REAL FAITH FOR REAL LIFE

EXTREME TEEN STUDY BIBLE

NEW KING JAMES VERSION

Extreme Teen Study Bible

Real Faith for Real Life

New King James Version®



Thomas Nelson
Since 1798

NASHVILLE DALLAS MEXICO CITY RIO DE JANEIRO

Extreme Teen Study Bible

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The Holy Bible, New King James Version

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Welcome

EXTREME TEEN STUDY BIBLE: INTRODUCTION

THIS IS A BOOK OF REAL RISK-TAKERS

This Bible is about radical devotion and revolutionary people. It is a Book that God breathed into the hearts and minds of people who were grappling with life and rising to the challenge of faith in the extreme.

The stories were written by and about dreamers and risk-takers—people who bet their lives on what they could only see through faith. They were people who took a chance on God and dared to believe that this world we live in is a *virtual world* compared to the reality of who God is and how He wants to connect with us.

They didn't pretty-up their lives. They told the truth when it was raw. They admitted their mistakes. God inspired a Book that reveals life with all its problems and all of humankind's frailties. He gave us a picture of the out-on-a-limb life that is the life of faith.

THIS BOOK IS ABOUT A REAL REVOLUTIONARY

This whole Bible is really about God connecting to us through Jesus Christ. The Old Testament is the story of Jesus' ancestors and how they lived their lives while waiting for the Messiah to come. The New Testament is about Jesus' life and the universal shock waves from His death and resurrection.

Jesus was all-the-way man and all-the-way God. He was the truest revolutionary of all time. He wasn't afraid to blast the hypocritical religious leaders or to cry when His friend died. He lived through a life just like ours with its frustrations and hard times to do something no one else has done: die as a sacrifice for our sins. The truth He spoke and the fact that He beat death turned the world upside down.

WHAT MAKES READING THE BIBLE A CHALLENGE?

It was written for a different culture.

That's why some of the concepts and behaviors seem foreign to us. We have to figure out the feelings and convictions behind those concepts and behaviors and how they might work today.

It was translated from a different language.

That's why there are so many versions, or translations. As our language changes we interpret the original Bible into our language again and again.

It was written in a different time.

That means different customs and attitudes. That means different names for the same things. That means understanding how faith worked in *that* time and from that figuring out how it should work today.

All of this means that we have to work a little harder to translate what the Bible says into our day and time. That's why we need extra notes and Bible helps. So take the plunge into all the great stuff packed into this Bible. It's worth it.

THIS BIBLE IS A SURVIVAL GUIDE

The Bible is a lot of books strapped together. They are inspired by God but written by all kinds of different people in all kinds of different circumstances and for all kinds of different reasons. These people weren't setting out to write a book of the Bible. They were facing life and surviving as best they could. Their stories teach us to survive as well by God's power. Because God inspired them, they're 100 percent accurate and reliable.

Some of these books are stories—relaying of events. Some of them are poetry. Some of them are song lyrics. Some are sermons. Some are biographies. Others are letters of introduction. One is a letter of recommendation. Another is a thank you note. Some books were written to show God's presence in history. One book is a passionate love song. Another is a health manual and a textbook for priests. Still another is a war saga. Several are heated letters written to set somebody straight. A few of them are visions of the future.

When you read the Bible, any part of it, understand the big picture. Understand why that book was written, what that writer was trying to accomplish. What were the people involved struggling with? What were they trying to make sense of? Each book has an **Introduction** written specifically to help answer these kinds of questions.

There are other special features to help you get as deep inside the Bible as you can:

Character profiles give you the inside info about specific people who stood a head above the rest to change their world.

World App and **Life App** articles help you examine real-world issues from a biblical perspective.

What's It Mean? serves up bite-sized notes about specific words or phrases in the Bible that may not be as obvious today as they were in Bible times.

God's Promises focus on the hundreds of reasons in Scripture that you can always count on Him.

Make It Real articles help you apply what you're reading to your own life, and the **Real Faith Index** in the back of this Bible lists these features by subject and provides each note's page number.

The **Quick Reference Finder** is the place to turn when you need to find God's answers to your questions.

Three different **Bible-reading plans** in the back give you suggestions for what to read every day to cover the Bible in a year.

It's all here—truth, inspiration, bottom-line *actual reality*. It's time to get real! Are you up for the challenge?

Preface to the New King James Version®

PURPOSE

In the preface to the 1611 edition, the translators of the Authorized Version, known popularly as the King James Bible, state that it was not their purpose "to make a new translation . . . but to make a good one better." Indebted to the earlier work of William Tyndale and others, they saw their best contribution to consist in revising and enhancing the excellence of the English versions which had sprung from the Reformation of the sixteenth century. In harmony with the purpose of the King James scholars, the translators and editors of the present work have not pursued a goal of innovation. They have perceived the Holy Bible, New King James Version, as a continuation of the labors of the earlier translators, thus unlocking for today's readers the spiritual treasures found especially in the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures.

A LIVING LEGACY

For nearly four hundred years, and throughout several revisions of its English form, the King James Bible has been deeply revered among the English-speaking peoples of the world. The precision of translation for which it is historically renowned, and its majesty of style, have enabled that monumental version of the word of God to become the mainspring of the religion, language, and legal foundations of our civilization.

Although the Elizabethan period and our own era share in zeal for technical advance, the former period was more aggressively devoted to classical learning. Along with this awakened concern for the classics came a flourishing companion interest in the Scriptures, an interest that was enlivened by the conviction that the manuscripts were providentially handed down and were a trustworthy record of the inspired Word of God. The King James translators were committed to producing an English Bible that would be a precise translation, and by no means a paraphrase or a broadly approximate rendering. On the one hand, the scholars were almost as familiar with the original languages of the Bible as with their native English. On the other hand, their reverence for the divine Author and His Word assured a translation of the Scriptures in which only a principle of utmost accuracy could be accepted.

In 1786 Catholic scholar Alexander Geddes said of the King James Bible, "If accuracy and strictest attention to the letter of the text be supposed to constitute an excellent version, this is of all versions the most excellent." George Bernard Shaw became a literary legend in our century because of his severe and often humorous criticisms of our most cherished values. Surprisingly, however, Shaw pays the following tribute to the scholars commissioned by King James: "The translation was extraordinarily well done because to the translators what they were translating was not merely a curious collection of ancient

books written by different authors in different stages of culture, but the Word of God divinely revealed through His chosen and expressly inspired scribes. In this conviction they carried out their work with boundless reverence and care and achieved a beautifully artistic result." History agrees with these estimates. Therefore, while seeking to unveil the excellent *form* of the traditional English Bible, special care has also been taken in the present edition to preserve the work of *precision* which is the legacy of the 1611 translators.

COMPLETE EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION

Where new translation has been necessary in the New King James Version, the most complete representation of the original has been rendered by considering the history of usage and etymology of words in their contexts. This principle of complete equivalence seeks to preserve *all* of the information in the text, while presenting it in good literary form. Dynamic equivalence, a recent procedure in Bible translation, commonly results in paraphrasing where a more literal rendering is needed to reflect a specific and vital sense. For example, complete equivalence truly renders the original text in expressions such as "lifted her voice and wept" (Gen. 21:16); "I gave you cleanness of teeth" (Amos 4:6); "Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!'" (Matt. 28:9); and "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me?" (John 2:4). Complete equivalence translates fully, in order to provide an English text that is both accurate and readable.

In keeping with the principle of complete equivalence, it is the policy to translate interjections which are commonly omitted in modern language renderings of the Bible. As an example, the interjection *behold*, in the older King James editions, continues to have a place in English usage, especially in dramatically calling attention to a spectacular scene, or an event of profound importance such as the Immanuel prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. Consequently, *behold* is retained for these occasions in the present edition. However, the Hebrew and Greek originals for this word can be translated variously, depending on the circumstances in the passage. Therefore, in addition to *behold*, words such as *indeed, look, see*, and *surely* are also rendered to convey the appropriate sense suggested by the context in each case.

In faithfulness to God and to our readers, it was deemed appropriate that all participating scholars sign a statement affirming their belief in the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture, and in the inerrancy of the original autographs.

DEVOTIONAL QUALITY

The King James scholars readily appreciated the intrinsic beauty of divine revelation. They accordingly disciplined their talents to render well-chosen English words of their time, as well as a graceful, often musical arrangement of language, which has stirred the hearts of Bible readers through the years. The translators, the committees, and the editors of the present edition, while sensitive to the late-twentieth-century English idiom, and while adhering faithfully to the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts, have sought to maintain those lyrical and devotional qualities that are so highly regarded in the Authorized Version. This devotional quality is especially apparent in the poetic and prophetic books, although even the relatively plain style of the Gospels and Epistles cannot strictly be likened, as sometimes suggested, to modern newspaper style. The Koine Greek of the New Testament is influenced by the Hebrew background of the writers, for whom even the gospel narratives were not merely flat utterance, but often sung in various degrees of rhythm.

THE STYLE

Students of the Bible applaud the timeless devotional character of our historic Bible. Yet it is also universally understood that our language, like all living languages, has undergone profound change since 1611. Subsequent revisions of the King James Bible have sought to keep abreast of changes in English speech. The present work is a further step toward this objective. Where obsolescence and other reading difficulties exist, present-day vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar have been carefully integrated. Words representing

ancient objects, such as *chariot* and *phylactery*, have no modern substitutes and are therefore retained.

A special feature of the New King James Version is its conformity to the thought flow of the 1611 Bible. The reader discovers that the sequence and selection of words, phrases, and clauses of the new edition, while much clearer, are so close to the traditional that there is remarkable ease in listening to the reading of either edition while following with the other.

In the discipline of translating biblical and other ancient languages, a standard method of transliteration, that is, the English spelling of untranslated words, such as names of persons and places, has never been commonly adopted. In keeping with the design of the present work, the King James spelling of untranslated words is retained, although made uniform throughout. For example, instead of the spellings *Isaiah* and *Elijah* in the Old Testament, and *Esaias* and *Elias* in the New Testament, *Isaiah* and *Elijah* now appear in both Testaments.

King James doctrinal and theological terms, for example, *propitiation, justification*, and *sanctification*, are generally familiar to English-speaking peoples. Such terms have been retained except where the original language indicates need for a more precise translation.

Readers of the Authorized Version will immediately be struck by the absence of several pronouns: *thee, thou*, and *ye* are replaced by the simple *you*, while, *your* and *yours* are substituted for *thy* and *thine* as applicable. *Thee, thou, thy*, and *thine* were once forms of address to express a special relationship to human as well as divine persons. These pronouns are no longer part of our language. However, reverence for God in the present work is preserved by capitalizing pronouns, including *You, Your*, and *Yours*, which refer to Him. Additionally, capitalization of these pronouns benefits the reader by clearly distinguishing divine and human persons referred to in a passage. Without such capitalization the distinction is often obscure, because the antecedent of a pronoun is not always clear in the English translation.

In addition to the pronoun usages of the seventeenth century, the *-eth* and *-est* verb endings, so familiar in the earlier King James editions, are now obsolete. Unless a speaker is schooled in these verb endings, there is common difficulty in selecting the correct form to be used with a given subject of the verb in vocal prayer. That is, should we use *love, loveth*, or *lovest*? *do, doeth, doest*, or *dost*? *have, hath*, or *hast*? Because these forms are obsolete, contemporary English usage has been substituted for the previous verb endings.

In older editions of the King James Version, the frequency of the connective *and* far exceeded the limits of present English usage. Also, biblical linguists agree that the Hebrew and Greek original words for this conjunction may commonly be translated otherwise, depending on the immediate context. Therefore, instead of *and*, alternatives such as *also, but, however, now, so, then*, and *thus* are accordingly rendered in the present edition, when the original language permits.

The real character of the Authorized Version does not reside in its archaic pronouns or verbs or other grammatical forms of the seventeenth century, but rather in the care taken by its scholars to impart the letter and spirit of the original text in a majestic and reverent style.

THE FORMAT

The format of the New King James Version is designed to enhance the vividness and devotional quality of the Holy Scriptures:

- Subject headings assist the reader to identify topics and transitions in the biblical content.
- Words or phrases in *italics* indicate expressions in the original language which require clarification by additional English words, as also done throughout the history of the King James Bible.
- Verse numbers within a paragraph are easily distinguishable.
- *Oblique type* in the New Testament indicates a quotation from the Old Testament.

- Prose is divided into paragraphs to indicate the structure of thought.
- Poetry is structured as contemporary verse to reflect the poetic form and beauty of the passage in the original language.
- The covenant name of God was usually translated from the Hebrew as "LORD" or "GOD" (using capital letters as shown) in the King James Old Testament. This tradition is maintained. In the present edition the name is so capitalized whenever the covenant name is quoted in the New Testament from a passage in the Old Testament.

THE OLD TESTAMENT TEXT

The Hebrew Bible has come down to us through the scrupulous care of ancient scribes who copied the original text in successive generations. By the sixth century A.D. the scribes were succeeded by a group known as the Masoretes, who continued to preserve the sacred Scriptures for another five hundred years in a form known as the Masoretic Text. Babylonia, Palestine, and Tiberias were the main centers of Masoretic activity; but by the tenth century A.D. the Masoretes of Tiberias, led by the family of ben Asher, gained the ascendancy. Through subsequent editions, the ben Asher text became in the twelfth century the only recognized form of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Daniel Bomberg printed the first Rabbinic Bible in 1516–17; that work was followed in 1524–25 by a second edition prepared by Jacob ben Chayyim and also published by Bomberg. The text of ben Chayyim was adopted in most subsequent Hebrew Bibles, including those used by the King James translators. The ben Chayyim text was also used for the first two editions of Rudolph Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* of 1906 and 1912. In 1937 Paul Kahle published a third edition of Biblia Hebraica. This edition was based on the oldest dated manuscript of the ben Asher text, the Leningrad Manuscript B19a (A.D. 1008), which Kahle regarded as superior to that used by ben Chayyim.

For the New King James Version the text used was the 1967/1977 Stuttgart edition of the Biblia Hebraica, with frequent comparisons being made with the Bomberg edition of 1524–25. The Septuagint (Greek) Version of the Old Testament and the Latin Vulgate also were consulted. In addition to referring to a variety of ancient versions of the Hebrew Scriptures, the New King James Version draws on the resources of relevant manuscripts from the Dead Sea caves. In the few places where the Hebrew was so obscure that the 1611 King James was compelled to follow one of the versions, but where information is now available to resolve the problems, the New King James Version follows the Hebrew text.

THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT

There is more manuscript support for the New Testament than for any other body of ancient literature. Over five thousand Greek, eight thousand Latin, and many more manuscripts in other languages attest the integrity of the New Testament. There is only one basic New Testament used by Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Orthodox, by conservatives and liberals. Minor variations in hand copying have appeared through the centuries, before mechanical printing began about A.D. 1450.

Some variations exist in the spelling of Greek words, in word order, and in similar details. These ordinarily do not show up in translation and do not affect the sense of the text in any way.

Other manuscript differences such as omission or inclusion of a word or a clause, and two paragraphs in the Gospels, should not overshadow the overwhelming degree of agreement which exists among the ancient records. Bible readers may be assured that the most important differences in English New Testaments of today are due, not to manuscript divergence, but to the way in which translators view the task of translation: How literally should the text be rendered? How does the translator view the matter of biblical inspiration? Does the translator adopt a paraphrase when a literal rendering would be quite clear and more to the point? The New King James Version follows the historic precedent of the Authorized Version in maintaining a literal approach to translation, except where the idiom of the original language cannot be translated directly into our tongue.

The King James New Testament was based on the traditional text of the Greek-speaking churches, first published in 1516, and later called the Textus Receptus or Received Text. Although based on the relatively few available manuscripts, these were representative of many more which existed at the time but only became known later. In the late nineteenth century, B. Westcott and F. Hort taught that this text had been officially edited by the fourth-century church, but a total lack of historical evidence for this event has forced a revision of the theory. It is now widely held that the Byzantine Text that largely supports the Textus Receptus has as much right as the Alexandrian or any other tradition to be weighed in determining the text of the New Testament. Those readings in the Textus Receptus which have weak support are indicated in the side reference column as being opposed by both Critical and Majority Texts (see "Popup Notes").

Since the 1880s most contemporary translations of the New Testament have relied upon a relatively few manuscripts discovered chiefly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Such translations depend primarily on two manuscripts, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, because of their greater age. The Greek text obtained by using these sources and the related papyri (our most ancient manuscripts) is known as the Alexandrian Text. However, some scholars have grounds for doubting the faithfulness of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, since they often disagree with one another, and Sinaiticus exhibits excessive omission.

A third viewpoint of New Testament scholarship holds that the best text is based on the consensus of the majority of existing Greek manuscripts. This text is called the Majority Text. Most of these manuscripts are in substantial agreement. Even though many are late, and none is earlier than the fifth century, usually their readings are verified by papyri, ancient versions, quotations from the early church fathers, or a combination of these. The Majority Text is similar to the Textus Receptus, but it corrects those readings which have little or no support in the Greek manuscript tradition.

Today, scholars agree that the science of New Testament textual criticism is in a state of flux. Very few scholars still favor the Textus Receptus as such, and then often for its historical prestige as the text of Luther, Calvin, Tyndale, and the King James Version. For about a century most have followed a Critical Text (so called because it is edited according to specific principles of textual criticism) which depends heavily upon the Alexandrian type of text. More recently many have abandoned this Critical Text (which is quite similar to the one edited by Westcott and Hort) for one that is more eclectic. Finally, a small but growing number of scholars prefer the Majority Text, which is close to the traditional text except in the Revelation.

In light of these facts, and also because the New King James Version is the fifth revision of a historic document translated from specific Greek texts, the editors decided to retain the traditional text in the body of the New Testament and to indicate major Critical and Majority Text variant readings in the popup notes. Although these variations are duly indicated in the popup notes of the present edition, it is most important to emphasize that fully eighty-five percent of the New Testament text is the same in the Textus Receptus, the Alexandrian Text, and the Majority Text.

NEW KING JAMES TRANSLATORS' NOTES

Significant explanatory notes, alternate translations, and cross-references, as well as New Testament citations of Old Testament passages, are supplied.

Important textual variants in the Old Testament are identified in a standard form.

The textual notes in the present edition of the New Testament make no evaluation of readings, but do clearly indicate the manuscript sources of readings. They objectively present facts without such tendentious remarks as "the best manuscripts omit" or "the most reliable manuscripts read." Such notes are value judgments that differ according to varying viewpoints on the text. By giving a clearly defined set of variants the New King James Version benefits readers of all textual persuasions.

Where significant variations occur in the New Testament Greek manuscripts, textual notes are classified as follows:

NU-Text
These variations from the traditional text generally represent the Alexandrian or Egyptian type of text described previously in "The New Testament Text." They are found in the Critical Text published in the twenty-seventh edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament (N) and in the United Bible Societies' fourth edition (U), hence the acronym, "NU-Text."

M-Text
This symbol indicates points of variation in the Majority Text from the traditional text, as also previously discussed in "The New Testament Text." It should be noted that M stands for whatever reading is printed in the published *Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, whether supported by overwhelming, strong, or only a divided majority textual tradition.

The textual notes reflect the scholarship of the past 150 years and will assist the reader to observe the variations between the different manuscript traditions of the New Testament. Such information is generally not available in English translations of the New Testament.

Quick Reference Finder

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DOES GOD CARE FOR THE UNBORN?
Exodus 21:22–25

WHAT DOES GOD THINK ABOUT KILLING CHILDREN?
2 Chronicles 33:6

HOW DOES GOD VIEW ALL CHILDREN?
Psalm 127:3–5

ARE CHILDREN FORMED BY CHANCE?
Psalm 139:13–16

DOES GOD KNOW THE UNBORN BY NAME?
Isaiah 49:1

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Joshua 3:9

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DOES SIN HAVE CONSEQUENCES?
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DOES SIN HAVE CONSEQUENCES?
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The Old Testament

Genesis

DATE OF WRITING: 1445–1400 B.C.
AUTHOR: TRADITIONALLY, MOSES
THEME: HOW IT ALL BEGAN
PURPOSE: A LIVING BEING—GOD—IS THE SOURCE OF ALL THINGS. HE WANTS A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH US, BASED ON OUR TRUST IN HIS PROMISES.

OUTLINE

1:1—2:25 .....The Story of Creation
3:1—4:16 .....The First Sin and the First Murder
4:17—5:32.....Descendants of Adam Before the Flood
6:1—9:29 .....Noah and the Flood
10:1—11:32 .....The Descendants of Noah and the Tower of Babel
12:1—25:18 .....The Story of Abraham
25:19—36:43 .....Isaac, Jacob, and Esau
37:1—50:26 .....The Story of Joseph

KEY VERSE:

"I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3).

THEN ///

The Book of Genesis is all about beginnings. Genesis begins with the creation of the world, but also shows the beginning of the nation of Israel and the beginning of God's plan to save the whole world.

Within all these beginnings, Genesis has loads of famous stories and people: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph. It's a who's who of the lightly populated days of the earth. What's amazing about this book, though, is that, unlike a who's who, Genesis tells us the real scoop on these people who established the original cultures of the world. We learn about their failures, not just their successes. They were real people living real lives in the real world. Genesis is a bottom-line, this-is-how-it-is, no-sugarcoating kind of book.

NOW ///

When we ask the big question, "Where do we come from?" Genesis gives the big answer, "We come from God. He made us and wants to be in relationship with us." He wants a personal relationship with us, based on our trust in His promises. And throughout Genesis, we see God's faithfulness in keeping His promises to His people over and over again. From this very first book of the Bible, God lays a foundation. We are what He created when He chose to love and be loved. He is the God who embraces us humans, "warts" and all, and even uses us to make the world a better place.

REALITY CHECK ///

At the beginning of Genesis, we see God creating the world we live in. The story of this creation, as simple and clear-cut as it is, has been the subject of a *lot* of dispute. Was it literally seven days? Did God create everything as full-grown? If God created just one family, where did all the other families come from? Exactly what fruit was it that Adam and Eve ate that ruined paradise for all of us? No matter how much people disagree about all the things we *don't* know about how God created the world, Genesis gives us concrete information about what we *do* know. God did create the world from nothing. He did it miraculously through a process only He can understand or re-create. He did it with a plan and a purpose that we are now living out.

THE HISTORY OF CREATION

1 In the beginning God created the
heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was
without form, and void; and darkness
was[a] on the face of the deep. And the Spirit
of God was hovering over the face of the
waters.

Genesis 1:1

Do you think it seems a little odd to single out the sky and the ground for mention in the first verse of the Bible? Actually, the phrase "the heavens and the earth" is a way of summarizing everything God made. It's another way of saying, "In the beginning God created the universe."

3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and
there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that
it was good; and God divided the light from
the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and
the darkness He called Night. So the eve-
ning and the morning were the first day.

6 Then God said, "Let there be a firma-
ment in the midst of the waters, and let it
divide the waters from the waters." 7 Thus
God made the firmament, and divided the
waters which *were* under the firmament
from the waters which *were* above the fir-
mament; and it was so. 8 And God called the
firmament Heaven. So the evening and the
morning were the second day.

9 Then God said, "Let the waters under
the heavens be gathered together into one
place, and let the dry *land* appear"; and it
was so. 10 And God called the dry *land* Earth,
and the gathering together of the waters He
called Seas. And God saw that *it was* good.

11 Then God said, "Let the earth bring
forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed, *and*

1:2 [a]Words in italic type have been added for clarity. They are not found in the original Hebrew or Aramaic.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // GENESIS 1:1

Something from Nothing A common definition of the word *create* is "to make something out of nothing." That's exactly what God did when He created this world. He made this incredible planet out of absolutely nothing! That's what He did when He made you. Thirty years ago you didn't exist. Now you do. Just because the earth and lots of people have been created, it doesn't mean God is finished. He's still creating. He can create something out of nothing. You may look for confidence in your life and see nothing. You may look for joy in your life and see nothing. You may look for just one good thing anywhere in your life and see nothing. When you're looking at nothing, remember that God is the ultimate Creator. Ask Him to make something out of nothing for you. (See also: Neh. 9:6; Ps. 104; Is. 42:5; Col. 1:16.)

Words to Live By

Create: Translated from the ancient Hebrew word *bara* (baw-raw'), "create" means "to make something from absolutely nothing." In Scripture, this word is used only when speaking of God. Only God can make anything exist.

the fruit tree *that* yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed *is* in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. 12And the earth brought forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed according to its kind, and the tree *that* yields fruit, whose seed *is* in itself according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. 13So the evening and the morning were the third day.

14Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 15and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. 16Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. *He made* the stars also. 17God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was* good. 19So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." 21So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. 22And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." 23So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Genesis 1:21

Nobody knows for sure what these great sea creatures looked like. It's possible, though, that some of the dinosaur fossils scientists have uncovered belong to the underwater giants described here.

24Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, *each* according to its kind"; and it was so. 25And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good.

26Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all[a] the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27So God created man in His *own* image;

1:26 [a]Syriac reads *all the wild animals of.*



WORLD APP

Going Green / Genesis 1:28

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). That's where it all began. God created everything and then made Adam and Eve, the first people. Adam and Eve lived in a world filled with animals, plants, crystal clear streams and rivers, and pure, clean air. Everything operated exactly the way God planned it and God called it all "good" (Gen. 1:31). Then God told Adam and Eve to take dominion of (care for and rule over) the earth. God gave His created world to mankind, trusting them to treasure His creation.

Since the world began, the population of the earth has grown from two people to over 6.94 billion. It's hard to find any place on the earth that looks as it did when God created it. Mankind has definitely taken over control of the world. Unfortunately, we have not given it very good care. There are so many people and so many needs for the earth's resources, we have stripped our world of the abundant natural treasures God entrusted to us.

A lot of damage has been done; some of it is irreversible—no matter what we do, our world will never again be the clean, pure place God created. But we can take God's direction to mankind seriously and begin to really take care of our world. We can recycle anything that can be reused; we can refuse to litter; we can be careful of the water and air and reduce pollution; we can cut down our use of natural resources like oil and natural gas. If we all take God's direction seriously and each of us tries to do our part, the beauty and richness of the earth will continue for all the generations that come after us. If we don't, we may just have to explain to God why we didn't do as He asked.

in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

29And God said, "See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. 30Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for food"; and it was so. 31Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. 2And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

4This *is* the history[a] of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, 5before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and *there was* no man to till the ground; 6but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

7And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

LIFE IN GOD'S GARDEN

8The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. 9And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life *was* also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. 11The name of the first *is* Pishon; it *is* the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold. 12And the gold of that land *is* good. Bdellium and the onyx stone *are* there. 13The name of the second river *is* Gihon; it *is* the one which goes around the whole land of Cush. 14The name of the third river *is* Hiddekel;[a] it *is* the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river *is* the Euphrates.

15Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

18And the LORD God said, "*It is* not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." 19Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. 20So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

21And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

23And Adam said:

"This *is* now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man."

24Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

25And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

THE TEMPTATION AND FALL OF MAN

3 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he

2:4 [a]Hebrew *toledoth,* literally *generations*
2:14 [a]Or *Tigris*



PROFILE
ABEL

Abel compiled some unique "firsts" in his short lifetime: member of the first family, first little brother, first rancher. Other "firsts" were more tragic than unique: part of the first sibling rivalry; first to do something better than his big brother; first to die at his brother's hand.

While these facts make Abel interesting, they are not the things that actually define him. Abel is best known for being a real worshiper of God. Because his parents (Adam and Eve) had turned away from God, Abel had to discover a way to approach God. Cain and Abel both offered God a sacrifice. Cain, the farmer, brought "an offering of the fruit of the ground" (Gen. 4:3). All the produce Cain harvested looked pretty much the same, so any old produce would do. But Abel brought the best he had. He took "the firstborn of his flock" and gave it to God as a sacrifice (v. 4). God accepted the attitude of Abel's worship and, many years later, Jesus even called him righteous.

Cain's halfhearted attitude was not acceptable to God, and this rejection (especially in the face of his brother's acceptance) angered Cain. He focused his rage on Abel. It doesn't seem as if Abel suspected his brother's intense jealousy and anger. He followed Cain out to a field where his older brother murdered him. Though it ended unfairly and too soon, Abel's life left a legacy of faith. The writer of the New Testament Book of Hebrews included Abel as one of the most faithful men in the Old Testament, saying, "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice" (Heb. 11:4).

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

If you've got brothers and/or sisters, here's a warning: don't try to make yourself look better by competing with them. The most important things in life have nothing to do with your own abilities or being better than someone else. The most important things in life are all about faith, love, and obedience to God.

Cain and Abel were motivated by attitudes that were miles apart. Cain couldn't stop thinking about himself; Abel was all about worshiping God and loving others. Abel understood that a real relationship with God and a true relationship with others will bring meaning to your life. When you compete, someone must lose. When you love, everyone wins.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Abel's life in Genesis 4:1–8; Matthew 23:35; and Hebrews 11:4; 12:24.

Abel was a real son and a real brother who was betrayed in a most awful way. But by giving wholeheartedly in worship to God, he has left us an amazing example to follow. Even though it was short, his life made a real difference. Yours can, too!

said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

2And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

4Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will

be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

8And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

9Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?"

10So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

11And He said, "Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

12Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

13And the LORD God said to the woman, "What *is* this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14So the LORD God said to the serpent:

"Because you have done this,
You *are* cursed more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you shall go,
And you shall eat dust
All the days of your life.
15And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel."

16To the woman He said:

"I will greatly multiply your sorrow and
conception;
In pain you shall bring forth children;
Your desire *shall be* for your husband,
And he shall rule over you."

17Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':

"Cursed *is* the ground for your sake;
In toil you shall eat *of* it
All the days of your life.
18Both thorns and thistles it shall bring
forth for you,
And you shall eat the herb of the field.
19In the sweat of your face you shall eat
bread
Till you return to the ground,
For out of it you were taken;
For dust you *are,*
And to dust you shall return."

20And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

21Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

22Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— 23therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

CAIN MURDERS ABEL

4 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." 2Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, 5but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

6So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, but you should rule over it."

8Now Cain talked with Abel his brother;[a]

4:8 [a]Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate add *"Let us go out to the field."*

WORLD APP

Crime / Genesis 4:3–9

God gave Adam and Eve one rule to follow: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Gen. 2:17); one rule, but also one chance to disobey God. And that's just what happened. Satan convinced Eve to eat the forbidden fruit; then she convinced Adam to do the same. At that moment, sin was born into a sinless world.

When Adam and Eve sinned, sin took up residence in their beings. Sin and death, like a fatal, inherited spiritual deformity, was passed from them to all their descendants. From the moment of the first sin, people have acted in ways that are against God. Just like Adam and Eve, they want control of their own lives and don't care what God says. When people only care about themselves and getting what they want from life, crime results. As a matter of fact, the first murder happened when Adam and Eve's son was killed by his brother in a fit of jealousy. Once sin took over, it didn't take long for crime to follow.

Crime rates grow worse every day: murder, theft, rape, and fraud seem to be everywhere we turn. At the heart of crime lies the selfish ambition to have desires met no matter the price others may have to pay. Criminals don't care about others, and they certainly don't care what God has to say.

When we accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord, He heals the spiritual part of us; He brings life in place of the deadly effect of sin—we are changed from the inside out. We begin to care what God wants and try to obey Him. He puts His love inside our hearts and we begin to treat others with consideration and care.

Many people try to find ways to decrease the crime rate and make our world safer. The only sure answer is to introduce people who are ruled by sin to the One who can change their hearts and lives. Criminals may have made our world more difficult and dangerous, but Jesus came to save the world and heal us from the effects of sin.

and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

9Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where *is* Abel your brother?"

He said, "I do not know. *Am* I my brother's keeper?"

10And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. 11So now you *are* cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."

13And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment *is* greater than I can bear! 14Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen *that* anyone who finds me will kill me."

15And the LORD said to him, "Therefore,[a] whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.

THE FAMILY OF CAIN

16Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. 17And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son—Enoch. 18To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech.

19Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one *was* Adah, and the name of the second *was* Zillah. 20And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. 21His brother's name *was* Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. 22And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain *was* Naamah.

23Then Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech!
For I have killed a man for wounding me,
Even a young man for hurting me.
24If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

A NEW SON

25And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, "For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." 26And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh.[a] Then *men* began to call on the name of the LORD.

THE FAMILY OF ADAM

5 This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. 3And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot *a son* in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. 4After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters. 5So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.

6Seth lived one hundred and five years, and begot Enosh. 7After he begot Enosh, Seth lived eight hundred and seven years, and had sons and daughters. 8So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died.

9Enosh lived ninety years, and begot Cainan.[a] 10After he begot Cainan, Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years, and had sons and daughters. 11So all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years; and he died.

12Cainan lived seventy years, and begot Mahalalel. 13After he begot Mahalalel, Cainan lived eight hundred and forty years, and had sons and daughters. 14So all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died.

15Mahalalel lived sixty-five years, and begot Jared. 16After he begot Jared, Mahalalel lived eight hundred and thirty years, and

4:15 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Not so.*
4:26 [a]Greek *Enos* **5:9** [a]Hebrew *Qenan*

had sons and daughters. 17So all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years; and he died.

18Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and begot Enoch. 19After he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and had sons and daughters. 20So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died.

21Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. 22After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. 23So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him.

25Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech. 26After he begot Lamech, Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years, and had sons and daughters. 27So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died.

Genesis 5:27

Even by early biblical standards, where it was not unusual for people to live for hundreds of years, Methuselah was an old guy. At 969 years old, he lived longer than anyone else mentioned in the Bible. Assuming his descendants all had children by their thirtieth birthday, Methuselah lived long enough to see thirty generations!

28Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and had a son. 29And he called his name Noah, saying, "This *one* will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed." 30After he begot Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years, and had sons and daughters. 31So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years; and he died.

32And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

THE WICKEDNESS AND JUDGMENT OF MAN

6 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they *were* beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

3And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive[a] with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." 4There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore *children* to them. Those *were* the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

5Then the LORD[a] saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. 6And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." 8But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

NOAH PLEASES GOD

9This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. 10And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

THE ARK PREPARED

13And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. 15And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 16You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and

6:3 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *abide.* **6:5** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Vulgate reads *God;* Septuagint reads *LORD God.*



WORLD APP

Natural Disasters / Genesis 6:13

Floods, tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, volcanoes: these are natural disasters and they are really frightening. The destructive force of nature can make real life seem as scary as a sci-fi horror flick.

Lately, it seems one disaster follows another with no time in between to pick up the pieces. There are scars all over our world caused by the violence that nature can produce. Does the number of natural disasters we see everywhere mean God is angry with the world? Is He going to use nature to bring it all to an end?

In Genesis 6, we read the story of Noah. The world was so sinful, God decided to wipe it out and start over. So He told Noah to build a boat (ark) to save himself, his family, and two of every animal. Then God made it rain; for forty days and forty nights water poured from the sky. The entire earth was flooded and all people and animals outside the ark were drowned. The Flood was the first recorded natural disaster.

But God made a promise to Noah. He told Him the earth would never again be destroyed by flood waters; He spoke these words, "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22). This means the earth will continue to operate as God intended until the day He decides it's time for Jesus to return. No one knows when that day will be; as a matter of fact, Jesus said only God the Father knows.

As a sign of the promise God made to Noah, He created the rainbow. Now, every generation is reminded of God's promise. So when it seems nature has gone crazy and scientists predict greater natural disasters ahead, remember God's promise—life on this earth will continue until God decides for time to end. Until then, watch for the rainbows and trust God to do exactly what He said.

set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it *with* lower, second, and third *decks.* 17And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which *is* the breath of life; everything that *is* on the earth shall die. 18But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every *sort* into the ark, to keep *them* alive with you; they shall be male and female. 20Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every *kind* will come to you to keep *them* alive. 21And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather *it* to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them."

Genesis 6:14

The ark Noah built was about the size of a modern-day cruise ship—about one-and-a-half football fields long. The word *ark* does not mean "boat"; it means "chest" or "box."

22Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

THE GREAT FLOOD

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen *that* you *are* righteous before Me in this generation. 2You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that *are* unclean, a male and his female; 3also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. 4For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made." 5And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him. 6Noah *was* six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth.

7So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. 8Of clean animals, of animals that *are* unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, 9two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. 10And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. 11In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. 12And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.

13On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark— 14they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. 15And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which *is* the breath of life. 16So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.

Genesis 7:2

God's rules for animal sacrifice were very strict. A sacrificial animal had to chew cud and have divided hooves. Sheep, which fit both of these categories, were among the most popular animals for sacrifice. Scavenging birds, including vultures, were unacceptable as sacrifices.

17Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. 19And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. 20The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. 21And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. 22All in whose nostrils *was* the breath of the spirit[a] of life, all that *was* on the dry *land,* died. 23So He

7:22 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate omit *of the spirit.*

destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who *were* with him in the ark remained *alive.* 24And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.

NOAH'S DELIVERANCE

8 Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that *were* with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. 3And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. 4Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. 5And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth *month,* on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

GOD
Does God care about me?
Genesis 8:1

6So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. 7Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. 8He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. 9But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. 10And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. 11Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf *was* in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. 12So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.

13And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first *month,* the first *day* of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. 14And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried.

15Then God spoke to Noah, saying, 16"Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that *is* with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." 18So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. 19Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, *and* whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH CREATION

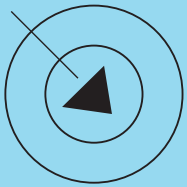
20Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

22"While the earth remains,
Seedtime and harvest,
Cold and heat,
Winter and summer,
And day and night
Shall not cease."

GOD'S PROMISE TO NOAH

9 So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.[a] 2And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. 3Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all

9:1 [a]Compare Genesis 1:28



PROMISE

God promises the rainbow as His sign.

"I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh" (Gen. 9:13–15).

Just before the rainbow appeared, God had done something massive and probably pretty scary. Because people had become sinful beyond belief, His heart was broken and He had had enough. He cleaned out the whole world with a huge flood. Almost every person and every animal on earth drowned. Only the people and the animals on Noah's ark were saved. You can imagine what they might have been thinking. *Will He ever do this again? Maybe next time we won't live through it.* God calmed them down by promising that He would never destroy the world by flood again. To help all people remember, He gave us something we can see. He put the rainbow in the sky as the sign of that promise.

Did God need the rainbow so He could remember what He'd said? No, the rainbow was for Noah and his family. It was for all his descendants who would live after him (Gen. 9:9). Today, it's for you. It lets you know that God keeps His promises. After all these millions of years, God still remembers the promise He made to that group of people on the ark. When He made that promise, He knew that as long as the sunlight hits the raindrops, people can see the rainbow and know that He remembers His promise.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Genesis 9:9

things, even as the green herbs. 4But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is,* its blood. 5Surely for your lifeblood I will demand *a reckoning;* from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man.

6"Whoever sheds man's blood,
By man his blood shall be shed;
For in the image of God
He made man.
7And as for you, be fruitful and
multiply;
Bring forth abundantly in the earth
And multiply in it."

8Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: 9"And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants[a] after you, 10and with every living creature that *is* with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. 11Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

12And God said: "This *is* the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations: 13I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. 14It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; 15and I will remember My covenant which *is* between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth." 17And God said to Noah, "This *is* the sign of the covenant which I have established

9:9 [a]Literally *seed*

between Me and all flesh that *is* on the earth."

NOAH AND HIS SONS

18 Now the sons of Noah who went out of
the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And
Ham *was* the father of Canaan. 19 These
three *were* the sons of Noah, and from
these the whole earth was populated.

20 And Noah began *to be* a farmer, and he
planted a vineyard. 21 Then he drank of the
wine and was drunk, and became uncov-
ered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of
Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father,
and told his two brothers outside. 23 But
Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid *it*
on both their shoulders, and went back-
ward and covered the nakedness of their
father. Their faces *were* turned away, and
they did not see their father's nakedness.

24 So Noah awoke from his wine, and
knew what his younger son had done to
him. 25 Then he said:

"Cursed *be* Canaan;
A servant of servants
He shall be to his brethren."

26 And he said:

"Blessed *be* the LORD,
The God of Shem,
And may Canaan be his servant.
27 May God enlarge Japheth,
And may he dwell in the tents of Shem;
And may Canaan be his servant."

28 And Noah lived after the flood three
hundred and fifty years. 29 So all the days
of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years;
and he died.

NATIONS DESCENDED FROM NOAH

10 Now this *is* the genealogy of the
sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and
Japheth. And sons were born to
them after the flood.

2 The sons of Japheth *were* Gomer, Ma-
gog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and
Tiras. 3 The sons of Gomer *were* Ashkenaz,
Riphath,[a] and Togarmah. 4 The sons of Ja-
van *were* Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and
Dodanim.[a] 5 From these the coastland
peoples of the Gentiles were separated
into their lands, everyone according to his
language, according to their families, into
their nations.

6 The sons of Ham *were* Cush, Mizraim,
Put,[a] and Canaan. 7 The sons of Cush
were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and
Sabtechah; and the sons of Raamah *were*
Sheba and Dedan.

8 Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a
mighty one on the earth. 9 He was a mighty
hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said,
"Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the
LORD." 10 And the beginning of his kingdom
was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the
land of Shinar. 11 From that land he went to
Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir,
Calah, 12 and Resen between Nineveh and
Calah (that *is* the principal city).

13 Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Le-
habim, Naphtuhim, 14 Pathrusim, and
Casluhim (from whom came the Philis-
tines and Caphtorim).

15 Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and
Heth; 16 the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the
Girgashite; 17 the Hivite, the Arkite, and the
Sinite; 18 the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and
the Hamathite. Afterward the families of
the Canaanites were dispersed. 19 And the
border of the Canaanites was from Sidon
as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then
as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Ad-
mah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. 20 These
were the sons of Ham, according to their
families, according to their languages, in
their lands *and* in their nations.

21 And *children* were born also to Shem,
the father of all the children of Eber, the
brother of Japheth the elder. 22 The sons of
Shem *were* Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud,
and Aram. 23 The sons of Aram *were* Uz,
Hul, Gether, and Mash.[a] 24 Arphaxad begot
Salah,[a] and Salah begot Eber. 25 To Eber
were born two sons: the name of one *was*
Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided;
and his brother's name *was* Joktan. 26 Joktan
begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth,

10:3 [a]Spelled *Diphath* in 1 Chronicles 1:6
10:4 [a]Spelled *Rodanim* in Samaritan Pentateuch and 1 Chronicles 1:7 **10:6** [a]Or *Phut*
10:23 [a]Called *Meshech* in Septuagint and 1 Chronicles 1:17 **10:24** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Vulgate, and Targum; Septuagint reads *Arphaxad begot Cainan, and Cainan begot Salah* (compare Luke 3:35, 36).

Jerah, 27Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 28Obal,[a] Abimael, Sheba, 29Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these *were* the sons of Joktan. 30And their dwelling place was from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the mountain of the east. 31These *were* the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands, according to their nations.

32These *were* the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.

THE TOWER OF BABEL

11 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. 2And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

5But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6And the LORD said, "Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." 8So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

SHEM'S DESCENDANTS

10This *is* the genealogy of Shem: Shem *was* one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. 11After he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters.

12Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah. 13After he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.

14Salah lived thirty years, and begot Eber. 15After he begot Eber, Salah lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.

16Eber lived thirty-four years, and begot Peleg. 17After he begot Peleg, Eber lived four hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters.

18Peleg lived thirty years, and begot Reu. 19After he begot Reu, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years, and begot sons and daughters.

20Reu lived thirty-two years, and begot Serug. 21After he begot Serug, Reu lived two hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters.

22Serug lived thirty years, and begot Nahor. 23After he begot Nahor, Serug lived two hundred years, and begot sons and daughters.

24Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and begot Terah. 25After he begot Terah, Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years, and begot sons and daughters.

26Now Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

TERAH'S DESCENDANTS

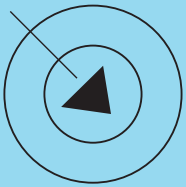
27This *is* the genealogy of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran begot Lot. 28And Haran died before his father Terah in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans. 29Then Abram and Nahor took wives: the name of Abram's wife *was* Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah. 30But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

Genesis 11:31

Canaan was the Promised land of the Israelites. It was located east of the Mediterranean Sea, where Syria, Lebanon, and Israel are today.

31And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur

10:28 [a]Spelled *Ebal* in 1 Chronicles 1:22



PROMISE

God promises that everyone on earth will be blessed.

"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:2, 3).

God had a plan for a man named Abram. God knew that Abram would believe Him, and that Abram would live out his faith through his actions. Because of His plan, God promised Abram that the world would be blessed because of him.

God blessed the world through Abram in two ways. First, Abraham (the name God gave Abram later) became the prime example for everyone who would ever put their faith in God. His descendants were honored and proud to be called the "children of Abraham." Paul said that anyone who has Abraham's kind of faith is a child of Abraham.

But the greatest blessing God gave through Abraham—the thing God was specifically talking about here—is Jesus. Jesus was a descendent of Abraham. God redeemed all of the sin in your life through Jesus, a descendant of the man whose greatest claim to fame was the simple fact that "he believed in the LORD" (Gen. 15:6).

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Genesis 15:4, 5; 17:4–8; Luke 1:54, 55; Galatians 3:14, 29

of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there. 32So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

PROMISES TO ABRAM

12 Now the LORD had said to Abram:

"Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father's house,
To a land that I will show you.
2I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
3I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth
shall be blessed."

4So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram *was* seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. 6Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh.[a] And the Canaanites *were* then in the land.

7Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent *with* Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. 9So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.[a]

ABRAM IN EGYPT

10Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine *was* severe in the land. 11And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you *are* a woman of beautiful countenance. 12Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that

12:6 [a]Hebrew *Alon Moreh* **12:9** [a]Hebrew *Negev*

they will say, 'This *is* his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13Please say you *are* my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I[a] may live because of you."

14So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she *was* very beautiful. 15The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. 16He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

17But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What *is* this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she *was* your wife? 19Why did you say, 'She *is* my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take *her* and go your way." 20So Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

ABRAM INHERITS CANAAN

13 Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South.[a] 2Abram *was* very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. 3And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

5Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. 6Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. 7And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.

8So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we *are* brethren. 9*Is* not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If *you take* the left, then I will go to the right; or, if *you go* to the right, then I will go to the left."

10And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched *his* tent even as far as Sodom. 13But the men of Sodom *were* exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.

14And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants[a] forever. 16And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered. 17Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

18Then Abram moved *his* tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre,[a] which *are* in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.

LOT'S CAPTIVITY AND RESCUE

14 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations,[a] 2*that* they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). 3All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). 4Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that *were* with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6and the Horites in

12:13 [a]Literally *my soul* **13:1** [a]Hebrew *Negev*
13:15 [a]Literally *seed,* and so throughout the book **13:18** [a]Hebrew *Alon Mamre*
14:1 [a]Hebrew *goyim*

their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which *is* by the wilderness. 7Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that *is,* Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazezon Tamar.

8And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that *is,* Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim 9against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations,[a] Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. 10Now the Valley of Siddim *was full of* asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; *some* fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains. 11Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

13Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre[a] the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they *were* allies with Abram. 14Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained *servants* who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which *is* north of Damascus. 16So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.

Genesis 14:14

Think of Abram (who later became Abraham) as a tribal chief. The people under his command weren't all his immediate relatives, but they were loyal to him. Some of the men in Abram's "tribe" were trained warriors.

17And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that *is,* the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who *were* with him.

ABRAM AND MELCHIZEDEK

18Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he *was* the priest of God Most High. 19And he blessed him and said:

"Blessed be Abram of God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;
20And blessed be God Most High,
Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."

And he gave him a tithe of all.

Genesis 14:18

Melchizedek, whose name means "King of Righteousness," is mentioned only two other times in the Bible—once in Psalms and once in Hebrews. He was from Salem which is another name for Jerusalem.

21Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."

22But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23that I *will take* nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that *is* yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'— 24except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

PROTECTION
Who will protect me?
Genesis 15:1

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAM

15 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

2But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will

14:9 [a]Hebrew *goyim* **14:13** [a]Hebrew *Alon Mamre*

You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* Eliezer of Damascus?" 3Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"

4And behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

6And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

7Then He said to him, "I *am* the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

8And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"

9So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. 11And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him. 13Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete."

17And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. 18On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying:

"To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— 19the Kenites, the Kenezzites, the Kadmonites, 20the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

Genesis 15:17

God's promise to give the land of Canaan to Abram is one of the most important events in the Old Testament. Most of the modern conflicts between middle-eastern countries can be traced back to this promise.

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no *children.* And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. 2So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing *children.* Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. 3Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. 4So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.

Genesis 16:2

In Old Testament times, for a couple to be childless was considered tragic. Children were seen as a sign of God's blessing. Female servants were expected to bear their master's children if the master's wife could not.

5Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong *be* upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me."

6So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid *is* in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence.

7Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. 8And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."

9The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." 10Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." 11And the Angel of the LORD said to her:

"Behold, you *are* with child,
And you shall bear a son.
You shall call his name Ishmael,
Because the LORD has heard your affliction.
12He shall be a wild man;
His hand *shall be* against every man,
And every man's hand against him.
And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

13Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" 14Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi;[a] observe, *it is* between Kadesh and Bered.

15So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. 16Abram *was* eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I *am* Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. 2And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." 3Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: 4"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. 5No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. 6I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. 7And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. 8Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Genesis 17:4, 5

Names were a very big deal in ancient times. The meaning of a person's name often revealed a very important personal characteristic. Such was the case with Abraham. In Hebrew, *Ab* means "father" and *raham* means "many."

9And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; 11and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. 13He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

15Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall be* her name. 16And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother of* nations; kings of peoples shall be from her."

17Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall *a child* be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear *a child?*" 18And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!"

19Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his

16:14 [a]Literally *Well of the One Who Lives and Sees Me*

name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his descendants after him. 20And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. 21But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year." 22Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

23So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him. 24Abraham *was* ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; 27and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

Genesis 18:1–5

In ancient times, hospitality wasn't a courtesy; it was a duty. People were expected to welcome travelers into their homes and care for their needs. It was considered rude for a host to ask his guests questions or carry on a conversation with them before they were given a chance to clean up and eat.

THE SON OF PROMISE

18 Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre,[a] as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw *them,* he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant."

They said, "Do as you have said."

6So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead *it* and make cakes." 7And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave *it* to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

9Then they said to him, "Where *is* Sarah your wife?"

So he said, "Here, in the tent."

10And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son."

(Sarah was listening in the tent door which *was* behind him.) 11Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; *and* Sarah had passed the age of childbearing.[a] 12Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

13And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear *a child,* since I am old?' 14Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

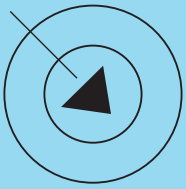
15But Sarah denied *it,* saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid.

And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"

ABRAHAM INTERCEDES FOR SODOM

16Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. 17And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, 18since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they

18:1 [a]Hebrew *Alon Mamre* **18:11** [a]Literally *the manner of women had ceased to be with Sarah*



PROMISE

God promises nothing is too hard for Him.

And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son" (Gen. 18:13, 14).

Hard. You know all about *hard.* It's hard to juggle school, a part-time job, and chores at home. It's hard when the game is tied and you miss a free throw. It's hard when you sit down to take a final and realize you should have paid more attention in class all year. But some things are beyond hard, like when someone you love dies. At times like those, it can seem there is no way to cope.

Though some things in life seem too difficult for us, nothing is too hard for God. Sometimes He does His most amazing work when all hope seems gone. He gives hope when all seems hopeless. He fills us with peace when we're in the middle of chaos. He saves the souls of people who deserve death. He makes the impossible possible. Think about the hard times: the last second, the darkest hour, the deepest hole. They are "mission impossible" for us. Invite Him into your hard times. Every one of them is "mission possible" for Him.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Numbers 11:23; Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27

keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."
20And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, 21I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."

22Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. 23And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare *it* for the fifty righteous that were in it? 25Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

26So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

27Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who *am but* dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: 28Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for *lack of* five?"

So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy *it.*"

29And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?"

So He said, "I will not do *it* for the sake of forty."

30Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not do *it* if I find thirty there."

31And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of twenty."

32Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?"

And He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of ten." 33So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

SODOM'S DEPRAVITY

19 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw *them,* he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. 2And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way."

Genesis 19:1, 2

The city gate was like a commerce center and a courthouse rolled into one. It's where people conducted their business, judicial, and political matters. Judging by his position at the city gate, Lot apparently was an important man in Sodom. He saw it as his responsibility to welcome the two strangers to the city.

And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square."

3But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

4Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. 5And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them *carnally.*"

6So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, 7and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! 8See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof."

9And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one came in to stay *here,* and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. 10But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. 11And they struck the men who *were* at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary *trying* to find the door.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH DESTROYED

12Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—take *them* out of this place! 13For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

14So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

15When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city." 16And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. 17So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he[a] said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed."

18Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! 19Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. 20See now, this city *is* near *enough* to flee to, and it *is* a little one; please let me escape there (*is* it not a little one?) and my soul shall live."

21And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. 22Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there."

Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

23The sun had risen upon the earth when

19:17 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *they.*

Lot entered Zoar. 24Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. 25So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.

26But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

27And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. 28Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace. 29And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.

THE DESCENDANTS OF LOT

30Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave. 31Now the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father *is* old, and *there is* no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. 32Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." 33So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

34It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, "Indeed I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in *and* lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." 35Then they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

36Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. 37The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he *is* the father of the Moabites to this day. 38And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he *is* the father of the people of Ammon to this day.

ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH

20 And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar. 2Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She *is* my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

3But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you *are* a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she *is* a man's wife."

4But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? 5Did he not say to me, 'She *is* my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He *is* my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this."

6And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. 7Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he *is* a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore *her,* know that you shall surely die, you and all who *are* yours."

8So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid. 9And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done." 10Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?"

11And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God *is* not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. 12But indeed *she is* truly my sister. She *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. 13And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This *is* your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He *is* my brother."' "

14Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave *them* to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him. 15And Abimelech said, "See, my land *is* before you; dwell where it pleases



PROFILE
ISAAC

Isaac was the only child of Abraham and Sarah. Growing up as an only child carries with it certain benefits. For one thing, sharing is just a concept you learn, not a constant struggle as in many multiple-sibling families. But being an only child also includes special challenges. You get all the attention—sometimes too much. Isaac had the added factor of parents who were old enough to be his great-grandparents. No wonder he had some special problems later when he became father of twins.

Isaac was a promise as well as a person. He had to learn to live with that fact. He was the first installment in God's promise to create a nation through Abraham. For instance, one day Isaac's father told him they were going on a camping trip. The next thing he knew, Isaac found himself tied up on an altar, about to be sacrificed as a burnt offering. Fortunately, this was only a test—a test of Abraham's trust in God. An alternative sacrifice was provided and Isaac continued to live a long and fruitful life.

There's no doubt Isaac learned that faith is serious business. His life wasn't full of accomplishments, but he kept the faith, and he passed it on. He gave God's special blessing to his son, Jacob, who continued the family line. The family of Isaac grew to become God's chosen people, Israel.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Making a difference may not lead to greatness. Perhaps you will seem to do little more than be a diligent student, a loyal friend, or one day a faithful spouse, caring parent, and growing disciple of Jesus—but a life well-lived in God's kingdom has an impact that we may never see.

The greatest accomplishment in life is to follow the example of Isaac. Isaac was a channel of God's blessing. Through him, the very family tree that would one day include Jesus was firmly established. In a very real way, Isaac was a channel of the greatest blessing the world has ever known. In God's hands, your life can also be a channel of blessing—seen or unseen.

? WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Isaac's life in Genesis 17:15—35:29. Romans 9:7–10; Hebrews 11:17–20; and James 2:21–24 also describe his significance.

Isaac was willing to play his role in God's ultimate plan. Through his trust and faith, he made a real difference. You can, too!

you." [16]Then to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand *pieces* of silver; indeed this vindicates you[a] before all who *are* with you and before everybody." Thus she was rebuked.

[17]So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore *children;* [18]for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

ISAAC IS BORN

21 And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. [2]For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. [3]And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac.

20:16 [a]Literally *it is a covering of the eyes for you*

4Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac
when he was eight days old, as God had
commanded him. 5Now Abraham was
one hundred years old when his son Isaac
was born to him. 6And Sarah said, "God
has made me laugh, *and* all who hear will
laugh with me." 7She also said, "Who would
have said to Abraham that Sarah would
nurse children? For I have borne *him* a son
in his old age."

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL DEPART

8So the child grew and was weaned. And
Abraham made a great feast on the same
day that Isaac was weaned.

9And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the
Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abra-
ham, scoffing. 10Therefore she said to
Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and
her son; for the son of this bondwoman
shall not be heir with my son, *namely* with
Isaac." 11And the matter was very displeas-
ing in Abraham's sight because of his son.

12But God said to Abraham, "Do not let
it be displeasing in your sight because of
the lad or because of your bondwoman.
Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to
her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be
called. 13Yet I will also make a nation of the
son of the bondwoman, because he *is* your
seed."

14So Abraham rose early in the morning,
and took bread and a skin of water; and
putting *it* on her shoulder, he gave *it* and
the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then
she departed and wandered in the Wilder-
ness of Beersheba. 15And the water in the
skin was used up, and she placed the boy
under one of the shrubs. 16Then she went
and sat down across from *him* at a distance
of about a bowshot; for she said to herself,
"Let me not see the death of the boy." So she
sat opposite *him,* and lifted her voice and
wept.

17And God heard the voice of the lad.
Then the angel of God called to Hagar out
of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you,
Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the
voice of the lad where he *is.* 18Arise, lift up
the lad and hold him with your hand, for I
will make him a great nation."

19Then God opened her eyes, and she
saw a well of water. And she went and
filled the skin with water, and gave the lad
a drink. 20So God was with the lad; and he
grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and be-
came an archer. 21He dwelt in the Wilder-
ness of Paran; and his mother took a wife
for him from the land of Egypt.

A COVENANT WITH ABIMELECH

22And it came to pass at that time that
Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of
his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God
is with you in all that you do. 23Now there-
fore, swear to me by God that you will not
deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or
with my posterity; but that according to
the kindness that I have done to you, you
will do to me and to the land in which you
have dwelt."

24And Abraham said, "I will swear."

25Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech
because of a well of water which Abime-
lech's servants had seized. 26And Abime-
lech said, "I do not know who has done this
thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard
of it until today." 27So Abraham took sheep
and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and
the two of them made a covenant. 28And
Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock
by themselves.

29Then Abimelech asked Abraham,
"What *is the meaning of* these seven ewe
lambs which you have set by themselves?"

30And he said, "You will take *these*
seven ewe lambs from my hand, that
they may be my witness that I have dug
this well." 31Therefore he called that place
Beersheba,[a] because the two of them swore
an oath there.

Genesis 21:32

The Philistines, who lived along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea near Israel, were enemies of God's people. Abraham made an agreement with the Philistine King Abimelech that enabled him to live in Philistine land without any problems. Later, though, the Philistines proved to be a real problem for Abraham's descendants.

32Thus they made a covenant at Beer-
sheba. So Abimelech rose with Phichol,
the commander of his army, and they

21:31 [a]Literally *Well of the Oath* or *Well of the Seven*

returned to the land of the Philistines.
33Then *Abraham* planted a tamarisk tree
in Beersheba, and there called on the
name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.
34And Abraham stayed in the land of the
Philistines many days.

ABRAHAM'S FAITH CONFIRMED

22 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am."

2Then He said, "Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

3So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad[a] and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

6So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid *it* on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!"

And he said, "Here I am, my son."

Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?"

8And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

> ***Genesis 22:11***
> In ancient times, when a servant was called by his master, the proper response was "Here I am." The fact that Abraham used these words in responding to God shows that he was ready to serve.

9Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

11But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

So he said, "Here I am."

12And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son,* from Me."

13Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him was* a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide;[a] as it is said *to* this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

15Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*—17blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." 19So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

THE FAMILY OF NAHOR

20Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: 21Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, 22Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." 23And Bethuel begot Rebekah.[a] These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. 24His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.

22:5 [a]Or *young man* **22:14** [a]Hebrew *YHWH Yireh* **22:23** [a]Spelled *Rebecca* in Romans 9:10

SARAH'S DEATH AND BURIAL

23 Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; *these were* the years of the life of Sarah. 2So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that *is,* Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

3Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, 4"I *am* a foreigner and a visitor among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

5And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, 6"Hear us, my lord: You *are* a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead."

7Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. 8And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me, 9that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he has, which *is* at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you."

10Now Ephron dwelt among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city, saying, 11"No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and the cave that *is* in it; I give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I give it to you. Bury your dead!"

12Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; 13and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you *will give it,* please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take *it* from me and I will bury my dead there."

14And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, 15"My lord, listen to me; the land *is worth* four hundred shekels of silver. What *is* that between you and me? So bury your dead." 16And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants.

17So the field of Ephron which *was* in Machpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the field and the cave which *was* in it, and all the trees that *were* in the field, which *were* within all the surrounding borders, were deeded 18to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

19And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that *is,* Hebron) in the land of Canaan. 20So the field and the cave that *is* in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.

A BRIDE FOR ISAAC

24 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, 3and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; 4but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

Genesis 24:4

In Old Testament times, the family unit included everyone from grandparents to multiple wives, from widowed daughters to servants. God used the family structure to spread His message from generation to generation. Abraham wanted Isaac's wife chosen from among his family in order to keep his family unified.

5And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?"

6But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there. 7The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants[a] I give

24:7 [a]Literally *seed*



PROFILE
REBEKAH

In Old Testament days, marriages were arranged. That is true of some cultures today as well. In an arranged marriage, brides and grooms don't get to choose each other. We sometimes find it hard to imagine arranged marriages being the norm if we've always seen these choices as absolute rights.

Rebekah grew up in an arranged-marriage world. She lived in a large household ruled by her father and brother. They had the power to decide her marital fate. But God was also working in the background in her life.

One day when she went to the city well for water she met an old man named Eliezer, who was a servant of Abraham. Eliezer had just prayed for guidance to find a suitable wife for Abraham's son, Isaac. Rebekah turned out to be the answer to that prayer. Both Rebekah's timing and her attitude fit the servant's expectations. She didn't hesitate to be helpful, even before she found out he represented a distant relative.

After Eliezer met her family and explained his mission and the events at the well, Rebekah's father and brother realized God was arranging these events. They gave their consent for Rebekah to marry Isaac. Gifts were presented. Return travel arrangements were made. Then, Rebekah was honored with final veto power when she was asked, "Will you go with this man?" (Gen. 24:58). Her simple affirmation took God's plan for the world another step.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Rebekah had a lot to learn. She made some major mistakes as a wife and mother. But her early and beautiful cooperation with God's work in her life was never undone.

If we are going to make a real difference in our tomorrows, and if we are going to cooperate with the difference God wants to make through us, it will hinge on what we do with our nows. What decisions and opportunities are before you now? In what ways are you seeking God's guidance about the choices you have to make? How ready are you to respond to His direction?

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read Rebekah's story in Genesis 24—27.

Rebekah was a real girl with real strengths and weaknesses. But she believed in God's plan and was willing to take a risk to play her part. Because of her obedience to God's plan, her life made a real difference. If you will follow where God leads, yours can, too!

this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. 8And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there." 9So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.

10Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods *were in* his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. 11And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw *water.* 12Then he said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13Behold, *here* I stand by the well of water, and the daughters

of the men of the city are coming out to
draw water. 14Now let it be that the young
woman to whom I say, 'Please let down
your pitcher that I may drink,' and she
says, 'Drink, and I will also give your cam-
els a drink'—*let* her *be the one* You have ap-
pointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this
I will know that You have shown kindness
to my master."

15And it happened, before he had fin-
ished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who
was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the
wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out
with her pitcher on her shoulder. 16Now
the young woman *was* very beautiful to
behold, a virgin; no man had known her.
And she went down to the well, filled her
pitcher, and came up. 17And the servant
ran to meet her and said, "Please let me
drink a little water from your pitcher."

18So she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she
quickly let her pitcher down to her hand,
and gave him a drink. 19And when she had
finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will
draw *water* for your camels also, until they
have finished drinking." 20Then she quickly
emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran
back to the well to draw *water,* and drew
for all his camels. 21And the man, wonder-
ing at her, remained silent so as to know
whether the LORD had made his journey
prosperous or not.

22So it was, when the camels had fin-
ished drinking, that the man took a golden
nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two
bracelets for her wrists weighing ten *shek-
els* of gold, 23and said, "Whose daughter *are*
you? Tell me, please, is there room *in* your
father's house for us to lodge?"

24So she said to him, "I *am* the daughter
of Bethuel, Milcah's son, whom she bore to
Nahor." 25Moreover she said to him, "We
have both straw and feed enough, and
room to lodge."

26Then the man bowed down his head
and worshiped the LORD. 27And he said,
"Blessed *be* the LORD God of my master
Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy
and His truth toward my master. As for me,
being on the way, the LORD led me to the
house of my master's brethren." 28So the
young woman ran and told her mother's
household these things.

29Now Rebekah had a brother whose
name *was* Laban, and Laban ran out to the
man by the well. 30So it came to pass, when
he saw the nose ring, and the bracelets on
his sister's wrists, and when he heard the
words of his sister Rebekah, saying, "Thus
the man spoke to me," that he went to the
man. And there he stood by the camels at
the well. 31And he said, "Come in, O blessed
of the LORD! Why do you stand outside?
For I have prepared the house, and a place
for the camels."

32Then the man came to the house. And
he unloaded the camels, and provided
straw and feed for the camels, and water to
wash his feet and the feet of the men who
were with him. 33*Food* was set before him to
eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have
told about my errand."

And he said, "Speak on."

34So he said, "I *am* Abraham's servant.
35The LORD has blessed my master greatly,
and he has become great; and He has given
him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male
and female servants, and camels and don-
keys. 36And Sarah my master's wife bore a
son to my master when she was old; and
to him he has given all that he has. 37Now
my master made me swear, saying, 'You
shall not take a wife for my son from the
daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land
I dwell; 38but you shall go to my father's
house and to my family, and take a wife for
my son.' 39And I said to my master, 'Perhaps
the woman will not follow me.' 40But he
said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I walk,
will send His angel with you and prosper
your way; and you shall take a wife for my
son from my family and from my father's
house. 41You will be clear from this oath
when you arrive among my family; for if
they will not give *her* to you, then you will
be released from my oath.'

42"And this day I came to the well and
said, 'O LORD God of my master Abraham,
if You will now prosper the way in which I
go, 43behold, I stand by the well of water;
and it shall come to pass that when the
virgin comes out to draw *water,* and I say
to her, "Please give me a little water from
your pitcher to drink," 44and she says to
me, "Drink, and I will draw for your cam-
els also,"—*let* her *be* the woman whom the
LORD has appointed for my master's son.'

45"But before I had finished speaking in
my heart, there was Rebekah, coming out
with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she

went down to the well and drew *water.* And I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' 46And she made haste and let her pitcher down from her *shoulder,* and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels a drink also.' So I drank, and she gave the camels a drink also. 47Then I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter *are* you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the nose ring on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. 48And I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son. 49Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."

50Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. 51Here *is* Rebekah before you; take *her* and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the LORD has spoken."

52And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he worshiped the LORD, *bowing himself* to the earth. 53Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave *them* to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.

54And he and the men who *were* with him ate and drank and stayed all night. Then they arose in the morning, and he said, "Send me away to my master."

55But her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman stay with us *a few* days, at least ten; after that she may go."

> ***Genesis 24:57***
> Asking Rebekah's opinion about the marriage plans was an unusual courtesy. In Old Testament times, marriages were generally arranged by young people's families. Very few women (and few men, for that matter) were allowed to give their opinion, let alone make their own choice.

56And he said to them, "Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master."

57So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally." 58Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?"

And she said, "I will go."

59So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. 60And they blessed Rebekah and said to her:

"Our sister, *may* you *become*
The mother of thousands of ten thousands;
And may your descendants possess
The gates of those who hate them."

61Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed.

62Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South. 63And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels *were* coming. 64Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; 65for she had said to the servant, "Who *is* this man walking in the field to meet us?"

The servant said, "It *is* my master." So she took a veil and covered herself.

66And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's *death.*

ABRAHAM AND KETURAH

25 Abraham again took a wife, and her name *was* Keturah. 2And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. 3Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. 4And the sons of Midian *were* Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these *were* the children of Keturah.

5And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. 6But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had;

and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.

ABRAHAM'S DEATH AND BURIAL

7This *is* the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. 8Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full *of years,* and was gathered to his people. 9And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, 10the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife. 11And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi.

THE FAMILIES OF ISHMAEL AND ISAAC

12Now this *is* the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham. 13And these *were* the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 14Mishma, Dumah, Massa, 15Hadar,[a] Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 16These *were* the sons of Ishmael and these *were* their names, by their towns and their settlements, twelve princes according to their nations. 17These *were* the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. 18(They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which *is* east of Egypt as you go toward Assyria.) He died in the presence of all his brethren.

19This *is* the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac. 20Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. 21Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she *was* barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If *all is* well, why *am I like* this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

23And the LORD said to her:

"Two nations *are* in your womb,
Two peoples shall be separated from your body;
One people shall be stronger than the other,
And the older shall serve the younger."

24So when her days were fulfilled *for her* to give birth, indeed *there were* twins in her womb. 25And the first came out red. *He was* like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.[a] 26Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob.[a] Isaac *was* sixty years old when she bore them.

Genesis 25:23

Ancient customs and laws required that the oldest son have the first claim to property and the leadership role in the family. A younger son ruling over his older brother was a totally foreign concept.

27So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. 28And Isaac loved Esau because he ate *of his* game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

ESAU SELLS HIS BIRTHRIGHT

29Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he *was* weary. 30And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red *stew,* for I *am* weary." Therefore his name was called Edom.[a]

31But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day."

32And Esau said, "Look, I *am* about to die; so what *is* this birthright to me?"

33Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day."

So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised *his* birthright.

25:15 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Hadad.*
25:25 [a]Literally *Hairy* **25:26** [a]Literally *Supplanter* **25:30** [a]Literally *Red*

ISAAC AND ABIMELECH

26 There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar.

2Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. 3Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. 4And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

6So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. 7And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She *is* my sister"; for he was afraid to say, "*She is* my wife," *because he thought,* "lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she *is* beautiful to behold." 8Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. 9Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Quite obviously she *is* your wife; so how could you say, 'She *is* my sister'?"

Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.'"

10And Abimelech said, "What *is* this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us." 11So Abimelech charged all *his* people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

12Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. 13The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; 14for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him. 15Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. 16And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

17Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. 18And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them.

Genesis 26:17–20

Wells were a big deal in this area during biblical times. They were dug in solid limestone, using primitive tools. The job was time-consuming and backbreaking. With water in short supply in that region, it's no wonder that the diggers were eager to protect their well.

19Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. 20But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water *is* ours." So he called the name of the well Esek,[a] because they quarreled with him. 21Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that *one* also. So he called its name Sitnah.[a] 22And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth,[a] because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

23Then he went up from there to Beersheba. 24And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I *am* the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I *am* with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake." 25So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

26Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol the commander of his army. 27And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?"

26:20 [a]Literally *Quarrel* **26:21** [a]Literally *Enmity* **26:22** [a]Literally *Spaciousness*

28But they said, "We have certainly seen
that the LORD is with you. So we said, 'Let
there now be an oath between us, between
you and us; and let us make a covenant
with you, 29that you will do us no harm,
since we have not touched you, and since
we have done nothing to you but good and
have sent you away in peace. You *are* now
the blessed of the LORD.'"

30So he made them a feast, and they ate
and drank. 31Then they arose early in the
morning and swore an oath with one an-
other; and Isaac sent them away, and they
departed from him in peace.

32It came to pass the same day that
Isaac's servants came and told him about
the well which they had dug, and said to
him, "We have found water." 33So he called
it Shebah.[a] Therefore the name of the city *is*
Beersheba[b] to this day.

34When Esau was forty years old, he
took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri
the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of
Elon the Hittite. 35And they were a grief of
mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

ISAAC BLESSES JACOB

27 Now it came to pass, when
Isaac was old and his eyes were
so dim that he could not see,
that he called Esau his older son and said
to him, "My son."

And he answered him, "Here I am."

Genesis 27:4

Blessings were taken very seriously in Old Testament times. To bless someone was to request God's favor and goodness. What's more, the act of blessing someone somehow carried with it a powerful force toward making the blessing a reality. Once a blessing was spoken, it couldn't be taken back or changed.

2Then he said, "Behold now, I am old.
I do not know the day of my death. 3Now
therefore, please take your weapons, your
quiver and your bow, and go out to the field
and hunt game for me. 4And make me sa-
vory food, such as I love, and bring *it* to me
that I may eat, that my soul may bless you
before I die."

5Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac
spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to
the field to hunt game and to bring *it.* 6So
Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying,
"Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau
your brother, saying, 7'Bring me game and
make savory food for me, that I may eat it
and bless you in the presence of the LORD
before my death.' 8Now therefore, my son,
obey my voice according to what I com-
mand you. 9Go now to the flock and bring
me from there two choice kids of the goats,
and I will make savory food from them for
your father, such as he loves. 10Then you
shall take *it* to your father, that he may
eat *it,* and that he may bless you before his
death."

11And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother,
"Look, Esau my brother *is* a hairy man, and
I *am* a smooth-*skinned* man. 12Perhaps my
father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a
deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse
on myself and not a blessing."

13But his mother said to him, "*Let* your
curse *be* on me, my son; only obey my
voice, and go, get *them* for me." 14And he
went and got *them* and brought *them* to
his mother, and his mother made savory
food, such as his father loved. 15Then
Rebekah took the choice clothes of her
elder son Esau, which *were* with her in
the house, and put them on Jacob her
younger son. 16And she put the skins of
the kids of the goats on his hands and
on the smooth part of his neck. 17Then
she gave the savory food and the bread,
which she had prepared, into the hand of
her son Jacob.

18So he went to his father and said, "My
father."

And he said, "Here I am. Who *are* you,
my son?"

19Jacob said to his father, "I *am* Esau
your firstborn; I have done just as you told
me; please arise, sit and eat of my game,
that your soul may bless me."

20But Isaac said to his son, "How *is it* that
you have found *it* so quickly, my son?"

And he said, "Because the LORD your
God brought *it* to me."

21Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near,
that I may feel you, my son, whether you
are really my son Esau or not." 22So Jacob

26:33 [a]Literally *Oath* or *Seven* [b]Literally *Well of the Oath* or *Well of the Seven*

went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau." 23And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.

24Then he said, "*Are* you really my son Esau?"

He said, "I *am.*"

25He said, "Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought *it* near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. 26Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." 27And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said:

"Surely, the smell of my son
Is like the smell of a field
Which the LORD has blessed.
28Therefore may God give you
Of the dew of heaven,
Of the fatness of the earth,
And plenty of grain and wine.
29Let peoples serve you,
And nations bow down to you.
Be master over your brethren,
And let your mother's sons bow down to you.
Cursed *be* everyone who curses you,
And blessed *be* those who bless you!"

ESAU'S LOST HOPE

30Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me."

32And his father Isaac said to him, "Who *are* you?"

So he said, "I *am* your son, your firstborn, Esau."

33Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where *is* the one who hunted game and brought *it* to me? I ate all *of it* before you came, and I have blessed him—*and* indeed he shall be blessed."

34When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me—me also, O my father!"

35But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing."

36And *Esau* said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"

37Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?"

38And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

39Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

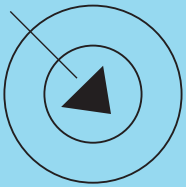
"Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth,
And of the dew of heaven from above.
40By your sword you shall live,
And you shall serve your brother;
And it shall come to pass, when you become restless,
That you shall break his yoke from your neck."

JACOB ESCAPES FROM ESAU

41So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob."

42And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you *by intending* to kill you. 43Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran. 44And stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turns away, 45until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"

46And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of



PROMISE

God promises to keep His promises.

"I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you" (Gen. 28:13–15).

Jacob got off to a bad start in his spiritual life. First, he talked his older brother, Esau, out of the inheritance he was supposed to get as the firstborn. Later, he tricked his father, Isaac, into thinking he was Esau so he could get the special blessing Isaac wanted to give Esau.

It didn't look like Jacob had much of a chance to do anything great for God. In fact, we might think his belief in God was kind of flimsy. But God had chosen Jacob. In spite of the sneaky things he'd done, the Lord appeared to Jacob in a dream and said, "I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you" (Gen. 28:15).

There may be times when God's promises seem really out there—way beyond the realm of possibility—especially when you know you haven't kept up your end of the deal. Even when your faith is a lot stronger than Jacob's was, there may be days when you want to say, "No way. God isn't going to do *that*—not for me." Don't give in. Instead, listen with all your heart, with every ounce of your faith to hear God say, "I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

SEE FOR YOURSELF// 2 Samuel 23:5; 1 Kings 8:56; 2 Kings 20:9

Heth, like these *who are* the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

28 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. 2Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

3"May God Almighty bless you,
And make you fruitful and multiply you,
That you may be an assembly of peoples;
4And give you the blessing of Abraham,
To you and your descendants with you,
That you may inherit the land
In which you are a stranger,
Which God gave to Abraham."

5So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

ESAU MARRIES MAHALATH

6Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, *and that* as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," 7and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram. 8Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. 9So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

JACOB'S VOW AT BETHEL

10Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. 11So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at

his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. 12Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder *was* set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

13And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. 14Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. 15Behold, I *am* with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

16Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know *it*." 17And he was afraid and said, "How awesome *is* this place! This *is* none other than the house of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven!"

18Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. 19And he called the name of that place Bethel;[a] but the name of that city had been Luz previously. 20Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. 22And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

JACOB MEETS RACHEL

29 So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. 2And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there *were* three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone *was* on the well's mouth. 3Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.

4And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where *are* you from?"

And they said, "We *are* from Haran."

5Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?"

And they said, "We know him."

6So he said to them, "Is he well?"

And they said, "*He is* well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep."

7Then he said, "Look, *it is* still high day; *it is* not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed *them*."

8But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep."

9Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. 11Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. 12And Jacob told Rachel that he *was* her father's relative and that he *was* Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her father.

13Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things. 14And Laban said to him, "Surely you *are* my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

JACOB MARRIES LEAH AND RACHEL

15Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you *are* my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what *should* your wages *be?*" 16Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder *was* Leah, and the name of the younger *was* Rachel. 17Leah's eyes *were* delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.

18Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."

19And Laban said, "*It is* better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me." 20So Jacob served

28:19 [a]Literally *House of God*

seven years for Rachel, and they seemed *only* a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

Genesis 29:18

Jacob gave years of his life to Rachel's father. But he wasn't trying to buy Rachel. He worked seven years for Laban to make up for the help that would be lost to Laban's family when Rachel left.

21Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give *me* my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her." 22And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. 23Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. 24And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah *as* a maid. 25So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it *was* Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?"

26And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. 27Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years."

28Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. 29And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. 30Then *Jacob* also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.

THE CHILDREN OF JACOB

31When the LORD saw that Leah *was* unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel *was* barren. 32So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben;[a] for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me." 33Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I *am* unloved, He has therefore given me this *son* also." And she called his name Simeon.[a] 34She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi.[a] 35And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah.[a] Then she stopped bearing.

30 Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!"

2And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "*Am* I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

3So she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear *a child* on my knees, that I also may have children by her." 4Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. 5And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. 6Then Rachel said, "God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan.[a] 7And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8Then Rachel said, "With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, *and* indeed I have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali.[a]

9When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife. 10And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11Then Leah said, "A troop comes!"[a] So she called his name Gad.[b] 12And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 13Then Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." So she called his name Asher.[a]

14Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me *some* of your son's mandrakes."

15But she said to her, "*Is it* a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?"

29:32 [a]Literally *See, a Son* **29:33** [a]Literally *Heard* **29:34** [a]Literally *Attached* **29:35** [a]Literally *Praise* **30:6** [a]Literally *Judge* **30:8** [a]Literally *My Wrestling* **30:11** [a]Following Qere, Syriac, and Targum; Kethib, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *in fortune*. [b]Literally *Troop* or *Fortune* **30:13** [a]Literally *Happy*

And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes."

16When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night.

Genesis 30:14–16

In Old Testament times, mandrakes, also known as "love flowers," were prescribed to increase fertility. A mandrake is a fruit-producing plant with dark green leaves and small blue flowers. The yellow fruit of this plant is small, sweet, and fragrant.

17And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar.[a] 19Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. 20And Leah said, "God has endowed me *with* a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun.[a] 21Afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

22Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. 23And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach." 24So she called his name Joseph,[a] and said, "The LORD shall add to me another son."

JACOB'S AGREEMENT WITH LABAN

25And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. 26Give *me* my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you."

27And Laban said to him, "Please *stay,* if I have found favor in your eyes, *for* I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake." 28Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give *it.*"

29So *Jacob* said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me. 30For what you had before I *came was* little, and it has increased to a great amount; the LORD has blessed you since my coming. And now, when shall I also provide for my own house?"

31So he said, "What shall I give you?"

And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks: 32Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and *these* shall be my wages. 33So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that *is* not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if *it is* with me."

34And Laban said, "Oh, that it were according to your word!" 35So he removed that day the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had *some* white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave *them* into the hand of his sons. 36Then he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

37Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which *was* in the rods. 38And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink. 39So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted. 40Then Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the brown in the flock of Laban; but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock.

41And it came to pass, whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. 42But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put *them* in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stron-

30:18 [a]Literally *Wages* **30:20** [a]Literally *Dwelling* **30:24** [a]Literally *He Will Add*

ger Jacob's. 43Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

JACOB FLEES FROM LABAN

31 Now *Jacob* heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth." 2And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it *was* not *favorable* toward him as before. 3Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you."

4So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock, 5and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it *is* not *favorable* toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me. 6And you know that with all my might I have served your father. 7Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me. 8If he said thus: 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: 'The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked. 9So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given *them* to me.

10"And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks *were* streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted. 11Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' 12And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks *are* streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. 13I *am* the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar *and* where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.' "

14Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? 15Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. 16For all these riches which God has taken from our father are *really* ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it."

17Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. 18And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained, his acquired livestock which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. 19Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's. 20And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. 21So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gilead.

LABAN PURSUES JACOB

22And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. 23Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. 24But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad."

25So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead.

26And Laban said to Jacob: "What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and carried away my daughters like captives *taken* with the sword? 27Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp? 28And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in *so* doing. 29It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' 30And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, *but* why did you steal my gods?"

31Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.' 32With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take *it* with you." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

33And Laban went into Jacob's tent, into Leah's tent, and into the two maids' tents,

but he did not find *them.* Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. 34Now Rachel had taken the household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all about the tent but did not find *them.* 35And she said to her father, "Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women *is* with me." And he searched but did not find the household idols.

36Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: "What *is* my trespass? What *is* my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? 37Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? Set *it* here before my brethren and your brethren, that they may judge between us both! 38These twenty years I *have been* with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. 39That which was torn *by beasts* I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, *whether* stolen by day or stolen by night. 40*There* I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. 41Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. 42Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked *you* last night."

LABAN'S COVENANT WITH JACOB

43And Laban answered and said to Jacob, "*These* daughters *are* my daughters, and *these* children *are* my children, and *this* flock *is* my flock; all that you see *is* mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne? 44Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me."

45So Jacob took a stone and set it up *as* a pillar. 46Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. 47Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha,[a] but Jacob called it Galeed.[b] 48And Laban said, "This heap *is* a witness between you and me this day." Therefore its name was called Galeed, 49also Mizpah,[a] because he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. 50If you afflict my daughters, or if you take *other* wives besides my daughters, *although* no man *is* with us—see, God *is* witness between you and me!"

51Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is *this* pillar, which I have placed between you and me. 52This heap *is* a witness, and *this* pillar *is* a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. 53The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. 54Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain. 55And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.

ESAU COMES TO MEET JACOB

32 So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. 2When Jacob saw them, he said, "This *is* God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.[a]

ANGELS
Do angels work among people?
Genesis 32:1

3Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. 4And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. 5I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have

31:47 [a]Literally, in Aramaic, *Heap of Witness*
[b]Literally, in Hebrew, *Heap of Witness*
31:49 [a]Literally *Watch* **32:2** [a]Literally *Double Camp*

sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.'"

6Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men *are* with him." 7So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that *were* with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. 8And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape."

9Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you': 10I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. 11Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me *and* the mother with the children. 12For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'"

13So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: 14two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. 16Then he delivered *them* to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves." 17And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose *are* these in front of you?' 18then you shall say, 'They *are* your servant Jacob's. It *is* a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also *is* behind us.'" 19So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; 20and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob *is* behind us.'" For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." 21So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.

WRESTLING WITH GOD

22And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. 23He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. 24Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. 25Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. 26And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks."

But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

27So He said to him, "What *is* your name?"

He said, "Jacob."

28And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel;[a] for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

29Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell *me* Your name, I pray."

And He said, "Why *is* it *that* you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.

30So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel:[a] "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." 31Just as he crossed over Penuel[a] the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. 32Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which *is* on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.

JACOB AND ESAU MEET

33 Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. 2And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed

32:28 [a]Literally *Prince with God* **32:30** [a]Literally *Face of God* **32:31** [a]Same as *Peniel,* verse 30

him, and they wept. 5And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who *are* these with you?"

So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." 6Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. 7And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down.

8Then Esau said, "What *do* you *mean by* all this company which I met?"

And he said, "*These are* to find favor in the sight of my lord."

9But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."

10And Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. 11Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." So he urged him, and he took *it.*

12Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you."

13But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children *are* weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing *are* with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. 14Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir."

15And Esau said, "Now let me leave with you *some* of the people who *are* with me."

But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." 16So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. 17And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.[a]

JACOB COMES TO CANAAN

18Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. 19And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. 20Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.[a]

THE DINAH INCIDENT

34 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. 2And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. 3His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. 4So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young woman as a wife."

Genesis 34:2–7

In Old Testament times, should a girl lose her virginity outside marriage, she faced a possible death penalty. This punishment did not apply to women who had been raped. In the case of sexual assault, the rapist was required to pay the woman's father as though he were going to marry the woman. The father could accept the rapist as a son-in-law or refuse to allow them to marry.

5And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so Jacob held his peace until they came. 6Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. 7And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard *it;* and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing which ought not to be done. 8But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. 9And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves. 10So you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it."

11Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me find favor in your

33:17 [a]Literally *Booths* **33:20** [a]Literally *God, the God of Israel*

eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. 12Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife."

13But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. 14And they said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that *would be* a reproach to us. 15But on this *condition* we will consent to you: If you will become as we *are,* if every male of you is circumcised, 16then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone."

18And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. 19So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. He *was* more honorable than all the household of his father.

20And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying: 21"These men *are* at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land *is* large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22Only on this *condition* will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they *are* circumcised. 23*Will* not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs *be* ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us." 24And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

25Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. 26And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out. 27The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled. 28They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what *was* in the city and what *was* in the field, 29and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that *was* in the houses.

30Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I *am* few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I."

31But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?"

JACOB'S RETURN TO BETHEL

35 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother."

2And Jacob said to his household and to all who *were* with him, "Put away the foreign gods that *are* among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. 3Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone." 4So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which *were* in their hands, and the earrings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which *was* by Shechem.

Genesis 35:2

The foreign gods Jacob referred to were small idols made from wood, metal, silver, or gold. People actually worshiped the imaginary being the idol represented. An idol can be anything that stands in the way of a personal relationship with the one true God.

5And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. 6So Jacob came to Luz (that *is,* Bethel), which *is* in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who *were* with him.

7And he built an altar there and called the
place El Bethel,[a] because there God ap-
peared to him when he fled from the face
of his brother.

8Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died,
and she was buried below Bethel under the
terebinth tree. So the name of it was called
Allon Bachuth.[a]

9Then God appeared to Jacob again,
when he came from Padan Aram, and
blessed him. 10And God said to him, "Your
name *is* Jacob; your name shall not be
called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be
your name." So He called his name Israel.
11Also God said to him: "I *am* God Almighty.
Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a
company of nations shall proceed from
you, and kings shall come from your body.
12The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac
I give to you; and to your descendants after
you I give this land." 13Then God went up
from him in the place where He talked with
him. 14So Jacob set up a pillar in the place
where He talked with him, a pillar of stone;
and he poured a drink offering on it, and
he poured oil on it. 15And Jacob called the
name of the place where God spoke with
him, Bethel.

DEATH OF RACHEL

16Then they journeyed from Bethel. And
when there was but a little distance to go
to Ephrath, Rachel labored *in childbirth,*
and she had hard labor. 17Now it came to
pass, when she was in hard labor, that the
midwife said to her, "Do not fear; you will
have this son also." 18And so it was, as her
soul was departing (for she died), that she
called his name Ben-Oni;[a] but his father
called him Benjamin.[b] 19So Rachel died and
was buried on the way to Ephrath (that *is,*
Bethlehem). 20And Jacob set a pillar on her
grave, which *is* the pillar of Rachel's grave
to this day.

21Then Israel journeyed and pitched his
tent beyond the tower of Eder. 22And it hap-
pened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that
Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his fa-
ther's concubine; and Israel heard *about it.*

JACOB'S TWELVE SONS

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: 23the
sons of Leah *were* Reuben, Jacob's first-
born, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar,
and Zebulun; 24the sons of Rachel *were*
Joseph and Benjamin; 25the sons of Bil-
hah, Rachel's maidservant, *were* Dan and
Naphtali; 26and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's
maidservant, *were* Gad and Asher. These
were the sons of Jacob who were born to
him in Padan Aram.

DEATH OF ISAAC

27Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at
Mamre, or Kirjath Arba[a] (that *is,* Hebron),
where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt.
28Now the days of Isaac were one hundred
and eighty years. 29So Isaac breathed his
last and died, and was gathered to his peo-
ple, *being* old and full of days. And his sons
Esau and Jacob buried him.

THE FAMILY OF ESAU

36 Now this *is* the genealogy of
Esau, who is Edom. 2Esau took
his wives from the daughters of
Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hit-
tite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the
daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; 3and Base-
math, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Neba-
joth. 4Now Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and
Basemath bore Reuel. 5And Aholibamah
bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These *were*
the sons of Esau who were born to him in
the land of Canaan.

6Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his
daughters, and all the persons of his house-
hold, his cattle and all his animals, and all
his goods which he had gained in the land
of Canaan, and went to a country away
from the presence of his brother Jacob. 7For
their possessions were too great for them
to dwell together, and the land where they
were strangers could not support them be-
cause of their livestock. 8So Esau dwelt in
Mount Seir. Esau *is* Edom.

9And this *is* the genealogy of Esau the fa-
ther of the Edomites in Mount Seir. 10These
were the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the
son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the
son of Basemath the wife of Esau. 11And
the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar,
Zepho,[a] Gatam, and Kenaz.

35:7 [a]Literally *God of the House of God*
35:8 [a]Literally *Terebinth of Weeping*
35:18 [a]Literally *Son of My Sorrow* [b]Literally *Son of the Right Hand* **35:27** [a]Literally *Town of Arba* **36:11** [a]Spelled *Zephi* in 1 Chronicles 1:36

12Now Timna was the concubine of
Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore Amalek
to Eliphaz. These *were* the sons of Adah,
Esau's wife.
13These *were* the sons of Reuel: Nahath,
Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were
the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.
14These were the sons of Aholibamah,
Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah, the
daughter of Zibeon. And she bore to Esau:
Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah.

THE CHIEFS OF EDOM

15These *were* the chiefs of the sons of Esau.
The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn *son* of
Esau, were Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief
Zepho, Chief Kenaz, 16Chief Korah,[a] Chief
Gatam, *and* Chief Amalek. These *were* the
chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They
were the sons of Adah.
17These *were* the sons of Reuel, Esau's son:
Chief Nahath, Chief Zerah, Chief Shammah,
and Chief Mizzah. These *were* the chiefs of
Reuel in the land of Edom. These *were* the
sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.
18And these *were* the sons of Aholiba-
mah, Esau's wife: Chief Jeush, Chief Jaalam,
and Chief Korah. These *were* the chiefs *who*
descended from Aholibamah, Esau's wife,
the daughter of Anah. 19These *were* the
sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these *were*
their chiefs.

THE SONS OF SEIR

20These *were* the sons of Seir the Horite
who inhabited the land: Lotan, Shobal,
Zibeon, Anah, 21Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.
These *were* the chiefs of the Horites, the
sons of Seir, in the land of Edom.
22And the sons of Lotan were Hori and
Hemam.[a] Lotan's sister *was* Timna.
23These *were* the sons of Shobal: Alvan,[a]
Manahath, Ebal, Shepho,[b] and Onam.
24These *were* the sons of Zibeon: both
Ajah and Anah. This *was the* Anah who
found the water[a] in the wilderness as he
pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon.
25These *were* the children of Anah: Dishon
and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.
26These *were* the sons of Dishon:[a]
Hemdan,[b] Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran.
27These *were* the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaa-
van, and Akan.[a] 28These *were* the sons of
Dishan: Uz and Aran.
29These *were* the chiefs of the Horites:
Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon,
Chief Anah, 30Chief Dishon, Chief Ezer,
and Chief Dishan. These *were* the chiefs of
the Horites, according to their chiefs in the
land of Seir.

THE KINGS OF EDOM

31Now these *were* the kings who reigned
in the land of Edom before any king
reigned over the children of Israel: 32Bela
the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the
name of his city *was* Dinhabah. 33And
when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah
of Bozrah reigned in his place. 34When
Jobab died, Husham of the land of the
Temanites reigned in his place. 35And
when Husham died, Hadad the son of
Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field
of Moab, reigned in his place. And the
name of his city *was* Avith. 36When Ha-
dad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in
his place. 37And when Samlah died, Saul
of Rehoboth-*by*-the-River reigned in his
place. 38When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the
son of Achbor reigned in his place. 39And
when Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor died,
Hadar[a] reigned in his place; and the name
of his city *was* Pau.[b] His wife's name *was*
Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the
daughter of Mezahab.

THE CHIEFS OF ESAU

40And these *were* the names of the chiefs of
Esau, according to their families and their
places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief
Alvah,[a] Chief Jetheth, 41Chief Aholibamah,
Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, 42Chief Kenaz,
Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, 43Chief Mag-
diel, and Chief Iram. These *were* the chiefs
of Edom, according to their dwelling places

36:16 [a]Samaritan Pentateuch omits *Chief Korah.* **36:22** [a]Spelled *Homam* in 1 Chronicles 1:39 **36:23** [a]Spelled *Alian* in 1 Chronicles 1:40 [b]Spelled *Shephi* in 1 Chronicles 1:40 **36:24** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate (*hot springs*); Septuagint reads *Jamin;* Targum reads *mighty men;* Talmud interprets as *mules.* **36:26** [a]Hebrew *Dishan* [b]Spelled *Hamran* in 1 Chronicles 1:41 **36:27** [a]Spelled *Jaakan* in 1 Chronicles 1:42 **36:39** [a]Spelled *Hadad* in Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, and 1 Chronicles 1:50 [b]Spelled *Pai* in 1 Chronicles 1:50 **36:40** [a]Spelled *Aliah* in 1 Chronicles 1:51



PROFILE
JOSEPH

Some young people seem to know exactly where they are headed in life and exactly what they want to accomplish. Joseph was one of those people who had his future figured out—but God was the one who set his course.

God gave Joseph a vivid set of dreams that cast him in the role of ruler over his father and eleven brothers. When he told them about his dream, Joseph's older brothers, of course, thought he was being arrogant, rude, and silly. They were already upset by the fact that their father treated Joseph with special attention. Their jealousy and anger escalated to the point where they considered killing him, but they decided to sell him into slavery instead. Little did the brothers know that they were working out God's plan.

Still a teenager, Joseph found himself a slave in Egypt. His integrity, work ethic, and abilities earned him the trust and respect of others. No matter where life landed him, Joseph immediately looked for and found a place to make a real difference. He made a difference as a slave in his master's home. Unfairly imprisoned, he made a difference in prison. And be being faithful and honorable in all he did, Joseph became a ruler in Egypt, over the very people who had enslaved and imprisoned him. With God's help, he set up a massive food storage program that saved Egypt and her neighbors during years of severe famine.

Later, his youthful dream came true when his entire family, in need of food because of the famine, bowed before him. They didn't recognize him at first, but appreciated his generosity as the governor of Egypt.

Joseph knew God's hand was on his life. He apparently never wavered in his confidence of that fact. He never let the immediate circumstances determine his view of God's power and ability to make a real difference through his life.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Your vision of your future may not be as clear as Joseph's. Most of us can't be sure what our tomorrows hold, and very few of us receive vivid dreams from God to tell us what's ahead. But that doesn't mean your confidence in God has to be less than Joseph's. The key is to remember that faith doesn't rest on knowing the future but on trust in God. You must realize that God is big enough to work out His plans in your life, no matter what the obstacles. Trust in such a God, follow as He leads you down the paths He has planned for you.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Joseph's amazing riches to rags to riches life in Genesis 37—50; he is also mentioned in Hebrews 11:21–22.

Joseph faced challenge after challenge throughout his life. But his faith in God remained strong. Joseph not only made a real difference by saving his family (and Egypt) from famine, but he also made a real difference by leaving his example of faithfulness for us to follow. Joseph's faith changed his world. Yours can, too!

in the land of their possession. Esau *was* the father of the Edomites.

JOSEPH DREAMS OF GREATNESS

37 Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. 2This *is* the history of Jacob.

Joseph, *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

3Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of *many* colors. 4But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

5Now Joseph had a dream, and he told *it* to his brothers; and they hated him even more. 6So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: 7There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

8And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

9Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

10So he told *it* to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What *is* this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" 11And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter *in mind.*

JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS

12Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. 13And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding *the flock* in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them."

So he said to him, "Here I am."

14Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

15Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

16So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding *their flocks.*"

17And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

18Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. 19Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! 20Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

21But Reuben heard *it,* and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." 22And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit which *is* in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

23So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph *of* his tunic, the tunic of *many* colors that *was* on him. 24Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit *was* empty; *there was* no water in it.

25And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry *them* down to Egypt. 26So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit *is there* if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh." And his brothers listened. 28Then Midianite traders passed by; so *the brothers* pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

29Then Reuben returned to the pit, and
indeed Joseph *was* not in the pit; and he
tore his clothes. 30And he returned to his
brothers and said, "The lad *is* no *more;* and
I, where shall I go?"
31So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid
of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the
blood. 32Then they sent the tunic of *many*
colors, and they brought *it* to their father
and said, "We have found this. Do you
know whether it *is* your son's tunic or not?"
33And he recognized it and said, "*It is* my
son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him.
Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces."
34Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sack-
cloth on his waist, and mourned for his
son many days. 35And all his sons and all
his daughters arose to comfort him; but he
refused to be comforted, and he said, "For
I shall go down into the grave to my son in
mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

Genesis 37:34

Sackcloth was a coarse material made from camel or goat hair. No one would wear such an uncomfortable cloth under normal conditions. It was reserved for times of personal sorrow. It was an obvious sign of mourning. If you saw someone wearing sackcloth, you knew that a loved one had died or some other awful thing had happened.

36Now the Midianites[a] had sold him in
Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh
and captain of the guard.

JUDAH AND TAMAR

38 It came to pass at that time that
Judah departed from his broth-
ers, and visited a certain Adul-
lamite whose name *was* Hirah. 2And Judah
saw there a daughter of a certain Canaan-
ite whose name *was* Shua, and he married
her and went in to her. 3So she conceived
and bore a son, and he called his name Er.
4She conceived again and bore a son, and
she called his name Onan. 5And she con-
ceived yet again and bore a son, and called
his name Shelah. He was at Chezib when
she bore him.
6Then Judah took a wife for Er his first-
born, and her name *was* Tamar. 7But Er,
Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight
of the LORD, and the LORD killed him.
8And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your
brother's wife and marry her, and raise up
an heir to your brother." 9But Onan knew
that the heir would not be his; and it came
to pass, when he went in to his brother's
wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he
should give an heir to his brother. 10And the
thing which he did displeased the LORD;
therefore He killed him also.

Genesis 38:8

If a man died before having children, it was his brother's personal responsibility to make sure that his widow would have a child. In other words, siblings were required to marry their own sisters-in-law! The good news is that it helped continue the family bloodline. A child born of such a union was counted as a child of the woman and her first husband.

11Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-
in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's
house till my son Shelah is grown." For he
said, "Lest he also die like his brothers." And
Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.
12Now in the process of time the daugh-
ter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah
was comforted, and went up to his sheep-
shearers at Timnah, he and his friend
Hirah the Adullamite. 13And it was told
Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law
is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep."
14So she took off her widow's garments,
covered *herself* with a veil and wrapped
herself, and sat in an open place which
was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that
Shelah was grown, and she was not given
to him as a wife. 15When Judah saw her, he
thought she *was* a harlot, because she had
covered her face. 16Then he turned to her
by the way, and said, "Please let me come
in to you"; for he did not know that she *was*
his daughter-in-law.
So she said, "What will you give me, that
you may come in to me?"
17And he said, "I will send a young goat
from the flock."

37:36 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Medanites.*

So she said, "Will you give *me* a pledge till you send *it?*"

18Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?"

So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that *is* in your hand." Then he gave *them* to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. 19So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

Genesis 38:18

Judah's signet, or ring, had a unique design carved into it. No other ring was quite like it. It was like personalized stationery. If you received a document with Judah's ring design pressed into it, you knew it came from Judah.

20And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her. 21Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who *was* openly by the roadside?"

And they said, "There was no harlot in this *place.*"

22So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this *place.*"

23Then Judah said, "Let her take *them* for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."

24And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she *is* with child by harlotry."

So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

25When she *was* brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I *am* with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these *are*—the signet and cord, and staff."

26So Judah acknowledged *them* and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he never knew her again.

27Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins *were* in her womb. 28And so it was, when she was giving birth, that *the one* put out *his* hand; and the midwife took a scarlet *thread* and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." 29Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? *This* breach *be* upon you!" Therefore his name was called Perez.[a] 30Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.

JOSEPH A SLAVE IN EGYPT

39 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. 2The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. 4So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all *that* he had he put under his authority. 5So it was, from the time *that* he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field. 6Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

7And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

8But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what *is* with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. 9*There is* no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you *are* his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

10So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her *or* to be with her.

11But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work,

38:29 [a]Literally *Breach* or *Breakthrough*

and none of the men of the house *was* inside, 12that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. 13And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, 14that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. 15And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside."

16So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. 17Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; 18so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."

19So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger was aroused. 20Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners *were* confined. And he was there in the prison. 21But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who *were* in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. 23The keeper of the prison did not look into anything *that was* under *Joseph's* authority,[a] because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made *it* prosper.

THE PRISONERS' DREAMS

40 It came to pass after these things *that* the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. 2And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. 3So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph *was* confined. 4And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.

5Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who *were* confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night *and* each man's dream with its *own* interpretation. 6And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they *were* sad. 7So he asked Pharaoh's officers who *were* with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look *so* sad today?"

8And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it."

So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell *them* to me, please."

9Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine *was* before me, 10and in the vine *were* three branches; it *was* as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. 11Then Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

12And Joseph said to him, "This *is* the interpretation of it: The three branches *are* three days. 13Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler. 14But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. 15For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."

16When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also *was* in my dream, and there *were* three white baskets on my head. 17In the uppermost basket *were* all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head."

18So Joseph answered and said, "This *is* the interpretation of it: The three baskets *are* three days. 19Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you."

20Now it came to pass on the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birthday, that he

39:23 [a]Literally *his hand*

made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. [21]Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. [22]But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. [23]Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

PHARAOH'S DREAMS

41 Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. [2]Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. [3]Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the *other* cows on the bank of the river. [4]And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. [5]He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. [6]Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. [7]And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, *it was* a dream. [8]Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but *there was* no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

Genesis 41:8

Ancient kings often used astrologers and magicians as advisors to help them make important decisions. Believe it or not, they even tried to predict the future by "reading" the body parts of the sacrificed animals they used in pagan worship.

[9]Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I remember my faults this day. [10]When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, *both* me and the chief baker, [11]we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his *own* dream. [12]Now there *was* a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his *own* dream. [13]And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him."

[14]Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. [15]And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and *there is* no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you *that* you can understand a dream, to interpret it."

[16]So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "*It is* not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

WISDOM
Where can I find wisdom?
Genesis 41:16

[17]Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. [18]Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. [19]Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. [20]And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. [21]When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they *were* just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. [22]Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. [23]Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, *and* blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. [24]And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told *this* to the magicians, but *there was* no one who could explain *it* to me."

[25]Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh *are* one; God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do: [26]The seven good cows *are* seven years, and the seven good heads *are* seven years; the dreams *are* one. [27]And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them

are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. 28This *is* the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do. 29Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; 30but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. 31So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it *will be* very severe. 32And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

33"Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34Let Pharaoh do *this,* and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth *of the produce* of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. 35And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. 36Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine."

JOSEPH'S RISE TO POWER

37So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. 38And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find *such a one* as this, a man in whom *is* the Spirit of God?"

39Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, *there is* no one as discerning and wise as you. 40You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." 41And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

42Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. 43And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" So he set him over all the land of Egypt. 44Pharaoh also said to Joseph, "I *am* Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." 45And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

46Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. 47Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. 48So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. 49Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for *it was* immeasurable.

50And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. 51Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh:[a] "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." 52And the name of the second he called Ephraim:[a] "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

53Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, 54and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. 55So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do." 56The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses[a] and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. 57So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy *grain,* because the famine was severe in all lands.

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

42 When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at

41:51 [a]Literally *Making Forgetful*
41:52 [a]Literally *Fruitfulness* **41:56** [a]Literally *all that was in them*

one another?" 2And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die."

3So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. 4But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him." 5And the sons of Israel went to buy *grain* among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6Now Joseph *was* governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with *their* faces to the earth. 7Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?"

And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."

8So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. 9Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You *are* spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!"

10And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. 11We *are* all one man's sons; we *are* honest *men;* your servants are not spies."

12But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

13And they said, "Your servants *are* twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest *is* with our father today, and one *is* no more."

14But Joseph said to them, "It *is* as I spoke to you, saying, 'You *are* spies!' 15In this *manner* you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. 16Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether *there is* any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you *are* spies!" 17So he put them all together in prison three days.

18Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, *for* I fear God: 19If you *are* honest *men,* let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. 20And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die."

And they did so. 21Then they said to one another, "We *are* truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us."

22And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us." 23But they did not know that Joseph understood *them,* for he spoke to them through an interpreter. 24And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

THE BROTHERS RETURN TO CANAAN

25Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them. 26So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. 27But as one *of them* opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. 28So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!" Then their hearts failed *them* and they were afraid, saying to one another, "What *is* this *that* God has done to us?"

29Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: 30"The man *who is* lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. 31But we said to him, 'We *are* honest *men;* we are not spies. 32We *are* twelve brothers, sons of our father; one *is* no *more,* and the youngest *is* with our father this day in the land of Canaan.' 33Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, 'By this I will know that you *are* honest *men:* Leave one of your brothers *here* with me, take *food for* the famine of your households, and be gone. 34And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you *are* not spies, but *that* you *are* honest *men.* I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.'"

35Then it happened as they emptied their

sacks, that surprisingly each man's bundle of money *was* in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. 36And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no *more*, Simeon is no *more*, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me."

37Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him *back* to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you."

38But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS RETURN WITH BENJAMIN

43 Now the famine *was* severe in the land. 2And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food."

3But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.' 4If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. 5But if you will not send *him*, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.'"

6And Israel said, "Why did you deal *so* wrongfully with me *as* to tell the man whether you had still *another* brother?"

7But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, '*Is* your father still alive? Have you *another* brother?' And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

8Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you *and* also our little ones. 9I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him *back* to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. 10For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time."

11And their father Israel said to them, "If *it must be* so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. 12Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. 13Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. 14And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!"

15So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph. 16When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take *these* men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for *these* men will dine with me at noon." 17Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

18Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "*It is* because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys."

19When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, 20and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; 21but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, *each* man's money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. 22And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."

23But he said, "Peace *be* with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

24So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. 25Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

26And when Joseph came home, they
brought him the present which *was* in their
hand into the house, and bowed down
before him to the earth. 27Then he asked
them about *their* well-being, and said, "*Is*
your father well, the old man of whom you
spoke? *Is* he still alive?"
28And they answered, "Your servant our
father *is* in good health; he *is* still alive." And
they bowed their heads down and pros-
trated themselves.
29Then he lifted his eyes and saw his
brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and
said, "*Is* this your younger brother of whom
you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be
gracious to you, my son." 30Now his heart
yearned for his brother; so Joseph made
haste and sought *somewhere* to weep. And
he went into *his* chamber and wept there.
31Then he washed his face and came out;
and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve
the bread."

Genesis 43:32

In biblical times, eating with another person was considered to be one of the highest forms of hospitality. The Egyptians, however, refused to eat at the same table as the Israelites because they saw the Israelites as a lower class of people.

32So they set him a place by himself, and
them by themselves, and the Egyptians
who ate with him by themselves; because
the Egyptians could not eat food with the
Hebrews, for that *is* an abomination to
the Egyptians. 33And they sat before him,
the firstborn according to his birthright
and the youngest according to his youth;
and the men looked in astonishment at
one another. 34Then he took servings to
them from before him, but Benjamin's serv-
ing was five times as much as any of theirs.
So they drank and were merry with him.

JOSEPH'S CUP

44 And he commanded the stew-
ard of his house, saying, "Fill
the men's sacks with food, as
much as they can carry, and put each man's
money in the mouth of his sack. 2Also put
my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the
sack of the youngest, and his grain money."
So he did according to the word that Jo-
seph had spoken. 3As soon as the morning
dawned, the men were sent away, they and
their donkeys. 4When they had gone out of
the city, *and* were not *yet* far off, Joseph said
to his steward, "Get up, follow the men;
and when you overtake them, say to them,
'Why have you repaid evil for good? 5*Is* not
this *the one* from which my lord drinks, and
with which he indeed practices divination?
You have done evil in so doing.'"
6So he overtook them, and he spoke to
them these same words. 7And they said to
him, "Why does my lord say these words?
Far be it from us that your servants should
do such a thing. 8Look, we brought back to
you from the land of Canaan the money
which we found in the mouth of our sacks.
How then could we steal silver or gold from
your lord's house? 9With whomever of your
servants it is found, let him die, and we also
will be my lord's slaves."
10And he said, "Now also *let* it *be* accord-
ing to your words; he with whom it is found
shall be my slave, and you shall be blame-
less." 11Then each man speedily let down
his sack to the ground, and each opened
his sack. 12So he searched. He began with
the oldest and left off with the youngest;
and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.
13Then they tore their clothes, and each
man loaded his donkey and returned to
the city.
14So Judah and his brothers came to
Joseph's house, and he *was* still there; and
they fell before him on the ground. 15And
Joseph said to them, "What deed *is* this you
have done? Did you not know that such a
man as I can certainly practice divination?"
16Then Judah said, "What shall we say
to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how
shall we clear ourselves? God has found
out the iniquity of your servants; here we
are, my lord's slaves, both we and *he* also
with whom the cup was found."
17But he said, "Far be it from me that I
should do so; the man in whose hand the
cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as
for you, go up in peace to your father."

JUDAH INTERCEDES FOR BENJAMIN

18Then Judah came near to him and said:
"O my lord, please let your servant speak

a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you *are* even like Pharaoh. 19My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' 20And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of *his* old age, *who is* young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' 21Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' 22And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.' 23But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.'

24"So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. 25And our father said, 'Go back *and* buy us a little food.' 26But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother *is* with us.' 27Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; 28and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. 29But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.'

30"Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, 31it will happen, when he sees that the lad *is* not *with us,* that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. 32For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' 33Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. 34For how shall I go up to my father if the lad *is* not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

JOSEPH REVEALED TO HIS BROTHERS

45 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard *it.*

3Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I *am* Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. 4And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I *am* Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6For these two years the famine *has been* in the land, and *there are* still five years in which *there will be* neither plowing nor harvesting. 7And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8So now *it was* not you *who* sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9"Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. 10You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. 11There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for *there are* still five years of famine." '

12"And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that *it is* my mouth that speaks to you. 13So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here."

14Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

16Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. 17And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. 18Bring your father and

your households and come to me; I will
give you the best of the land of Egypt, and
you will eat the fat of the land. 19Now you
are commanded—do this: Take carts out
of the land of Egypt for your little ones and
your wives; bring your father and come.
20Also do not be concerned about your
goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt
is yours.'"

21Then the sons of Israel did so; and
Joseph gave them carts, according to the
command of Pharaoh, and he gave them
provisions for the journey. 22He gave to
all of them, to each man, changes of gar-
ments; but to Benjamin he gave three
hundred *pieces* of silver and five changes
of garments. 23And he sent to his father
these *things:* ten donkeys loaded with the
good things of Egypt, and ten female don-
keys loaded with grain, bread, and food for
his father for the journey. 24So he sent his
brothers away, and they departed; and he
said to them, "See that you do not become
troubled along the way."

25Then they went up out of Egypt, and
came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their
father. 26And they told him, saying, "Joseph
is still alive, and he *is* governor over all the
land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still,
because he did not believe them. 27But
when they told him all the words which
Joseph had said to them, and when he saw
the carts which Joseph had sent to carry
him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.
28Then Israel said, "*It is* enough. Joseph my
son *is* still alive. I will go and see him before
I die."

JACOB'S JOURNEY TO EGYPT

46 So Israel took his journey with
all that he had, and came to
Beersheba, and offered sacri-
fices to the God of his father Isaac. 2Then
God spoke to Israel in the visions of the
night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!"

And he said, "Here I am."

3So He said, "I *am* God, the God of your
father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for
I will make of you a great nation there. 4I
will go down with you to Egypt, and I will
also surely bring you up *again;* and Joseph
will put his hand on your eyes."

5Then Jacob arose from Beersheba;
and the sons of Israel carried their father
Jacob, their little ones, and their wives,
in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to
carry him. 6So they took their livestock
and their goods, which they had acquired
in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt,
Jacob and all his descendants with him.
7His sons and his sons' sons, his daugh-
ters and his sons' daughters, and all his
descendants he brought with him to
Egypt.

8Now these *were* the names of the chil-
dren of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went
to Egypt: Reuben *was* Jacob's firstborn.
9The sons of Reuben *were* Hanoch, Pallu,
Hezron, and Carmi. 10The sons of Simeon
were Jemuel,[a] Jamin, Ohad, Jachin,[b] Zohar,[c]
and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman.
11The sons of Levi *were* Gershon, Kohath,
and Merari. 12The sons of Judah *were* Er,
Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er
and Onan died in the land of Canaan). The
sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.
13The sons of Issachar *were* Tola, Puvah,[a]
Job,[b] and Shimron. 14The sons of Zebulun
were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. 15These *were*
the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob
in Padan Aram, with his daughter Dinah.
All the persons, his sons and his daughters,
were thirty-three.

16The sons of Gad *were* Ziphion,[a] Haggi,
Shuni, Ezbon,[b] Eri, Arodi,[c] and Areli. 17The
sons of Asher *were* Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui, Be-
riah, and Serah, their sister. And the sons
of Beriah *were* Heber and Malchiel. 18These
were the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave
to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to
Jacob: sixteen persons.

19The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife, *were*
Joseph and Benjamin. 20And to Joseph in
the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and
Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter
of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him.
21The sons of Benjamin *were* Belah, Becher,
Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim,
Huppim,[a] and Ard. 22These *were* the sons of
Rachel, who were born to Jacob: fourteen
persons in all.

46:10 [a]Spelled *Nemuel* in 1 Chronicles 4:24
[b]Called *Jarib* in 1 Chronicles 4:24 [c]Called *Zerah*
in 1 Chronicles 4:24 **46:13** [a]Spelled *Puah* in
1 Chronicles 7:1 [b]Same as *Jashub* in Numbers
26:24 and 1 Chronicles 7:1 **46:16** [a]Spelled
Zephon in Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint,
and Numbers 26:15 [b]Called *Ozni* in Numbers
26:16 [c]Spelled *Arod* in Numbers 26:17
46:21 [a]Called *Hupham* in Numbers 26:39

23The son of Dan *was* Hushim.[a] 24The
sons of Naphtali *were* Jahzeel,[a] Guni, Jezer,
and Shillem.[b] 25These *were* the sons of
Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his
daughter, and she bore these to Jacob:
seven persons in all.

26All the persons who went with Jacob to
Egypt, who came from his body, besides Ja-
cob's sons' wives, *were* sixty-six persons in
all. 27And the sons of Joseph who were born
to him in Egypt *were* two persons. All the
persons of the house of Jacob who went to
Egypt were seventy.

JACOB SETTLES IN GOSHEN

28Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph,
to point out before him *the way* to Goshen.
And they came to the land of Goshen. 29So
Joseph made ready his chariot and went up
to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he
presented himself to him, and fell on his
neck and wept on his neck a good while.

30And Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me
die, since I have seen your face, because
you *are* still alive."

31Then Joseph said to his brothers and
to his father's household, "I will go up and
tell Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers
and those of my father's house, who *were*
in the land of Canaan, have come to me.
32And the men *are* shepherds, for their oc-
cupation has been to feed livestock; and
they have brought their flocks, their herds,
and all that they have.' 33So it shall be, when
Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your
occupation?' 34that you shall say, 'Your ser-
vants' occupation has been with livestock
from our youth even till now, both we *and*
also our fathers,' that you may dwell in the
land of Goshen; for every shepherd *is* an
abomination to the Egyptians."

47 Then Joseph went and told
Pharaoh, and said, "My father
and my brothers, their flocks
and their herds and all that they possess,
have come from the land of Canaan; and
indeed they *are* in the land of Goshen."
2And he took five men from among his
brothers and presented them to Pharaoh.
3Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What
is your occupation?"

And they said to Pharaoh, "Your ser-
vants *are* shepherds, both we *and* also our
fathers." 4And they said to Pharaoh, "We
have come to dwell in the land, because
your servants have no pasture for their
flocks, for the famine *is* severe in the land
of Canaan. Now therefore, please let your
servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

5Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying,
"Your father and your brothers have come
to you. 6The land of Egypt *is* before you.
Have your father and brothers dwell in the
best of the land; let them dwell in the land
of Goshen. And if you know *any* competent
men among them, then make them chief
herdsmen over my livestock."

7Then Joseph brought in his father Ja-
cob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob
blessed Pharaoh. 8Pharaoh said to Jacob,
"How old *are* you?"

9And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of
the years of my pilgrimage *are* one hundred
and thirty years; few and evil have been the
days of the years of my life, and they have
not attained to the days of the years of the
life of my fathers in the days of their pil-
grimage." 10So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and
went out from before Pharaoh.

11And Joseph situated his father and his
brothers, and gave them a possession in
the land of Egypt, in the best of the land,
in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had
commanded. 12Then Joseph provided his
father, his brothers, and all his father's
household with bread, according to the
number in *their* families.

JOSEPH DEALS WITH THE FAMINE

13Now *there was* no bread in all the land;
for the famine *was* very severe, so that
the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan
languished because of the famine. 14And
Joseph gathered up all the money that was
found in the land of Egypt and in the land
of Canaan, for the grain which they bought;
and Joseph brought the money into Pha-
raoh's house.

15So when the money failed in the land
of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the
Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give
us bread, for why should we die in your
presence? For the money has failed."

16Then Joseph said, "Give your livestock,
and I will give you *bread* for your livestock,
if the money is gone." 17So they brought

46:23 [a]Called *Shuham* in Numbers 26:42
46:24 [a]Spelled *Jahziel* in 1 Chronicles 7:13
[b]Spelled *Shallum* in 1 Chronicles 7:13

their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread *in exchange* for the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the donkeys. Thus he fed them with bread *in exchange* for all their livestock that year.

18When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. 19Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh; give *us* seed, that we may live and not die, that the land may not be desolate."

20Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's. 21And as for the people, he moved them into the cities,[a] from *one* end of the borders of Egypt to the *other* end. 22Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations *allotted to them* by Pharaoh, and they ate their rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands.

23Then Joseph said to the people, "Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, *here is* seed for you, and you shall sow the land. 24And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones."

25So they said, "You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." 26And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, *that* Pharaoh should have one-fifth, except for the land of the priests only, *which* did not become Pharaoh's.

JOSEPH'S VOW TO JACOB

27So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly. 28And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years. 29When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, 30but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place."

And he said, "I will do as you have said."

31Then he said, "Swear to me." And he swore to him. So Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed.

JACOB BLESSES JOSEPH'S SONS

48 Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father *is* sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed. 3Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, 4and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you *as* an everlasting possession.' 5And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, *are* mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. 6Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. 7But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when *there was* but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

8Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who *are* these?"

9Joseph said to his father, "They *are* my sons, whom God has given me in this *place*."

And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them." 10Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, *so that* he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced

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47:21 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *made the people virtual slaves.*

them. 11And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not
thought to see your face; but in fact, God
has also shown me your offspring!"
12So Joseph brought them from beside
his knees, and he bowed down with his
face to the earth. 13And Joseph took them
both, Ephraim with his right hand toward
Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his
left hand toward Israel's right hand, and
brought *them* near him. 14Then Israel
stretched out his right hand and laid *it* on
Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and
his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding
his hands knowingly, for Manasseh *was*
the firstborn. 15And he blessed Joseph, and
said:

"God, before whom my fathers
Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has fed me all my life
long to this day,
16The Angel who has redeemed me from
all evil,
Bless the lads;
Let my name be named upon them,
And the name of my fathers Abraham
and Isaac;
And let them grow into a multitude in
the midst of the earth."

17Now when Joseph saw that his father
laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim,
it displeased him; so he took hold of his
father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's
head to Manasseh's head. 18And Joseph
said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this
one is the firstborn; put your right hand on
his head."
19But his father refused and said, "I
know, my son, I know. He also shall become
a people, and he also shall be great; but
truly his younger brother shall be greater
than he, and his descendants shall become
a multitude of nations."
20So he blessed them that day, saying,
"By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God
make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!'"
And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh.
21Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold,
I am dying, but God will be with you and
bring you back to the land of your fathers.
22Moreover I have given to you one portion
above your brothers, which I took from the
hand of the Amorite with my sword and my
bow."

JACOB'S LAST WORDS TO HIS SONS

49 And Jacob called his sons and
said, "Gather together, that I
may tell you what shall befall
you in the last days:

2"Gather together and hear, you sons of
Jacob,
And listen to Israel your father.

3"Reuben, you are my firstborn,
My might and the beginning of my
strength,
The excellency of dignity and the
excellency of power.
4Unstable as water, you shall not excel,
Because you went up to your father's
bed;
Then you defiled *it*—
He went up to my couch.

5"Simeon and Levi *are* brothers;
Instruments of cruelty *are in* their
dwelling place.
6Let not my soul enter their council;
Let not my honor be united to their
assembly;
For in their anger they slew a man,
And in their self-will they hamstrung
an ox.
7Cursed *be* their anger, for *it is* fierce;
And their wrath, for it is cruel!
I will divide them in Jacob
And scatter them in Israel.

8"Judah, you *are he* whom your brothers
shall praise;
Your hand *shall be* on the neck of your
enemies;
Your father's children shall bow down
before you.
9Judah *is* a lion's whelp;
From the prey, my son, you have
gone up.
He bows down, he lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who shall rouse him?
10The scepter shall not depart from
Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes;
And to Him *shall be* the obedience of
the people.
11Binding his donkey to the vine,
And his donkey's colt to the choice vine,

He washed his garments in wine,
And his clothes in the blood of grapes.
12 His eyes *are* darker than wine,
And his teeth whiter than milk.

13 "Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea;
He *shall become* a haven for ships,
And his border shall adjoin Sidon.

14 "Issachar is a strong donkey,
Lying down between two burdens;
15 He saw that rest *was* good,
And that the land *was* pleasant;
He bowed his shoulder to bear *a burden,*
And became a band of slaves.

16 "Dan shall judge his people
As one of the tribes of Israel.
17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way,
A viper by the path,
That bites the horse's heels
So that its rider shall fall backward.
18 I have waited for your salvation,
O LORD!

19 "Gad, a troop shall tramp upon him,
But he shall triumph at last.

20 "Bread from Asher *shall be* rich,
And he shall yield royal dainties.

21 "Naphtali *is* a deer let loose;
He uses beautiful words.

22 "Joseph *is* a fruitful bough,
A fruitful bough by a well;
His branches run over the wall.
23 The archers have bitterly grieved him,
Shot *at him* and hated him.
24 But his bow remained in strength,
And the arms of his hands were made strong
By the hands of the Mighty *God* of Jacob
(From there *is* the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),

HELP
Who will help me?
Genesis 49:25

25 By the God of your father who will help you,
And by the Almighty who will bless you
With blessings of heaven above,
Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,
Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.
26 The blessings of your father
Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors,
Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.
They shall be on the head of Joseph,
And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.

27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;
In the morning he shall devour the prey,
And at night he shall divide the spoil."

28 All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel, and this *is* what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing.

JACOB'S DEATH AND BURIAL

29 Then he charged them and said to them: "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 in the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. 31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. 32 The field and the cave that *is* there *were* purchased from the sons of Heth." 33 And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

50 Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him. 2 And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. 3 Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

4 Now when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household



LIFE APP

Betrayal / Genesis 50:19–21

Benedict Arnold. Judas Iscariot. These men are so famous for something they've done, their very names are synonymous with the act: betrayal. One betrayed our country. The other betrayed our Lord. Betrayal is a horrible act with harmful consequences—for those betrayed and even the betrayer.

Maybe you have trusted someone with your deepest secrets or your thoughts and feelings, or even with hard-earned money or prized possessions. Whatever trust you placed in someone, if they betrayed you, you were probably left devastated, hurt and angry. But how do you handle that? In those times of betrayal, it's easy to let bitterness start to grow in your heart. When you're hurt and angry, it may seem impossible to forgive the one who hurt you, let alone ever have a relationship with them again. But bitterness doesn't have to be the end result of betrayal.

In Genesis 50, we meet a man named Joseph. He was betrayed but didn't hold on to bitterness. Joseph was betrayed by his very own brothers. They were jealous of him, threw him in a pit, and sold him into slavery. This betrayal sent Joseph on a difficult and emotional journey, but eventually he ended up in a powerful position in another country. Years after their betrayal, his brothers came to Joseph for help, not even recognizing him. Had bitterness been growing in Joseph's heart, he could have plotted his ultimate revenge for the pain they caused him. But instead, Joseph chose forgiveness. He was able to see that, out of their horrible act, God had done something amazing.

When you are betrayed, it's natural to feel hurt and even angry. But you do not have to let that anger turn to bitterness. You can take your pain and anger straight to God. Instead of holding on to the pain, let Him give you a heart of forgiveness and show you how He can make something beautiful out of even the worst circumstances.

of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, 5'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.'"

Genesis 50:2

The Israelites had strict laws about touching dead bodies, so they rarely embalmed anyone. In fact, Jacob and Joseph are the only two Old Testament people we know of who were embalmed. It may be that embalming was necessary because of the long journey required to return their bodies to Canaan.

6And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear."

7So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, 8as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen. 9And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering.

10Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which *is* beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father. 11And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This *is* a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim,[a] which *is* beyond the Jordan.

12So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. 13For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. 14And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.

JOSEPH REASSURES HIS BROTHERS

15When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him." 16So they sent *messengers* to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, 17'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you." ' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

18Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we *are* your servants."

19Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God? 20But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive. 21Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

DEATH OF JOSEPH

22So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. 23Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third *generation.* The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph's knees.

24And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." 25Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." 26So Joseph died, *being* one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

50:11 [a]Literally *Mourning of Egypt*

Exodus

DATE OF WRITING: 1445–1440 B.C.
AUTHOR: TRADITIONALLY, MOSES
THEME: DELIVERANCE
PURPOSE: GOD BREAKS OUR CHAINS, THEN DRAWS US TO HIMSELF BY TEACHING US WISE WAYS AND WORSHIP.

OUTLINE

1:1–22 ..... The People of Israel Become Slaves
2:1–25 ..... Moses Is Born and Grows Up
3:1—7:13 ..... God Sends Moses to Speak to the Pharaoh
7:14—10:29 ..... The First Nine Disasters
11:1—13:22 ..... The Last Disaster and the First Passover
14:1—15:21 ..... The People Cross the Red Sea
15:22—18:27 ..... Moses Leads the People to Mount Sinai
19:1—24:18 ..... The Ten Commandments and Other Laws
25:1—27:21 ..... Instructions for the Ark of the Testimony, the Tabernacle, and Its Furnishings
28:1—31:18 ..... Instructions for the Priests, Sacrifices, and the Sabbath
32:1–35 ..... The People Make an Idol
33:1—35:3 ..... The Lord Makes Promises, Renews His Covenant, and Gives More Laws to Israel
35:4—36:7 ..... Offerings and Gifts for the Tabernacle and the Priestly Garments
36:8—38:31 ..... Skilled Workers Make the Tabernacle and Its Furnishings
39:1–31 ..... The Priestly Garments Are Made
39:32—40:38 ..... The Tabernacle Is Set Up

KEY VERSE:

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5, 6).

THEN ///

If Exodus was a movie, it would be an action-adventure, full of miracles, spectacular events, and amazing special effects. The bad guys in this scenario are the Egyptians, particularly Pharaoh, who (for longer than you would imagine) would *not* let those Hebrew people go.

The good guys—well, the favored guys—are the Hebrews (or Israelites), led by Moses. After being enslaved by the Egyptians for generations, they were freed only to wander around in a desert for years.

All through this adventure God does amazing things—more amazing than anything you've seen in a theater. Seas split in two. Food falls like dew. Boulders sprout fountains. The glory of God's presence becomes visible. Moses' face actually *glows*. Exodus is proof that real life can be more amazing and action-packed than any movie script.

NOW ///

In Exodus, we learn that God does have a plan, even if we can't always understand it at the time. The same God who led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt can lead us out of the slavery of sin and death. The same God who split the sea in two and sent food falling from the sky can deliver us from perilous circumstances and provide for us when we need help.

Our lives may not look exactly like the Israelites' at first glance, but we all do have our own adventures to follow in life. And God will provide everything we need to live out every adventure He has for us. So buckle your seat belts and prepare for a ride of a read.

REALITY CHECK ///

Have you heard of a Passover meal? It's a meal of very specific foods prepared a very specific way and eaten in a very specific order. When people eat a Passover meal, they are actually remembering the last plague the Egyptians experienced because Pharaoh would not let the Hebrews leave.

On that last night of plagues, the Lord passed through Egypt and the oldest son of each household died as He passed . . . unless the family had spread the blood of a lamb on their doorpost. If the blood was on the doorpost, then the Lord *passed over* that home and the firstborn lived.

The Passover was a picture for the Hebrews, and anyone else watching, of what Jesus would do one day for all of us. He would spill His blood on a wooden cross to save us from certain death.

ISRAEL'S SUFFERING IN EGYPT

1 Now these *are* the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: 2Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; 3Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; 4Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. 5All those who were descendants[a] of Jacob were seventy[b] persons (for Joseph was in Egypt *already*). 6And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. 7But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Exodus 1:1–5

Seventy was a significant number for Israel because it was a multiple of seven, the sacred number. To the Israelites, seven symbolized completion, abundance, and rest. (Consider the seven days of creation in Genesis 1.)

8Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we; 10come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and *so* go up out of the land." 11Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. 13So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. 14And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve *was* with rigor.

15Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one *was* Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; 16and he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see *them* on the birthstools, if it *is* a son, then you shall kill him; but if it *is* a daughter, then she shall live." 17But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. 18So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?"

19And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women *are* not like the Egyptian women; for they *are* lively and give birth before the midwives come to them."

20Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. 21And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them.

22So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born[a] you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive."

MOSES IS BORN

2 And a man of the house of Levi went and took *as wife* a daughter of Levi. 2So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he *was* a beautiful *child,* she hid him three months. 3But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid *it* in the reeds by the river's bank. 4And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

5Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. 6And when she opened *it,* she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

7Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?"

8And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother. 9Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and

1:5 [a]Literally *who came from the loins of* [b]Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *seventy-five* (compare Acts 7:14). **1:22** [a]Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Targum add *to the Hebrews.*



PROFILE
MOSES

Few doubt the amazing difference Moses made in his lifetime, or in the millennia since. His is one of the few almost universally known names in history. But what about his youth? Were there signs of his later greatness in the events of his early years?

We don't know when Moses discovered his unique background, but perhaps his mother cared for him long enough to instill a strong sense of his heritage. Apparently his training in all the wisdom and knowledge of Egypt couldn't drive out of Moses his early education. He knew himself to be a Hebrew, and the Book of Hebrews describes Moses as "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin" (11:25).

Moses was loyal to his people. When faced with an Egyptian guard beating a Hebrew slave, Moses did not hesitate. He intervened, killing the guard. This led to his escape into the wilderness and the second long phase of training in his life. When he eventually led his people out of Egypt, he led them into a desert that had become his backyard in the previous forty years.

Two big lessons from Moses' youth formed important foundations for the events of his life: (1) his faith in God, and (2) his ability to write. He did not record the first five books of the Bible in his youth. They were actually more like a journal he kept during the years of travel. But he learned to write in Egypt. He remembered his ABCs. His elementary school tutors taught him well. And Moses made a real difference for the world with the way he used the tools of faith and knowledge he was given as a child.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Don't fall into the trap of thinking of your youthful years as marking time until you arrive at adulthood. Much of what you accomplish as an adult will be shaped by what you learn as a young person. You don't know what God will use from your past when you get older. Give Him lots to work with.

Make the most of your opportunities while you're young. Get to know God better. Learn from pastors and teachers in your church. Read your Bible on your own. Take your educational opportunities seriously, but enjoy learning. Be like a sponge soaking up all the good you can find. Then the day adulthood arrives, you will be well prepared to make a real difference in your life and in your world.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Moses' life in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Moses was chosen by God for great things, but his journey was a long one. He was willing to follow God's call and use the skills he had, even when it was difficult, and his life made a real difference. Yours can, too!

nurse him for me, and I will give *you* your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. [10]And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses,[a] saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

MOSES FLEES TO MIDIAN

[11]Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one

2:10 [a]Literally *Drawn Out*



PROFILE
MIRIAM

Older brothers or sisters find out sooner or later that they have an automatic job—watching younger brothers or sisters! That was the case with Miriam, too.

Miriam lived during a time when the children of Israel were slaves in Egypt. As if that wasn't bad enough, the government decided that male children were to be killed at birth. That's when Miriam's little brother Moses was born.

Miriam and her mother worked out a plan they hoped would keep Moses alive. They put the baby in a floating basket near a place in the Nile River where wealthy Egyptian women came to bathe. As it turned out, as Miriam watched from the reeds, Moses was fished out and adopted by a princess of Egypt. Thinking quickly, Miriam approached the princess and offered to get a nanny for the baby. She brought her mother, of course.

Miriam was part of God's plan to keep Moses alive. She made a difference by following through on her responsibilities. How could she have known her little brother would turn out to be such a large figure in history? She didn't have to know. She only had to have the courage and responsibility to do what she was called to do.

✚ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

The younger you are, the less important your duties may seem sometimes. Don't worry about it. The shortest road to bigger jobs is doing little jobs very well. In fact, God tells us that those who show Him they can be trusted with small things can be trusted with large ones (Luke 16:10). Besides, like Miriam, you probably won't know ahead of time what tasks in your life will make the biggest difference. Your job is to carry out your responsibilities—whatever their size!

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

You can read this adventure in babysitting in Exodus 1:15—2:10.

Miriam was a big sister in a scary world. Her sense of responsibility to her family and her willingness to go out on a limb to do what was right made Miriam able to make a real difference. Take your responsibilities seriously and you can, too!

of his brethren. 12So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?"

14Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?"

So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!" 15When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

16Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

18When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "How *is it that* you have come so soon today?"

19And they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock."

Exodus 2:16

The land of Midian didn't have definite boundaries like most countries do today. It was located in the general area between Egypt and Canaan. Jacob and his family called Midian home until famine forced them to head to Egypt.

20So he said to his daughters, "And where *is* he? Why *is* it *that* you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."

21Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. 22And she bore *him* a son. He called his name Gershom,[a] for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land."

23Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. 24So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them.*

MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH

3 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush *was* not consumed. 3Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

4So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!"

And he said, "Here I am."

5Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground." 6Moreover He said, "I *am* the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

RESPECT

Is God worthy of our respect?

Exodus 3:5

7And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. 9Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

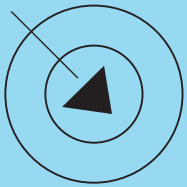
11But Moses said to God, "Who *am* I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

12So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this *shall be* a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

13Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What *is* His name?' what shall I say to them?"

14And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This *is* My name forever, and this *is* My memorial to all generations.' 16Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and *seen* what is done to you in Egypt;

2:22 [a]Literally *Stranger There*



PROMISE

God promises to deliver His people out of Egypt.

"So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 3:8a).

The children of Israel had been delivered from Egypt, but thanks to doubting and unbelief, they wandered in the desert for 40 years.

But you know what? Year number 41 came, and they didn't wander anymore. They entered into the Promised Land, the land of milk and honey God had promised them! Maybe, for whatever reason, it seems you are in a desert period in your life. Maybe you feel like you've been stumbling around for 40 years. Don't worry; number 41 is on its way!

Look at these examples: Noah and his family were on the ark while it rained for 40 days and 40 nights—day 41 came, and the rain stopped. For 40 days Goliath showed up every morning and taunted Israel—41 came, and David took him down!

God has promised to bring you out of your "Egypt" as well—if you will hold on to your faith in Him. Whatever situation you are going through right now, don't give up. God is on your side! So if it seems like trouble has been raining down on you, don't worry because 41 is on the way. The rain is going to stop. Whatever giant is in your life, 41 is coming and that giant's going down! You are more than a conqueror through Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:37).

While you may not know or understand the timing, you can know that He will deliver you out of Egypt.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Genesis 7; 8; 1 Samuel 17; Psalm 34:17, 19

17 and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" 18 Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' 19 But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. 20 So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. 21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. 22 But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put *them* on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

MIRACULOUS SIGNS FOR PHARAOH

4 Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'"

2 So the LORD said to him, "What *is* that in your hand?"

He said, "A rod."

3 And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take *it* by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), 5 "that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

6Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous, like snow. 7And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his *other* flesh. 8"Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. 9And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river[a] and pour *it* on the dry *land*. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry *land*."

10Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I *am* slow of speech and slow of tongue."

11So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? *Have* not I, the LORD? 12Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."

13But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever *else* You may send."

14So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. 16So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. 17And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs."

MOSES GOES TO EGYPT

18So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my brethren who *are* in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive."

And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

19Now the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead." 20Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

21And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. 22Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel *is* My son, My firstborn. 23So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn."'"

24And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him. 25Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast *it* at *Moses'*[a] feet, and said, "Surely you *are* a husband of blood to me!" 26So He let him go. Then she said, "*You are* a husband of blood!"—because of the circumcision.

Exodus 4:27

When friends or family members hadn't seen each other for a day or so, it was common for them to kiss when they met. It was also a common gesture for when two acquaintances said good-bye. Rarely is romantic kissing mentioned in the Bible.

27And the LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and kissed him. 28So Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. 29Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. 30And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. 31So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

4:9 [a]That is, the Nile **4:25** [a]Literally *his*

FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH PHARAOH

5 Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'"

2And Pharaoh said, "Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go."

3So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

4Then the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get *back* to your labor." 5And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land *are* many now, and you make them rest from their labor!"

6So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, 7"You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.' 9Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words."

> ***Exodus 5:7***
> Trees were scarce in Egypt. With little wood available, Egyptian builders used huge stones to construct their pyramids and temples. For houses and common buildings, they used bricks made of straw and mud.

10And the taskmasters of the people and their officers went out and spoke to the people, saying, "Thus says Pharaoh: 'I will not give you straw. 11Go, get yourselves straw where you can find it; yet none of your work will be reduced.'" 12So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. 13And the taskmasters forced *them* to hurry, saying, "Fulfill your work, *your* daily quota, as when there was straw." 14Also the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten *and* were asked, "Why have you not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as before?"

15Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, "Why are you dealing thus with your servants? 16There is no straw given to your servants, and they say to us, 'Make brick!' And indeed your servants *are* beaten, but the fault *is* in your *own* people."

17But he said, "You *are* idle! Idle! Therefore you say, 'Let us go *and* sacrifice to the LORD.' 18Therefore go now *and* work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks." 19And the officers of the children of Israel saw *that* they *were* in trouble after it was said, "You shall not reduce *any* bricks from your daily quota."

20Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them. 21And they said to them, "Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us."

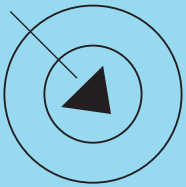
ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE ASSURED

22So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why *is* it You have sent me? 23For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all."

6 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."

2And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I *am* the LORD. 3I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by* My name LORD[a] I was not known to them. 4I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. 5And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My

6:3 [a]Hebrew *YHWH,* traditionally *Jehovah*



PROMISE

God promises to take you as His own.

"I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD *your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians"* (Ex. 6:7).

In many ways, Israel's history is a symbol of the journey that all of Jesus' followers are making. That's one reason the Old Testament is still so important to Christians. You can look in the Old Testament to find wisdom for whatever you're going through and to prepare for what's coming next.

When God said, "I will take you as My people," He wasn't just talking to the Israelites. He was also looking out through time and speaking to Christians today. He knew you would be on earth at this moment and He wanted to be sure you knew that He accepted you as His own. The nation of Israel was God's own because of the faith and obedience of their father, Abraham. Today, you are a chosen person because of the love and obedience of your Lord and Savior, Jesus.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Romans 1:16, 17

covenant. 6Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I *am* the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you *as* a heritage: I *am* the LORD.'" 9So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.

10And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 11"Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land."

12And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, "The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I *am* of uncircumcised lips?"

13Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

THE FAMILY OF MOSES AND AARON

14These *are* the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, *were* Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. These are the families of Reuben. 15And the sons of Simeon *were* Jemuel,[a] Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These *are* the families of Simeon. 16These *are* the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi *were* one hundred and thirty-seven. 17The sons of Gershon *were* Libni and Shimi according to their families. 18And the sons of Kohath *were* Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath *were* one hundred and thirty-three. 19The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi. These *are* the families of Levi according to their generations.

20Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram *were* one hundred and thirty-seven. 21The sons of Izhar *were* Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. 22And the sons of Uzziel *were* Mishael, Elzaphan, and Zithri. 23Aaron took to himself Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as wife; and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 24And the sons of Korah *were* Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These are the families of the Korahites. 25Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Putiel as wife; and she bore

6:15 [a]Spelled *Nemuel* in Numbers 26:12

him Phinehas. These *are* the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families.

26These *are the same* Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies." 27These *are* the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These *are the same* Moses and Aaron.

AARON IS MOSES' SPOKESMAN

28And it came to pass, on the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, 29that the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I *am* the LORD. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you."

30But Moses said before the LORD, "Behold, I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh heed me?"

7 So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you *as* God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. 2You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land. 3And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. 4But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies *and* My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them."

6Then Moses and Aaron did *so;* just as the LORD commanded them, so they did. 7And Moses *was* eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

AARON'S MIRACULOUS ROD

8Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 9"When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* let it become a serpent.'" 10So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

11But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. 13And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

THE FIRST PLAGUE: WATERS BECOME BLOOD

14So the LORD said to Moses: "Pharaoh's heart *is* hard; he refuses to let the people go. 15Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. 16And you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness"; but indeed, until now you would not hear! 17Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I *am* the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which *are* in the river with the rod that *is* in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. 18And the fish that *are* in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river."'"

19Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *buckets of* wood and *pitchers of* stone.'" 20And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that *were* in the river were turned to blood. 21The fish that *were* in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

22Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. 23And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. 24So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for wa-

ter to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. 25And seven days passed after the LORD had struck the river.

THE SECOND PLAGUE: FROGS

8 And the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 2But if you refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs. 3So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. 4And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants."'"

Exodus 8:1–5

Frogs were considered sacred in ancient Egypt; they were symbols of fertility. Can you imagine how confused and alarmed the people became when they saw their land covered with the amphibians?

5Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.'" 6So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. 7And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

8Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Entreat the LORD that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD."

9And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, *that* they may remain in the river only."

10So he said, "Tomorrow." And he said, "*Let it be* according to your word, that you may know that *there is* no one like the LORD our God. 11And the frogs shall depart from you, from your houses, from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only."

12Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses cried out to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. 13So the LORD did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields. 14They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. 15But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

THE THIRD PLAGUE: LICE

16So the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'" 17And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

18Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. 19Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This *is* the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said.

THE FOURTH PLAGUE: FLIES

20And the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 21Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms *of flies* on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms *of flies,* and also the ground on which they *stand.* 22And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms *of flies* shall be there, in order that you may know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the land. 23I will make a difference[a] between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be."'" 24And the LORD did so. Thick swarms

8:23 [a]Literally *set a ransom* (compare Exodus 9:4 and 11:7)

of flies came into the house of Pharaoh, *into* his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms *of flies.*

25Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land."

26And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? 27We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He will command us."

28So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me."

29Then Moses said, "Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the LORD, that the swarms *of flies* may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD."

30So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. 31And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms *of flies* from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. 32But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.

THE FIFTH PLAGUE: LIVESTOCK DISEASED

9 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 2For if you refuse to let *them* go, and still hold them, 3behold, the hand of the LORD will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep—a very severe pestilence. 4And the LORD will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all *that* belongs to the children of Israel."'" 5Then the LORD appointed a set time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land."

6So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died. 7Then Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go.

THE SIXTH PLAGUE: BOILS

8So the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. 9And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." 10Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered *them* toward heaven. And *they* caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast. 11And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. 12But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

THE SEVENTH PLAGUE: HAIL

13Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me, 14for at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that *there is* none like Me in all the earth. 15Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. 16But indeed for this *purpose* I have raised you up, that I may show My power *in* you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. 17As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go. 18Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now. 19Therefore send now *and* gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is found in the field and is not brought home; and they shall die."'"



LIFE APP

Righteousness / Exodus 9:27

"Righteousness" may sound like an old-fashioned word. A few decades ago, it was used the way we would use "awesome" today. Something "righteous" was sweet, great, or wonderful. And it does have that kind of meaning. But in the Bible, it doesn't describe something; it describes Someone.

The word "righteous" actually describes someone who is always just, fair, and filled with integrity. Although people may sometimes be fair, may sometimes operate with justice, and may have some integrity, all of us mess up and do things that are just not right. No matter how hard we try, we just can't seem to live out that "righteousness" in our lives. That's why Paul says, *"There is none righteous, no, not one"* (Rom. 3:10). He's talking about all people.

Another word we use often today is "wicked." Somehow, we've taken a word that means evil and turned it into a word that describes something good. Just making that choice proves how far away from righteousness the world really is. Far too often, the world's choices are anything but fair (like killing an unborn child). Our idea of justice can actually be more like revenge. And our integrity is frequently dependent on whether we will gain or lose by living up to our word.

The only One who is truly righteous is God. He is the only One who never operates without fairness. God is the only One who can determine true justice; and He is the only One whose integrity is eternal.

No matter how hard we try, we can never make ourselves righteous. But when we receive salvation in Jesus, His righteousness becomes ours. When we accept Jesus as our Savior, His Spirit actually lives within our hearts. He begins to change us from the inside out. The blood He shed on the cross covers over our sinful selves and when God looks at us, He sees us through the image of His sinless Son. Through faith in Jesus, we can actually become righteous in the sight of God. (See Phil. 3:9.)

20He who feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. 21But he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.

22Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." 23And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. 26Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were,* there was no hail.

27And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time. The LORD *is* righteous, and my people and I *are* wicked. 28Entreat the LORD, that there may be no *more* mighty thundering and hail, for *it is* enough. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer."

29So Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth *is* the LORD's. 30But as for you and your servants, I know that you will not yet fear the LORD God."

31Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley *was* in the head and the flax *was* in bud. 32But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they *are* late crops.

33So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and spread out his hands to the LORD; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth. 34And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. 35So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

THE EIGHTH PLAGUE: LOCUSTS

10 Now the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, 2and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I *am* the LORD."

3So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 4Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. 5And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. 6They shall fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians—which neither your fathers nor your fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were on the earth to this day.'" And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

Exodus 10:4

Locusts are still a major problem in North Africa and the Middle East. A large swarm is capable of destroying entire crops. A swarm is large enough to block off sunlight to an entire region! Water and fire are useless against a large swarm of locusts.

7Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?"

8So Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God. Who *are* the ones that are going?"

9And Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD."

10Then he said to them, "The LORD had better be with you when I let you and your little ones go! Beware, for evil is ahead of you. 11Not so! Go now, you *who are* men, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desired." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

12Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land—all that the hail has left." 13So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day and all *that* night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. 14And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. *They were* very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. 15For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.

16Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. 17Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that He may take away from me this death only." 18So he went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. 19And the LORD turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt. 20But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

THE NINTH PLAGUE: DARKNESS

21Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness *which* may even be felt." 22So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

24Then Pharaoh called to Moses and said, "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back. Let your little ones also go with you."

25But Moses said, "You must also give us sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. 26Our livestock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For we must take some of them to serve the LORD our God, and even we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there."

27But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. 28Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!"

29So Moses said, "You have spoken well. I will never see your face again."

DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN ANNOUNCED

11 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets *you* go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether. 2Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold." 3And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

4Then Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: 'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; 5and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who *is* behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. 6Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it *before,* nor shall be like it again. 7But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.' 8And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, and all the people who follow you!' After that I will go out." Then he went out from Pharaoh in great anger.

9But the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not heed you, so that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." 10So Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

THE PASSOVER INSTITUTED

12 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2"This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. 3Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. 4And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. 5Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. 6Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. 8Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. 9Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. 10You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. 11And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the LORD's Passover.

12'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. 13Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are.* And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

14'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. 15Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. 16On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that* which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. 17So you shall observe *the Feast of* Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. 18In the first *month,* on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* a stranger or a native of the land. 20You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.'"

21Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover *lamb.* 22And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that *is* in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. 23For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike *you.* 24And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. 25It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. 26And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' 27that you shall say, 'It *is* the Passover sacrifice

of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.'" So the people bowed their heads and worshiped. 28Then the children of Israel went away and did *so;* just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

Exodus 12:26, 27

The Passover is one of the most important events in Jewish history. One of the key parts of modern Passover celebrations is the retelling of the story of the Israelites' escape from Egypt. Traditionally the story is told as parents reply to questions asked by the youngest child in the family.

THE TENTH PLAGUE: DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN

29And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who *was* in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. 30So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead.

THE EXODUS

31Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have said. 32Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also."

33And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We *shall* all *be* dead." 34So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. 35Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. 36And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them *what they requested.* Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

37Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. 38A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock. 39And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.

40Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt[a] *was* four hundred and thirty years. 41And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. 42It *is* a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This *is* that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

PASSOVER REGULATIONS

43And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This *is* the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it. 44But every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. 45A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it. 46In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones. 47All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. 48And when a stranger dwells with you *and wants* to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. 49One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you."

50Thus all the children of Israel did; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. 51And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies.

12:40 [a]Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint read *Egypt and Canaan.*

THE FIRSTBORN CONSECRATED

13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and beast; it is Mine."

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

3And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this *place.* No leavened bread shall be eaten. 4On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. 5And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. 6Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day *there shall be* a feast to the LORD. 7Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. 8And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, '*This is done* because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.' 9It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. 10You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

THE LAW OF THE FIRSTBORN

11"And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, 12that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males *shall be* the LORD's. 13But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem *it,* then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. 14So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *is* this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 15And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' 16It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."

THE WILDERNESS WAY

17Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them *by* way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." 18So God led the people around *by* way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.

19And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."[a]

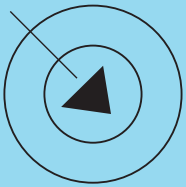
20So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. 21And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. 22He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night *from* before the people.

THE RED SEA CROSSING

14 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. 3For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They *are* bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' 4Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD." And they did so.

5Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pha-

13:19 [a]Genesis 50:25



PROMISE

God promises to fight for you.

"The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (Ex. 14:14).

Just as God fought for the Israelites when they were stuck between the raging Red Sea and the advancing Egyptian army, Jesus has fought for you. He fought and defeated the power of sin in your life. That's huge. It means you can do the right thing even when it's hard.

Even the apostle Paul said that he had a hard time doing the right thing because his selfish desires kept urging him to do something else. Everyone who wants to please God faces this problem. But Jesus went up against all of your selfishness and temptations. He fought the battle to clear the way for you to do all the right things. And He won.

Moses told the Israelites, "You shall hold your peace." That's true for you. You can stand firm because Jesus has already won your battle. Does that mean you just hang around, doing nothing? No, you can determine to stay strong, stay close to Him, and keep believing that He's already won.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Deuteronomy 1:30, 31; 2 Chronicles 32:8; Nehemiah 4:20

raoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" 6So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. 7Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. 8And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness. 9So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon.

10And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. 11Then they said to Moses, "Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 12*Is* this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For *it would have been* better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

13And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. 14The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

15And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. 16But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea. 17And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. 18Then the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

19And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. 20So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness *to the one,* and it gave light by night *to the other,* so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

21Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea

to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry *land,* and the waters were divided. 22So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry *ground,* and the waters *were* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. 23And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

24Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. 25And He took off[a] their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

26Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." 27And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, *and* all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. 29But the children of Israel had walked on dry *land* in the midst of the sea, and the waters *were* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

30So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.

THE SONG OF MOSES

15 Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying:

"I will sing to the LORD,
For He has triumphed gloriously!
The horse and its rider
He has thrown into the sea!

MUSIC
For what can music be used?
Exodus 15:1

2The LORD *is* my strength and song,
And He has become my salvation;
He *is* my God, and I will praise Him;
My father's God, and I will exalt Him.
3The LORD *is* a man of war;
The LORD *is* His name.
4Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea;
His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.

GOD
What is God like?
Exodus 15:3, 4

5The depths have covered them;
They sank to the bottom like a stone.

6"Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power;
Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces.
7And in the greatness of Your excellence
You have overthrown those who rose against You;
You sent forth Your wrath;
It consumed them like stubble.
8And with the blast of Your nostrils
The waters were gathered together;
The floods stood upright like a heap;
The depths congealed in the heart of the sea.
9The enemy said, 'I will pursue,
I will overtake,
I will divide the spoil;
My desire shall be satisfied on them.
I will draw my sword,
My hand shall destroy them.'
10You blew with Your wind,
The sea covered them;
They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

11"Who *is* like You, O LORD, among the gods?

14:25 [a]Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Syriac read *bound.*

Who *is* like You, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?
12 You stretched out Your right hand;
The earth swallowed them.
13 You in Your mercy have led forth
The people whom You have redeemed;
You have guided *them* in Your strength
To Your holy habitation.

14 "The people will hear *and* be afraid;
Sorrow will take hold of the
inhabitants of Philistia.
15 Then the chiefs of Edom will be
dismayed;
The mighty men of Moab,
Trembling will take hold of them;
All the inhabitants of Canaan will melt
away.

Exodus 15:14, 15

The Philistines happened to be living in the very place God had promised to the Israelites. In order to claim their land, the Israelites would have to "evict" the Philistines. The job would not be easy, though. The Philistines were known for making advanced weapons out of iron.

16 Fear and dread will fall on them;
By the greatness of Your arm
They will be *as* still as a stone,
Till Your people pass over, O LORD,
Till the people pass over
Whom You have purchased.
17 You will bring them in and plant them
In the mountain of Your inheritance,
In the place, O LORD, *which* You have
made
For Your own dwelling,
The sanctuary, O Lord, *which* Your
hands have established.

18 "The LORD shall reign forever and ever."

19 For the horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them. But the children of Israel went on dry *land* in the midst of the sea.

THE SONG OF MIRIAM

20 Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. 21 And Miriam answered them:

"Sing to the LORD,
For He has triumphed gloriously!
The horse and its rider
He has thrown into the sea!"

BITTER WATERS MADE SWEET

22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. 23 Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah.[a] 24 And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" 25 So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast *it* into the waters, the waters were made sweet.

There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, 26 and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you."

27 Then they came to Elim, where there *were* twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.

BREAD FROM HEAVEN

16 And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. 2 Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3 And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat *and* when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

15:23 [a] Literally *Bitter*

4Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. 5And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily."

6Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt. 7And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your complaints against the LORD. But what *are* we, that you complain against us?" 8Also Moses said, "*This shall be seen* when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what *are* we? Your complaints *are* not against us but against the LORD."

9Then Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your complaints.'" 10Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

11And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12"I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.'"

13So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. 14And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, *as* fine as frost on the ground. 15So when the children of Israel saw *it,* they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it *was.*

And Moses said to them, "This *is* the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. 16This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, *according to the* number of persons; let every man take for *those* who *are* in his tent.'"

17Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. 18So when they measured *it* by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need. 19And Moses said, "Let no one leave any of it till morning." 20Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. 21So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted.

22And so it was, on the sixth day, *that* they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23Then he said to them, "This *is what* the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow *is* a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake *today,* and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.'" 24So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. 25Then Moses said, "Eat that today, for today *is* a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. 26Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none."

27Now it happened *that some* of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. 28And the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? 29See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." 30So the people rested on the seventh day.

31And the house of Israel called its name Manna.[a] And it *was* like white coriander seed, and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey.

32Then Moses said, "This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'" 33And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot and

16:31 [a]Literally *What?* (compare Exodus 16:15)

put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations." 34As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. 35And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. 36Now an omer *is* one-tenth of an ephah.

WATER FROM THE ROCK

17 Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but *there was* no water for the people to drink. 2Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink."

So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?"

3And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why *is* it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

4So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"

5And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. 6Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink."

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7So he called the name of the place Massah[a] and Meribah,[b] because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

VICTORY OVER THE AMALEKITES

8Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." 10So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12But Moses' hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

14Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." 15And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner;[a] 16for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation."

JETHRO'S ADVICE

18 And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people—that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. 2Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, 3with her two sons, of whom the name of one *was* Gershom (for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land")[a] 4and the name of the other *was* Eliezer[a] (for *he said,* "The God of my father *was* my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"); 5and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God. 6Now he had said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her."

7So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and kissed him. And they asked each other about *their* well-being, and they went into the tent. 8And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come

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17:7 [a]Literally *Tempted* [b]Literally *Contention* **17:15** [a]Hebrew *YHWH Nissi* **18:3** [a]Compare Exodus 2:22 **18:4** [a]Literally *My God Is Help*

upon them on the way, and *how* the LORD had delivered them. 9Then Jethro rejoiced for all the good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. 10And Jethro said, "Blessed *be* the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, *and* who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 11Now I know that the LORD *is* greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, *He was* above them." 12Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took[a] a burnt offering and *other* sacrifices *to offer* to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

13And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. 14So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?"

15And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. 16When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."

17So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do *is* not good. 18Both you and these people who *are* with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself. 19Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. 20And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. 21Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 22And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be *that* every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear *the burden* with you. 23If you do this thing, and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace."

LEADERSHIP
What makes a good leader?
Exodus 18:21

24So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. 25And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 26So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves.

27Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own land.

ISRAEL AT MOUNT SINAI

19 In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came *to* the Wilderness of Sinai. 2For they had departed from Rephidim, had come *to* the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.

3And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. 6And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

7So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. 9And the LORD said to

18:12 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Septuagint; Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *offered.*

MAKING IT REAL // EXODUS 19:5, 6

God's Special Treasure When you hear the word *priest*, what do you think of? Maybe you picture a person standing before a congregation wearing a robe or a special collar—something that identifies the person as holy. You probably think of that person as someone who has instant access to God. You may even think that person loves God more than you do.

Since most people have this exalted idea of what a priest is, it's kind of a shock that God told Moses to tell the whole nation of Israel that they would serve Him as priests. Later God appointed men to wear special clothes and to lead religious ceremonies. But He didn't leave the rest of the population to be just "regular" people. In some way, God wanted every one of the Israelites to serve Him as a priest.

Because much of what happened to Israel is a shadow, or a picture, of what God intends for all Christians, what God told Moses applies to you, too. First Peter 2:9 says, "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people." But don't think you have to go to seminary just yet. Being a priest isn't about wearing special clothes or conducting a religious service. It's about dedicating your whole life and heart to God, no matter what you decide to do for a living. It's about serving Him out of a pure heart and knowing that, because of Jesus, you've got your own IM connection to heaven—and God is always logged on! So even if you don't become a pastor or a missionary, you are still a "special treasure" in God's sight and you have the privilege of serving Him as a priest. (See also: 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6.)

Words to Live By

Special treasure: The Old Testament word translated in Exodus 19:5 as "special treasure" is *cegullah* (seg-ool-law'). It means "a treasured possession that is loved and protected." God chose you, He loves you, and He has a very important job for you to do. He will always love and protect those who belong to Him.

Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever."

So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

10Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. 11And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. 12You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves *that* you do *not* go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. 13Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot *with an arrow;* whether man or beast, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain."

14So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. 15And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not come near *your* wives."

16Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. 17And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain[a] quaked greatly. 19And when the blast of

19:18 [a]Septuagint reads *all the people.*

the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. 20Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

21And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. 22Also let the priests who come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them."

23But Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, 'Set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it.'"

24Then the LORD said to him, "Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them." 25So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

20 And God spoke all these words, saying:

Exodus 20:2–17

The Ten Commandments are God's laws for living. They apply to us today every bit as much as they applied to the Israelites in the wilderness. God's morals do not change.

2"I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3"You shall have no other gods before Me.

4"You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; 5you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, 6but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

7"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

8"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. 11For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

12"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

13"You shall not murder.

14"You shall not commit adultery.

15"You shall not steal.

16"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

HONESTY

Is honesty a command from God?

Exodus 20:16

17"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor's."

THE PEOPLE AFRAID OF GOD'S PRESENCE

18Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it,* they trembled and stood afar off. 19Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

MIR MAKING IT REAL // EXODUS 20:12

Parent Problems Parents can really get on your last nerve. Sometimes it seems they want you to be just like them, no matter what you think of it. What should you do if your parents are always on your case about the way you choose to live? The answer to this question lies in the big principle of Exodus 20:12—honor your father and your mother.

Parents aren't in this world to make your life difficult or keep you from being the person God created you to be. They are in your life to help you grow into the very best version of yourself. Though it may be nearly impossible to understand their choices or demands at times, try to trust that they only want what's best for you.

The next time your parents decide to keep you from doing something or won't let you have your way, try treating them with respect instead of anger and rebellion. You may be shocked at how rational and understanding they can be when they don't have to fight with you to get you to do the right thing.

Growing in your faith means that you always try to live your life according to the truth in the Bible. Whether you like it or not, God says to honor your parents. It may be difficult at times to obey God's command; but anytime God says we must do something, He will be faithful to give us the ability to do as He asks. (See also: Eph. 6:1–3; Col. 3:20.)

Words to Live By

Honor: The word translated in Exodus 20:12 as "honor" is the Hebrew word *kabad* (kaw-bade'). In the original language, this word means "to consider something to have great importance and value." When we honor someone, we pay close attention to what they say and put great value on their opinions. To honor a parent means to realize how important they are in our lives, obey them, and treat them with great respect.

20 And Moses said to the people, "Do not
fear; for God has come to test you, and that
His fear may be before you, so that you may
not sin." 21 So the people stood afar off, but
Moses drew near the thick darkness where
God *was*.

THE LAW OF THE ALTAR

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Thus
you shall say to the children of Israel: 'You
have seen that I have talked with you from
heaven. 23 You shall not make *anything to*
be with Me—gods of silver or gods of gold
you shall not make for yourselves. 24 An
altar of earth you shall make for Me, and
you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offer-
ings and your peace offerings, your sheep
and your oxen. In every place where I rec-
ord My name I will come to you, and I will
bless you. 25 And if you make Me an altar of
stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone;
for if you use your tool on it, you have pro-
faned it. 26 Nor shall you go up by steps to
My altar, that your nakedness may not be
exposed on it.'

THE LAW CONCERNING SERVANTS

21 "Now these *are* the judgments
which you shall set before
them: 2 If you buy a Hebrew
servant, he shall serve six years; and in the
seventh he shall go out free and pay noth-
ing. 3 If he comes in by himself, he shall
go out by himself; if he *comes in* married,
then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his
master has given him a wife, and she has
borne him sons or daughters, the wife and
her children shall be her master's, and he
shall go out by himself. 5 But if the servant
plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and
my children; I will not go out free,' 6 then
his master shall bring him to the judges.
He shall also bring him to the door, or to
the doorpost, and his master shall pierce
his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him
forever.

7"And if a man sells his daughter to be
a female slave, she shall not go out as the
male slaves do. 8If she does not please her
master, who has betrothed her to him-
self, then he shall let her be redeemed. He
shall have no right to sell her to a foreign
people, since he has dealt deceitfully with
her. 9And if he has betrothed her to his
son, he shall deal with her according to
the custom of daughters. 10If he takes an-
other *wife,* he shall not diminish her food,
her clothing, and her marriage rights.
11And if he does not do these three for her,
then she shall go out free, without *paying*
money.

THE LAW CONCERNING VIOLENCE

12"He who strikes a man so that he dies
shall surely be put to death. 13However, if
he did not lie in wait, but God delivered
him into his hand, then I will appoint for
you a place where he may flee.
14"But if a man acts with premeditation
against his neighbor, to kill him by treach-
ery, you shall take him from My altar, that
he may die.
15"And he who strikes his father or his
mother shall surely be put to death.
16"He who kidnaps a man and sells him,
or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be
put to death.
17"And he who curses his father or his
mother shall surely be put to death.
18"If men contend with each other, and
one strikes the other with a stone or with
his fist, and he does not die but is confined
to *his* bed, 19if he rises again and walks
about outside with his staff, then he who
struck *him* shall be acquitted. He shall only
pay *for* the loss of his time, and shall pro-
vide *for him* to be thoroughly healed.
20"And if a man beats his male or female
servant with a rod, so that he dies un-
der his hand, he shall surely be punished.
21Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a
day or two, he shall not be punished; for he
is his property.
22"If men fight, and hurt a woman with
child, so that she gives birth prematurely,
yet no harm follows, he shall surely be pun-
ished accordingly as the woman's husband
imposes on him; and he shall pay as the
judges *determine.* 23But if *any* harm fol-
lows, then you shall give life for life, 24eye
for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot
for foot, 25burn for burn, wound for wound,
stripe for stripe.

ABORTION
Does God care for the unborn?
Exodus 21:22–25

26"If a man strikes the eye of his male or
female servant, and destroys it, he shall let
him go free for the sake of his eye. 27And if
he knocks out the tooth of his male or fe-
male servant, he shall let him go free for
the sake of his tooth.

ANIMAL CONTROL LAWS

28"If an ox gores a man or a woman to
death, then the ox shall surely be stoned,
and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the
owner of the ox *shall be* acquitted. 29But
if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in
times past, and it has been made known to
his owner, and he has not kept it confined,
so that it has killed a man or a woman,
the ox shall be stoned and its owner also
shall be put to death. 30If there is imposed
on him a sum of money, then he shall pay
to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on
him. 31Whether it has gored a son or gored
a daughter, according to this judgment
it shall be done to him. 32If the ox gores
a male or female servant, he shall give to
their master thirty shekels of silver, and the
ox shall be stoned.
33"And if a man opens a pit, or if a man
digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox
or a donkey falls in it, 34the owner of the pit
shall make *it* good; he shall give money to
their owner, but the dead *animal* shall be his.
35"If one man's ox hurts another's, so
that it dies, then they shall sell the live
ox and divide the money from it; and the
dead *ox* they shall also divide. 36Or if it was
known that the ox tended to thrust in time
past, and its owner has not kept it con-
fined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the
dead animal shall be his own.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROPERTY

22 "If a man steals an ox or a
sheep, and slaughters it or sells
it, he shall restore five oxen for

an ox and four sheep for a sheep. [2]If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, *there shall be* no guilt for his bloodshed. [3]If the sun has risen on him, *there shall be* guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. [4]If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall restore double.

[5]"If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.

[6]"If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

[7]"If a man delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. [8]If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the judges *to see* whether he has put his hand into his neighbor's goods.

[9]"For any kind of trespass, *whether it concerns* an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, *or* for any kind of lost thing which *another* claims to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; *and* whomever the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor. [10]If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies, is hurt, or driven away, no one seeing *it,* [11]*then* an oath of the LORD shall be between them both, that he has not put his hand into his neighbor's goods; and the owner of it shall accept *that,* and he shall not make *it* good. [12]But if, in fact, it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it. [13]If it is torn to pieces *by a beast, then* he shall bring it as evidence, *and* he shall not make good what was torn.

[14]"And if a man borrows *anything* from his neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not *being* with it, he

MIR MAKING IT REAL // EXODUS 22:18

Enemy Territory "You shall not . . . practice divination or soothsaying"! That's what Leviticus 19:26 says. Don't even think about it. The world of witchcraft and black magic is very real, horribly powerful, and totally controlled by Satan. Experimenting with spells and curses is asking Satan to use his power for you. He will, but not without a trade. He'll want something from you in exchange for his power. People who experiment with witchcraft can really get messed up. They start out by just letting Satan have a tiny part of them. But every time they ask Satan to use his power for them, he takes over a little more; then before they know it he's totally taken over and is running their entire lives.

Have nothing to do with witches, Satan worship, black magic, animal sacrifice, even Wicca (or "white witchcraft")—anything that promotes darkness and evil. Some of Satan's schemes to get our attention are easy to spot, but others are sneaky. Be on the lookout for movies, books, music, video games, Web sites, even social media pages that make "magic" or witchcraft seem harmless and fun, and then stay away. Witchcraft and black magic—anything that tries to make Satan's power seem appealing—are dangerous. Playing with them is like playing with fire, and you will most definitely get burned. (See also: Lev. 19:26; 20:6; Phil. 4:8; 1 Thess. 5:21, 22; Rev. 21:8.)

Words to Live By

Satan: The name for Satan is totally recognizable even in the original languages of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. In the Old Testament he is called Satan, in the New, he is called Satanas. The meaning is the same no matter where we encounter his name; he is the enemy, the one who wants to see you lose, the adversary who never stops trying to destroy anything or anyone that God loves.

shall surely make *it* good. 15If its owner *was* with it, he shall not make *it* good; if it *was* hired, it came for its hire.

MORAL AND CEREMONIAL PRINCIPLES

16"If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her *to be* his wife. 17If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins.

18"You shall not permit a sorceress to live.

19"Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death.

20"He who sacrifices to *any* god, except to the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.

21"You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

22"You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. 23If you afflict them in any way, *and* they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; 24and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

Exodus 22:21–24

The law was serious business among the Israelites, who considered all crimes to be against God. The people were responsible for treating each other fairly. Those who didn't were punished publicly.

25"If you lend money to *any of* My people *who are* poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest. 26If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. 27For that *is* his only covering, it *is* his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I *am* gracious.

28"You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

29"You shall not delay *to offer* the first of your ripe produce and your juices. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me. 30Likewise you shall do with your oxen *and* your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me.

31"And you shall be holy men to Me: you shall not eat meat torn *by beasts* in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

JUSTICE FOR ALL

23 "You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. 2You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert *justice.* 3You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.

GOSSIP

What does God say about gossip?

Exodus 23:1

4"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. 5If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.

6"You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. 7Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked. 8And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous.

9"Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

THE LAW OF SABBATHS

10"Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, 11but the seventh *year* you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard *and* your olive grove. 12Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.

13"And in all that I have said to you, be
circumspect and make no mention of the
name of other gods, nor let it be heard from
your mouth.

THREE ANNUAL FEASTS

14"Three times you shall keep a feast to
Me in the year: 15You shall keep the Feast
of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleav-
ened bread seven days, as I commanded
you, at the time appointed in the month of
Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none
shall appear before Me empty); 16and the
Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your la-
bors which you have sown in the field; and
the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the
year, when you have gathered in *the fruit of*
your labors from the field.

17"Three times in the year all your males
shall appear before the Lord GOD.[a]

18"You shall not offer the blood of My
sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the
fat of My sacrifice remain until morning.
19The first of the firstfruits of your land you
shall bring into the house of the LORD your
God. You shall not boil a young goat in its
mother's milk.

THE ANGEL AND THE PROMISES

20"Behold, I send an Angel before you to
keep you in the way and to bring you into
the place which I have prepared. 21Beware
of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke
Him, for He will not pardon your trans-
gressions; for My name *is* in Him. 22But if
you indeed obey His voice and do all that I
speak, then I will be an enemy to your ene-
mies and an adversary to your adversaries.
23For My Angel will go before you and bring
you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and
the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the
Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut
them off. 24You shall not bow down to their
gods, nor serve them, nor do according
to their works; but you shall utterly over-
throw them and completely break down
their *sacred* pillars.

25"So you shall serve the LORD your God,
and He will bless your bread and your wa-
ter. And I will take sickness away from the
midst of you. 26No one shall suffer miscar-
riage or be barren in your land; I will fulfill
the number of your days.

27"I will send My fear before you, I will
cause confusion among all the people to
whom you come, and will make all your
enemies turn *their* backs to you. 28And I
will send hornets before you, which shall
drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the
Hittite from before you. 29I will not drive
them out from before you in one year, lest
the land become desolate and the beasts
of the field become too numerous for you.
30Little by little I will drive them out from
before you, until you have increased, and
you inherit the land. 31And I will set your
bounds from the Red Sea to the sea, Philis-
tia, and from the desert to the River.[a] For I
will deliver the inhabitants of the land into
your hand, and you shall drive them out
before you. 32You shall make no covenant
with them, nor with their gods. 33They shall
not dwell in your land, lest they make you
sin against Me. For *if* you serve their gods,
it will surely be a snare to you."

ISRAEL AFFIRMS THE COVENANT

24 Now He said to Moses, "Come
up to the LORD, you and Aaron,
Nadab and Abihu, and seventy
of the elders of Israel, and worship from
afar. 2And Moses alone shall come near the
LORD, but they shall not come near; nor
shall the people go up with him."

3So Moses came and told the people all
the words of the LORD and all the judg-
ments. And all the people answered with
one voice and said, "All the words which
the LORD has said we will do." 4And Moses
wrote all the words of the LORD. And he
rose early in the morning, and built an altar
at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pil-
lars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.
5Then he sent young men of the children of
Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sac-
rificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD.
6And Moses took half the blood and put *it*
in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled
on the altar. 7Then he took the Book of the
Covenant and read in the hearing of the
people. And they said, "All that the LORD
has said we will do, and be obedient." 8And
Moses took the blood, sprinkled *it* on the
people, and said, "This is the blood of the
covenant which the LORD has made with
you according to all these words."

23:17 [a]Hebrew *YHWH,* usually translated *LORD* **23:31** [a]Hebrew *Nahar,* the Euphrates

Exodus 24:8

The sprinkling of blood as a covenant promise was serious business. The people entering into the covenant were literally saying, "We would rather die than break our promise."

ON THE MOUNTAIN WITH GOD

9Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 10and they saw the God of Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in *its* clarity. 11But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.

12Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

13So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. 14And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur *are* with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them." 15Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain.

16Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17The sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. 18So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

OFFERINGS FOR THE SANCTUARY

25 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. 3And this *is* the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; 4blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* fine linen, and goats' *hair;* 5ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; 6oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; 7onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. 8And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. 9According to all that I show you, *that is,* the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make *it.*

THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY

10"And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. 11And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around. 12You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in its four corners; two rings *shall be* on one side, and two rings on the other side. 13And you shall make poles *of* acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. 14You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. 15The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. 16And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you.

Exodus 25:10

The acacia wood used to build the ark of the covenant was strong enough to withstand hungry insects and preserve the contents of the chest. These trees still grow in the Sinai Desert, southern Palestine, and Egypt.

17"You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length and a cubit and a half its width. 18And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it *of one piece* with the mercy seat. 20And the cherubim shall stretch out *their* wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cheru-

bim *shall be* toward the mercy seat. 21You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. 22And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which *are* on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

THE TABLE FOR THE SHOWBREAD

23"You shall also make a table of acacia wood; two cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. 24And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold all around. 25You shall make for it a frame of a handbreadth all around, and you shall make a gold molding for the frame all around. 26And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners that *are* at its four legs. 27The rings shall be close to the frame, as holders for the poles to bear the table. 28And you shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be carried with them. 29You shall make its dishes, its pans, its pitchers, and its bowls for pouring. You shall make them of pure gold. 30And you shall set the showbread on the table before Me always.

THE GOLD LAMPSTAND

31"You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and flowers shall be *of one piece.* 32And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side. 33Three bowls *shall be* made like almond *blossoms* on one branch, *with* an *ornamental* knob and a flower, and three bowls made like almond *blossoms* on the other branch, *with* an *ornamental* knob and a flower—and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand. 34On the lampstand itself four bowls *shall be* made like almond *blossoms, each with* its *ornamental* knob and flower. 35And *there shall be* a knob under the *first* two branches of the same, a knob under the *second* two branches of the same, and a knob under the *third* two branches of the same, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand. 36Their knobs and their branches *shall be of one piece;* all of it *shall be* one hammered piece of pure gold. 37You shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it. 38And its wick-trimmers and their trays *shall be* of pure gold. 39It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils. 40And see to it that you make *them* according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

THE TABERNACLE

26 "Moreover you shall make the tabernacle *with* ten curtains *of* fine woven linen and blue, purple, and scarlet *thread;* with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them. 2The length of each curtain *shall be* twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits. And every one of the curtains shall have the same measurements. 3Five curtains shall be coupled to one another, and *the other* five curtains *shall be* coupled to one another. 4And you shall make loops of blue *yarn* on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of *one* set, and likewise you shall do on the outer edge of *the other* curtain of the second set. 5Fifty loops you shall make in the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain that *is* on the end of the second set, that the loops may be clasped to one another. 6And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle.

7"You shall also make curtains of goats' *hair,* to be a tent over the tabernacle. You shall make eleven curtains. 8The length of each curtain *shall be* thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; and the eleven curtains shall all have the same measurements. 9And you shall couple five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves, and you shall double over the sixth curtain at the forefront of the tent. 10You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in *one* set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain of the second set. 11And you shall make fifty bronze clasps, put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be

one. 12The remnant that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. 13And a cubit on one side and a cubit on the other side, of what remains of the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and on that side, to cover it.

14"You shall also make a covering of ram skins dyed red for the tent, and a covering of badger skins above that.

15"And for the tabernacle you shall make the boards of acacia wood, standing upright. 16Ten cubits *shall be* the length of a board, and a cubit and a half *shall be* the width of each board. 17Two tenons *shall be* in each board for binding one to another. Thus you shall make for all the boards of the tabernacle. 18And you shall make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side. 19You shall make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards: two sockets under each of the boards for its two tenons. 20And for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, *there shall be* twenty boards 21and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under each of the boards. 22For the far side of the tabernacle, westward, you shall make six boards. 23And you shall also make two boards for the two back corners of the tabernacle. 24They shall be coupled together at the bottom and they shall be coupled together at the top by one ring. Thus it shall be for both of them. They shall be for the two corners. 25So there shall be eight boards with their sockets of silver—sixteen sockets—two sockets under each of the boards.

Exodus 26:30

The tabernacle, or sacred tent, was the place where the Israelites worshiped the Lord. It had to be built to the Lord's exact instructions. God gave exact directions to construct every element of the tabernacle and each article in it. The tabernacle was to provide a place where God could live among His people.

26"And you shall make bars of acacia wood: five for the boards on one side of the tabernacle, 27five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the far side westward. 28The middle bar shall pass through the midst of the boards from end to end. 29You shall overlay the boards with gold, make their rings of gold *as* holders for the bars, and overlay the bars with gold. 30And you shall raise up the tabernacle according to its pattern which you were shown on the mountain.

31"You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. 32You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia *wood* overlaid with gold. Their hooks *shall be* gold, upon four sockets of silver. 33And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy *place* and the Most Holy. 34You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy. 35You shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand across from the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south; and you shall put the table on the north side.

36"You shall make a screen for the door of the tabernacle, *woven of* blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. 37And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia *wood,* and overlay them with gold; their hooks *shall be* gold, and you shall cast five sockets of bronze for them.

THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING

27 "You shall make an altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide—the altar shall be square—and its height *shall be* three cubits. 2You shall make its horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it. And you shall overlay it with bronze. 3Also you shall make its pans to receive its ashes, and its shovels and its basins and its forks and its firepans; you shall make all its utensils of bronze. 4You shall make a grate for it, a network of bronze; and on the network you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. 5You shall put it under the rim of the altar beneath, that the network may be midway up the altar. 6And you shall make poles for the altar, poles

of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. 7The poles shall be put in the rings, and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar to bear it. 8You shall make it hollow with boards; as it was shown you on the mountain, so shall they make *it.*

THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE

9"You shall also make the court of the tabernacle. For the south side *there shall be* hangings for the court *made of* fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long for one side. 10And its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets *shall be* bronze. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *shall be* silver. 11Likewise along the length of the north side *there shall be* hangings one hundred *cubits* long, with its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of bronze, and the hooks of the pillars and their bands of silver.

12"And along the width of the court on the west side *shall be* hangings of fifty cubits, with their ten pillars and their ten sockets. 13The width of the court on the east side *shall be* fifty cubits. 14The hangings on *one* side *of the gate shall be* fifteen cubits, *with* their three pillars and their three sockets. 15And on the other side *shall be* hangings of fifteen *cubits, with* their three pillars and their three sockets.

16"For the gate of the court *there shall be* a screen twenty cubits long, *woven of* blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. It *shall have* four pillars and four sockets. 17All the pillars around the court shall have bands of silver; their hooks *shall be* of silver and their sockets of bronze. 18The length of the court *shall be* one hundred cubits, the width fifty throughout, and the height five cubits, *made of* fine woven linen, and its sockets of bronze. 19All the utensils of the tabernacle for all its service, all its pegs, and all the pegs of the court, *shall be* of bronze.

THE CARE OF THE LAMPSTAND

20"And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. 21In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which *is* before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the LORD. *It shall be* a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.

GARMENTS FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

28 "Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron *and* Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. 3So you shall speak to all *who are* gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. 4And these *are* the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod,[a] a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest.

THE EPHOD

5"They shall take the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and the fine linen, 6and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, *and* scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, artistically worked. 7It shall have two shoulder straps joined at its two edges, and *so* it shall be joined together. 8And the intricately woven band of the ephod, which *is* on it, shall be of the same workmanship, *made of* gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen.

9"Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: 10six of their names on one stone and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth. 11With the work of an engraver in stone, *like* the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall set them in settings of gold. 12And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod *as* memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a memorial. 13You shall also make settings of gold, 14and you shall make two chains of pure gold like braided cords, and fasten the braided chains to the settings.

28:4 [a]That is, an ornamented vest

THE BREASTPLATE

15"You shall make the breastplate of judgment. Artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, you shall make it. 16It shall be doubled into a square: a span *shall be* its length, and a span *shall be* its width. 17And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: *The first* row *shall be* a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; *this shall be* the first row; 18the second row *shall be* a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; 19the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 20and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings. 21And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes.

22"You shall make chains for the breastplate at the end, like braided cords of pure gold. 23And you shall make two rings of gold for the breastplate, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. 24Then you shall put the two braided *chains* of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate; 25and the *other* two ends of the two braided *chains* you shall fasten to the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front.

26"You shall make two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which is on the inner side of the ephod. 27And two *other* rings of gold you shall make, and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the intricately woven band of the ephod. 28They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, using a blue cord, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod.

29"So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy *place,* as a memorial before the LORD continually. 30And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim,[a] and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD. So Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.

OTHER PRIESTLY GARMENTS

31"You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 32There shall be an opening for his head in the middle of it; it shall have a woven binding all around its opening, like the opening in a coat of mail, so that it does not tear. 33And upon its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, all around its hem, and bells of gold between them all around: 34a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe all around. 35And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound will be heard when he goes into the holy *place* before the LORD and when he comes out, that he may not die.

36"You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, *like* the engraving of a signet:

HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

37And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. 38So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

39"You shall skillfully weave the tunic of fine linen *thread,* you shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make the sash of woven work.

40"For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make hats for them, for glory and beauty. 41So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall anoint them, consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister to Me as priests. 42And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs. 43They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they come into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister in the holy *place,* that

28:30 [a]Literally *the Lights and the Perfections* (compare Leviticus 8:8)

they do not incur iniquity and die. *It shall be* a statute forever to him and his descendants after him.

AARON AND HIS SONS CONSECRATED

29 "And this is what you shall do to them to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests: Take one young bull and two rams without blemish, 2and unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil (you shall make them of wheat flour). 3You shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, with the bull and the two rams.

4"And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall wash them with water. 5Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the intricately woven band of the ephod. 6You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. 7And you shall take the anointing oil, pour *it* on his head, and anoint him. 8Then you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. 9And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.

10"You shall also have the bull brought before the tabernacle of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull. 11Then you shall kill the bull before the LORD, *by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 12You shall take *some* of the blood of the bull and put *it* on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour all the blood beside the base of the altar. 13And you shall take all the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them, and burn *them* on the altar. 14But the flesh of the bull, with its skin and its offal, you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It *is* a sin offering.

15"You shall also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram; 16and you shall kill the ram, and you shall take its blood and sprinkle *it* all around on the altar. 17Then you shall cut the ram in pieces, wash its entrails and its legs, and put *them* with its pieces and with its head. 18And you shall burn the whole ram on the altar. It *is* a burnt offering to the LORD; it *is* a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

19"You shall also take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram. 20Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put *it* on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. 21And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* on Aaron and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and he and his garments shall be hallowed, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.

22"Also you shall take the fat of the ram, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver, the two kidneys and the fat on them, the right thigh (for it *is* a ram of consecration), 23one loaf of bread, one cake *made with* oil, and one wafer from the basket of the unleavened bread that *is* before the LORD; 24and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and you shall wave them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 25You shall receive them back from their hands and burn *them* on the altar as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma before the LORD. It *is* an offering made by fire to the LORD.

26"Then you shall take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration and wave it *as* a wave offering before the LORD; and it shall be your portion. 27And from the ram of the consecration you shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering which is waved, and the thigh of the heave offering which is raised, of *that* which *is* for Aaron and of *that* which is for his sons. 28It shall be from the children of Israel *for* Aaron and his sons by a statute forever. For it is a heave offering; it shall be a heave offering from the children of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, *that is,* their heave offering to the LORD.

29"And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them.

30That son who becomes priest in his place
shall put them on for seven days, when he
enters the tabernacle of meeting to minis-
ter in the holy *place.*

31"And you shall take the ram of the
consecration and boil its flesh in the holy
place. 32Then Aaron and his sons shall eat
the flesh of the ram, and the bread that *is* in
the basket, *by* the door of the tabernacle of
meeting. 33They shall eat those things with
which the atonement was made, to conse-
crate *and* to sanctify them; but an outsider
shall not eat *them,* because they *are* holy.
34And if any of the flesh of the consecration
offerings, or of the bread, remains until the
morning, then you shall burn the remain-
der with fire. It shall not be eaten, because
it *is* holy.

35"Thus you shall do to Aaron and his
sons, according to all that I have com-
manded you. Seven days you shall con-
secrate them. 36And you shall offer a bull
every day *as* a sin offering for atonement.
You shall cleanse the altar when you make
atonement for it, and you shall anoint it
to sanctify it. 37Seven days you shall make
atonement for the altar and sanctify it.
And the altar shall be most holy. Whatever
touches the altar must be holy.[a]

THE DAILY OFFERINGS

38"Now this *is* what you shall offer on the
altar: two lambs of the first year, day by
day continually. 39One lamb you shall offer
in the morning, and the other lamb you
shall offer at twilight. 40With the one lamb
shall be one-tenth *of an ephah* of flour
mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed
oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine *as* a
drink offering. 41And the other lamb you
shall offer at twilight; and you shall offer
with it the grain offering and the drink
offering, as in the morning, for a sweet
aroma, an offering made by fire to the
LORD. 42*This shall be* a continual burnt
offering throughout your generations
at the door of the tabernacle of meeting
before the LORD, where I will meet you to
speak with you. 43And there I will meet
with the children of Israel, and *the taber-
nacle* shall be sanctified by My glory. 44So I
will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting
and the altar. I will also consecrate both
Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as
priests. 45I will dwell among the children
of Israel and will be their God. 46And they
shall know that I *am* the LORD their God,
who brought them up out of the land of
Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I *am*
the LORD their God.

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE

30 "You shall make an altar to
burn incense on; you shall
make it of acacia wood. 2A cubit
shall be its length and a cubit its width—it
shall be square—and two cubits *shall be* its
height. Its horns *shall be* of one piece with
it. 3And you shall overlay its top, its sides all
around, and its horns with pure gold; and
you shall make for it a molding of gold all
around. 4Two gold rings you shall make for
it, under the molding on both its sides. You
shall place *them* on its two sides, and they
will be holders for the poles with which to
bear it. 5You shall make the poles of acacia
wood, and overlay them with gold. 6And
you shall put it before the veil that *is* before
the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy
seat that *is* over the Testimony, where I will
meet with you.

Exodus 30:6

The mercy seat was considered to be God's earthly throne, where the Lord spoke to the high priest. It was located on the lid of the ark of the Testimony, between the two winged creatures on each end of the lid.

7"Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense
every morning; when he tends the lamps,
he shall burn incense on it. 8And when
Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall
burn incense on it, a perpetual incense
before the LORD throughout your genera-
tions. 9You shall not offer strange incense
on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering;
nor shall you pour a drink offering on it.
10And Aaron shall make atonement upon
its horns once a year with the blood of the
sin offering of atonement; once a year he
shall make atonement upon it through-
out your generations. It *is* most holy to the
LORD."

29:37 [a]Compare Numbers 4:15 and Haggai 2:11–13

THE RANSOM MONEY

11Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
12"When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when *you* number them. 13This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel *is* twenty gerahs). The half-shekel *shall be* an offering to the LORD. 14Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the LORD. 15The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when *you* give an offering to the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves. 16And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves."

THE BRONZE LAVER

17Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
18"You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, 19for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. 20When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. 21So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them—to him and his descendants throughout their generations."

THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL

22Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
23"Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred *shekels* of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty *shekels*), two hundred and fifty *shekels* of sweet-smelling cane, 24five hundred *shekels* of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. 25And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. 26With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; 27the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; 28the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. 29You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy.[a] 30And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister to Me as priests.

31"And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. 32It shall not be poured on man's flesh; nor shall you make *any other* like it, according to its composition. It *is* holy, *and* it shall be holy to you. 33Whoever compounds *any* like it, or whoever puts *any* of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people.'"

THE INCENSE

34And the LORD said to Moses: "Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with *these* sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. 35You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, *and* holy. 36And you shall beat *some* of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. 37But *as for* the incense which you shall make, you shall not make any for yourselves, according to its composition. It shall be to you holy for the LORD. 38Whoever makes *any* like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people."

ARTISANS FOR BUILDING THE TABERNACLE

31 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *manner of* workmanship, 4to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver,

30:29 [a]Compare Numbers 4:15 and Haggai 2:11–13

in bronze, 5in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all *manner of* workmanship.

6"And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you: 7the tabernacle of meeting, the ark of the Testimony and the mercy seat that *is* on it, and all the furniture of the tabernacle— 8the table and its utensils, the pure *gold* lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense, 9the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base— 10the garments of ministry,[a] the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests, 11and the anointing oil and sweet incense for the holy *place*. According to all that I have commanded you they shall do."

THE SABBATH LAW

12And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 13"Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it *is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that *you* may know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you. 14You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for *it is* holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does *any* work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. 15Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh *is* the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. 16Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations *as* a perpetual covenant. 17It *is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'"

18And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

THE GOLD CALF

32 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

2And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me." 3So all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron. 4And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf.

> ***Exodus 32:2–4***
> Bulls were popular worship objects in the ancient world. Centuries-old images of bulls have been found everywhere from the palaces of Crete, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, to the temples of Egypt.

Then they said, "This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

5So when Aaron saw *it,* he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow *is* a feast to the LORD." 6Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

7And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted *themselves.* 8They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'" 9And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it *is* a stiff-necked people! 10Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

11Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt

31:10 [a]Or *woven garments*

with great power and with a mighty hand?
12Why should the Egyptians speak, and say,
'He brought them out to harm them, to kill
them in the mountains, and to consume
them from the face of the earth'? Turn from
Your fierce wrath, and relent from this
harm to Your people. 13Remember Abra-
ham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to
whom You swore by Your own self, and said
to them, 'I will multiply your descendants
as the stars of heaven; and all this land that
I have spoken of I give to your descendants,
and they shall inherit *it* forever.'"[a] 14So the
LORD relented from the harm which He
said He would do to His people.

15And Moses turned and went down
from the mountain, and the two tablets of
the Testimony *were* in his hand. The tablets
were written on both sides; on the one *side*
and on the other they were written. 16Now
the tablets *were* the work of God, and the
writing *was* the writing of God engraved on
the tablets.

17And when Joshua heard the noise of
the people as they shouted, he said to Mo-
ses, "*There is* a noise of war in the camp."

18But he said:

"*It is* not the noise of the shout of
victory,
Nor the noise of the cry of defeat,
But the sound of singing I hear."

19So it was, as soon as he came near the
camp, that he saw the calf *and* the danc-
ing. So Moses' anger became hot, and he
cast the tablets out of his hands and broke
them at the foot of the mountain. 20Then
he took the calf which they had made,
burned *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to pow-
der; and he scattered *it* on the water and
made the children of Israel drink *it*. 21And
Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people
do to you that you have brought *so* great a
sin upon them?"

22So Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of
my lord become hot. You know the people,
that they *are set* on evil. 23For they said to
me, 'Make us gods that shall go before us;
as for this Moses, the man who brought us
out of the land of Egypt, we do not know
what has become of him.' 24And I said to
them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them
break *it* off.' So they gave *it* to me, and I cast
it into the fire, and this calf came out."

25Now when Moses saw that the people
were unrestrained (for Aaron had not re-
strained them, to *their* shame among their
enemies), 26then Moses stood in the en-
trance of the camp, and said, "Whoever *is*
on the LORD's side—*come* to me!" And all
the sons of Levi gathered themselves to-
gether to him. 27And he said to them, "Thus
says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man
put his sword on his side, and go in and out
from entrance to entrance throughout the
camp, and let every man kill his brother,
every man his companion, and every man
his neighbor.'" 28So the sons of Levi did ac-
cording to the word of Moses. And about
three thousand men of the people fell that
day. 29Then Moses said, "Consecrate your-
selves today to the LORD, that He may be-
stow on you a blessing this day, for every
man has opposed his son and his brother."

30Now it came to pass on the next day
that Moses said to the people, "You have
committed a great sin. So now I will go up
to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement
for your sin." 31Then Moses returned to the
LORD and said, "Oh, these people have com-
mitted a great sin, and have made for them-
selves a god of gold! 32Yet now, if You will for-
give their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out
of Your book which You have written."

33And the LORD said to Moses, "Who-
ever has sinned against Me, I will blot him
out of My book. 34Now therefore, go, lead
the people to *the place* of which I have
spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go
before you. Nevertheless, in the day when
I visit for punishment, I will visit punish-
ment upon them for their sin."

SIN
Does sin have consequences?
Exodus 32:34

35So the LORD plagued the people be-
cause of what they did with the calf which
Aaron made.

THE COMMAND TO LEAVE SINAI

33 Then the LORD said to Moses,
"Depart *and* go up from here,
you and the people whom you

32:13 [a]Genesis 13:15 and 22:17

have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.' 2And I will send *My* Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. 3*Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you *are* a stiff-necked people."

4And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. 5For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You *are* a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.'" 6So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb.

MOSES MEETS WITH THE LORD

7Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass *that* everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which *was* outside the camp. 8So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, *that* all the people rose, and each man stood *at* his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. 9And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle, and *the LORD* talked with Moses. 10All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing *at* the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man *in* his tent door. 11So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

THE PROMISE OF GOD'S PRESENCE

12Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' 13Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation *is* Your people."

14And He said, "My Presence will go *with you,* and I will give you rest."

15Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go *with us,* do not bring us up from here. 16For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who *are* upon the face of the earth."

17So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."

18And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

19Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." 20But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." 21And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. 22So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. 23Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

MOSES MAKES NEW TABLETS

34 And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first *ones,* and I will write on *these* tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. 2So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain. 3And no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain."

4So he cut two tablets of stone like the first *ones.* Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.

5Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed

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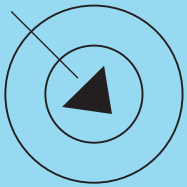
Goodness / Exodus 34:6

As we mature in our faith, we want to become more and more like the God we serve. Exodus 34:6 shows us many of God's attributes that we should strive for as best we can, such as goodness and truth. Paul also teaches us about goodness and truth in Romans 15:14, noting the people in Rome "also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."

It is interesting to note that Paul mentions they are full of goodness before he says they are able to admonish one another. This teaches us a pretty important lesson. We are often quick to notice and point out the flaws or sins in someone else's life. But if we do this without the right spirit (being full of goodness), we will simply pepper them with harsh words that can offend much more than help. When we approach people with a self-righteous and judgmental attitude, they may choose not to hear what we say because of how we say it. If our attempts to correct others begin with our desire to look smarter or godlier, then we are not helping at all.

However, if we are maturing in our faith and becoming more like God, we will be growing in goodness. And when we are full of goodness, our motives in helping others will be pure. The point won't be how smart we are; the point will be how God may use us to help the other person. And the other person will be more likely to sense the goodness inside of us and be open to what we have to say.

Being full of goodness means loving God with all your heart and letting His love and mercy fill your entire life. When you're full of God's goodness, it will begin to overflow and have a positive effect on everyone around you. And when others are touched by this godly goodness, they may want to find out where it came from. Then they too can meet the God of goodness who can change their lives forever.



PROMISE

God promises to do miracles.

"Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth" (Ex. 34:10a).

God said that He would do things "such as have not been done in all the earth." He sure kept that promise to the Israelites. He cut a path for them through the Jordan River (Josh. 3). He made the walls of Jericho fall down when the priests blew their trumpets (Josh. 6). He kept the sun from going down one day (Josh. 10:12–14). And all the miracles we read about in the Old Testament were just the beginning.

God did a lot of miracles in New Testament times, too. Jesus and His disciples often healed people. Jesus made blind eyes see. He made crippled legs walk. He made lepers whole. He even raised people from the dead. (You can read about all the miracles of Jesus in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.)

Today, a lot of people have stopped expecting to see God do miracles. Modern technology is now able to do things that used to require a miracle. Science can explain things that no one understood many years ago. Sometimes even people who do believe in miracles aren't on the lookout for them anymore. But that doesn't mean that they're not happening.

We live in a day of miracles. God's miracle-working power is alive and moving all over the world. Be on the lookout. He can do "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Exodus 11:9; Psalm 77:14; Daniel 6:27; Micah 7:15; Galatians 3:5

the name of the LORD. 6And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, 7keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty,* visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

Exodus 34:13

The wooden images were used in the worship of Asherah, who was similar to Venus, the Roman goddess of love. The Canaanites believed that Asherah, the wife of the fertility god Baal, had some special powers over fertility herself.

8So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. 9Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we *are* a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."

THE COVENANT RENEWED

10And He said: "Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you *are* shall see the work of the LORD. For it *is* an awesome thing that I will do with you. 11Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. 12Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst. 13But you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images

14(for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God), 15lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, 16and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.

WORSHIP
Should we worship anyone or anything besides God?
Exodus 34:14

17"You shall make no molded gods for yourselves.

18"The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, in the appointed time of the month of Abib; for in the month of Abib you came out from Egypt.

19"All that open the womb *are* Mine, and every male firstborn among your livestock, *whether* ox or sheep. 20But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem *him,* then you shall break his neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem.

"And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.

21"Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.

22"And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end.

23"Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel. 24For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year.

25"You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven, nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover be left until morning.

26"The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk."

27Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." 28So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.[a]

THE SHINING FACE OF MOSES

29Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony *were* in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. 30So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. 31Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. 32Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. 33And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. 34But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. 35And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

SABBATH REGULATIONS

35 Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, "These *are* the words which the LORD has commanded *you* to do: 2Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. 3You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day."

34:28 [a]Literally *Ten Words*

OFFERINGS FOR THE TABERNACLE

4And Moses spoke to all the congregation
of the children of Israel, saying, "This *is* the
thing which the LORD commanded, say-
ing: 5"Take from among you an offering to
the LORD. Whoever *is* of a willing heart,
let him bring it as an offering to the LORD:
gold, silver, and bronze; 6blue, purple, and
scarlet *thread,* fine linen, and goats' *hair;*
7ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and aca-
cia wood; 8oil for the light, and spices for
the anointing oil and for the sweet incense;
9onyx stones, and stones to be set in the
ephod and in the breastplate.

ARTICLES OF THE TABERNACLE

10All *who are* gifted artisans among you
shall come and make all that the LORD has
commanded: 11the tabernacle, its tent, its
covering, its clasps, its boards, its bars, its
pillars, and its sockets; 12the ark and its
poles, *with* the mercy seat, and the veil of
the covering; 13the table and its poles, all
its utensils, and the showbread; 14also the
lampstand for the light, its utensils, its
lamps, and the oil for the light; 15the in-
cense altar, its poles, the anointing oil, the
sweet incense, and the screen for the door
at the entrance of the tabernacle; 16the
altar of burnt offering with its bronze grat-
ing, its poles, all its utensils, *and* the laver
and its base; 17the hangings of the court, its
pillars, their sockets, and the screen for the
gate of the court; 18the pegs of the taberna-
cle, the pegs of the court, and their cords;
19the garments of ministry,[a] for ministering
in the holy *place*—the holy garments for
Aaron the priest and the garments of his
sons, to minister as priests.'"

THE TABERNACLE OFFERINGS PRESENTED

20And all the congregation of the children
of Israel departed from the presence of
Moses. 21Then everyone came whose heart
was stirred, and everyone whose spirit
was willing, *and* they brought the LORD's
offering for the work of the tabernacle of
meeting, for all its service, and for the holy
garments. 22They came, both men and
women, as many as had a willing heart,
and brought earrings and nose rings, rings
and necklaces, all jewelry of gold, that
is, every man who *made* an offering of
gold to the LORD. 23And every man, with
whom was found blue, purple, and scar-
let *thread,* fine linen, and goats' *hair,* red
skins of rams, and badger skins, brought
them. 24Everyone who offered an offer-
ing of silver or bronze brought the LORD's
offering. And everyone with whom was
found acacia wood for any work of the ser-
vice, brought *it.* 25All the women *who were*
gifted artisans spun yarn with their hands,
and brought what they had spun, of blue,
purple, *and* scarlet, and fine linen. 26And
all the women whose hearts stirred with
wisdom spun yarn of goats' *hair.* 27The rul-
ers brought onyx stones, and the stones
to be set in the ephod and in the breast-
plate, 28and spices and oil for the light,
for the anointing oil, and for the sweet
incense. 29The children of Israel brought a
freewill offering to the LORD, all the men
and women whose hearts were willing to
bring *material* for all kinds of work which
the LORD, by the hand of Moses, had com-
manded to be done.

GIVING
What kind of attitude should we have when we give?
Exodus 35:22

THE ARTISANS CALLED BY GOD

30And Moses said to the children of Israel,
"See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel
the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe
of Judah; 31and He has filled him with
the Spirit of God, in wisdom and under-
standing, in knowledge and all manner of
workmanship, 32to design artistic works,
to work in gold and silver and bronze,
33in cutting jewels for setting, in carving
wood, and to work in all manner of artistic
workmanship.

34"And He has put in his heart the abil-
ity to teach, *in* him and Aholiab the son of
Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35He has
filled them with skill to do all manner of
work of the engraver and the designer and
the tapestry maker, in blue, purple, and
scarlet *thread,* and fine linen, and of the
weaver—those who do every work and
those who design artistic works.

35:19 [a]Or *woven garments*

36 "And Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the LORD has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the LORD has commanded."

THE PEOPLE GIVE MORE THAN ENOUGH

2Then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, everyone whose heart was stirred, to come and do the work. 3And they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary. So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. 4Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work he was doing, 5and they spoke to Moses, saying, "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded *us* to do."

6So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the sanctuary." And the people were restrained from bringing, 7for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done—indeed too much.

BUILDING THE TABERNACLE

8Then all the gifted artisans among them who worked on the tabernacle made ten curtains woven of fine linen, and of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread; with* artistic designs of cherubim they made them. 9The length of each curtain *was* twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the curtains *were* all the same size. 10And he coupled five curtains to one another, and *the other* five curtains he coupled to one another. 11He made loops of blue *yarn* on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of one set; likewise he did on the outer edge of *the other* curtain of the second set. 12Fifty loops he made on one curtain, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain on the end of the second set; the loops held one *curtain* to another. 13And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains to one another with the clasps, that it might be one tabernacle.

14He made curtains of goats' *hair* for the tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven curtains. 15The length of each curtain *was* thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the eleven curtains *were* the same size. 16He coupled five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. 17And he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain of the second set. 18He also made fifty bronze clasps to couple the tent together, that it might be one. 19Then he made a covering for the tent of ram skins dyed red, and a covering of badger skins above *that.*

20For the tabernacle he made boards of acacia wood, standing upright. 21The length of each board *was* ten cubits, and the width of each board a cubit and a half. 22Each board had two tenons for binding one to another. Thus he made for all the boards of the tabernacle. 23And he made boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side. 24Forty sockets of silver he made to go under the twenty boards: two sockets under each of the boards for its two tenons. 25And for the other side of the tabernacle, the north side, he made twenty boards 26and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under each of the boards. 27For the west side of the tabernacle he made six boards. 28He also made two boards for the two back corners of the tabernacle. 29And they were coupled at the bottom and coupled together at the top by one ring. Thus he made both of them for the two corners. 30So there were eight boards and their sockets—sixteen sockets of silver—two sockets under each of the boards.

31And he made bars of acacia wood: five for the boards on one side of the tabernacle, 32five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle on the far side westward. 33And he made the middle bar to pass through the boards from one end to the other. 34He overlaid the boards with gold, made their rings of gold *to be* holders for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

35And he made a veil of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen; it was

worked *with* an artistic design of cherubim.
36 He made for it four pillars of acacia *wood,*
and overlaid them with gold, with their
hooks of gold; and he cast four sockets of
silver for them.

37 He also made a screen for the tab-
ernacle door, of blue, purple, and scarlet
thread, and fine woven linen, made by
a weaver, 38 and its five pillars with their
hooks. And he overlaid their capitals and
their rings with gold, but their five sockets
were bronze.

MAKING THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY

37 Then Bezalel made the ark of
acacia wood; two and a half cu-
bits *was* its length, a cubit and
a half its width, and a cubit and a half its
height. 2 He overlaid it with pure gold inside
and outside, and made a molding of gold
all around it. 3 And he cast for it four rings
of gold *to be set* in its four corners: two rings
on one side, and two rings on the other side
of it. 4 He made poles of acacia wood, and
overlaid them with gold. 5 And he put the
poles into the rings at the sides of the ark,
to bear the ark. 6 He also made the mercy
seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits *was*
its length and a cubit and a half its width.
7 He made two cherubim of beaten gold; he
made them of one piece at the two ends
of the mercy seat: 8 one cherub at one end
on this side, and the other cherub at the
other end on that side. He made the cheru-
bim at the two ends *of one piece* with the
mercy seat. 9 The cherubim spread out *their*
wings above, *and* covered the mercy seat
with their wings. They faced one another;
the faces of the cherubim were toward the
mercy seat.

MAKING THE TABLE FOR THE SHOWBREAD

10 He made the table of acacia wood; two
cubits *was* its length, a cubit its width, and
a cubit and a half its height. 11 And he over-
laid it with pure gold, and made a molding
of gold all around it. 12 Also he made a
frame of a handbreadth all around it, and
made a molding of gold for the frame all
around it. 13 And he cast for it four rings
of gold, and put the rings on the four cor-
ners that *were* at its four legs. 14 The rings
were close to the frame, as holders for the
poles to bear the table. 15 And he made the
poles of acacia wood to bear the table, and
overlaid them with gold. 16 He made of pure
gold the utensils which were on the table:
its dishes, its cups, its bowls, and its pitch-
ers for pouring.

> ***Exodus 37:17, 18***
> The lampstand had seven branches, with a lamp on each branch. The lamps themselves were small cups that were partially closed on top, with an opening just large enough for a wick. The lamp fuel of choice in ancient days was olive oil.

MAKING THE GOLD LAMPSTAND

17 He also made the lampstand of pure gold;
of hammered work he made the lamp-
stand. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its
ornamental knobs, and its flowers were
of the same piece. 18 And six branches
came out of its sides: three branches of
the lampstand out of one side, and three
branches of the lampstand out of the other
side. 19 There were three bowls made like
almond *blossoms* on one branch, with an
ornamental knob and a flower, and three
bowls made like almond *blossoms* on the
other branch, with an *ornamental* knob
and a flower—and so for the six branches
coming out of the lampstand. 20 And on the
lampstand itself *were* four bowls made like
almond *blossoms, each with* its *ornamen-
tal* knob and flower. 21 *There was* a knob
under the *first* two branches of the same,
a knob under the *second* two branches of
the same, and a knob under the *third* two
branches of the same, according to the six
branches extending from it. 22 Their knobs
and their branches were of one piece; all of
it *was* one hammered piece of pure gold.
23 And he made its seven lamps, its wick-
trimmers, and its trays of pure gold. 24 Of a
talent of pure gold he made it, with all its
utensils.

MAKING THE ALTAR OF INCENSE

25 He made the incense altar of acacia
wood. Its length *was* a cubit and its width a
cubit—*it was* square—and two cubits *was*

its height. Its horns were *of one piece* with it.
26And he overlaid it with pure gold: its top,
its sides all around, and its horns. He also
made for it a molding of gold all around it.
27He made two rings of gold for it under its
molding, by its two corners on both sides,
as holders for the poles with which to bear
it. 28And he made the poles of acacia wood,
and overlaid them with gold.

MAKING THE ANOINTING OIL AND THE INCENSE

29He also made the holy anointing oil and
the pure incense of sweet spices, according
to the work of the perfumer.

MAKING THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING

38 He made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood; five cubits *was* its length and five cubits its width—*it was* square—and its height *was* three cubits. 2He made its horns on its four corners; the horns were *of one piece* with it. And he overlaid it with bronze. 3He made all the utensils for the altar: the pans, the shovels, the basins, the forks, and the firepans; all its utensils he made of bronze. 4And he made a grate of bronze network for the altar, under its rim, midway from the bottom. 5He cast four rings for the four corners of the bronze grating, *as* holders for the poles. 6And he made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with bronze. 7Then he put the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to bear it. He made the altar hollow with boards.

MAKING THE BRONZE LAVER

8He made the laver of bronze and its base
of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the
serving women who assembled at the door
of the tabernacle of meeting.

MAKING THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE

9Then he made the court on the south side;
the hangings of the court *were of* fine wo-
ven linen, one hundred cubits long. 10There
were twenty pillars for them, with twenty
bronze sockets. The hooks of the pillars
and their bands *were* silver. 11On the north
side *the hangings were* one hundred cubits
long, with twenty pillars and their twenty
bronze sockets. The hooks of the pillars
and their bands *were* silver. 12And on the
west side *there were* hangings of fifty cubits,
with ten pillars and their ten sockets. The
hooks of the pillars and their bands *were*
silver. 13For the east side *the hangings were*
fifty cubits. 14The hangings of one side *of*
the gate were fifteen cubits *long, with* their
three pillars and their three sockets, 15and
the same for the other side of the court
gate; on this side and that *were* hangings
of fifteen cubits, *with* their three pillars
and their three sockets. 16All the hangings
of the court all around *were of* fine woven
linen. 17The sockets for the pillars *were*
bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their
bands *were* silver, and the overlay of their
capitals *was* silver; and all the pillars of the
court had bands of silver. 18The screen for
the gate of the court *was* woven of blue,
purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine wo-
ven linen. The length *was* twenty cubits,
and the height along its width *was* five
cubits, corresponding to the hangings of
the court. 19And *there were* four pillars *with*
their four sockets of bronze; their hooks
were silver, and the overlay of their capitals
and their bands *was* silver. 20All the pegs of
the tabernacle, and of the court all around,
were bronze.

MATERIALS OF THE TABERNACLE

21This is the inventory of the tabernacle,
the tabernacle of the Testimony, which was
counted according to the commandment
of Moses, for the service of the Levites,
by the hand of Ithamar, son of Aaron the
priest.

> ***Exodus 38:21–31***
> The inner part of the tabernacle was the worship area. Only gold and silver, the finest and most expensive metals, were good enough to be used as decorations for the holy area. The outer area of the tabernacle was decorated with bronze, a less expensive metal.

22Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of
the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD
had commanded Moses. 23And with him
was Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the

tribe of Dan, an engraver and designer, a weaver of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine linen.

24All the gold that was used in all the work of the holy *place,* that is, the gold of the offering, was twenty-nine talents and seven hundred and thirty shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. 25And the silver from those who were numbered of the congregation *was* one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: 26a bekah for each man (*that is,* half a shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for everyone included in the numbering from twenty years old and above, for six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty *men.* 27And from the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil: one hundred sockets from the hundred talents, one talent for each socket. 28Then from the one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five *shekels* he made hooks for the pillars, overlaid their capitals, and made bands for them.

29The offering of bronze *was* seventy talents and two thousand four hundred shekels. 30And with it he made the sockets for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, the bronze altar, the bronze grating for it, and all the utensils for the altar, 31the sockets for the court all around, the bases for the court gate, all the pegs for the tabernacle, and all the pegs for the court all around.

MAKING THE GARMENTS OF THE PRIESTHOOD

39 Of the blue, purple, and scarlet *thread* they made garments of ministry,[a] for ministering in the holy *place,* and made the holy garments for Aaron, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

MAKING THE EPHOD

2He made the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine woven linen. 3And they beat the gold into thin sheets and cut *it into* threads, to work *it* in *with* the blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and the fine linen, *into* artistic designs. 4They made shoulder straps for it to couple *it* together; it was coupled together at its two edges. 5And the intricately woven band of his ephod that *was* on it *was* of the same workmanship, *woven of* gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and *of* fine woven linen, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6And they set onyx stones, enclosed in settings of gold; they were engraved, as signets are engraved, with the names of the sons of Israel. 7He put them on the shoulders of the ephod *as* memorial stones for the sons of Israel, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

MAKING THE BREASTPLATE

8And he made the breastplate, artistically woven like the workmanship of the ephod, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine woven linen. 9They made the breastplate square by doubling it; a span *was* its length and a span its width when doubled. 10And they set in it four rows of stones: a row with a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald was the first row; 11the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; 12the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 13the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. *They were* enclosed in settings of gold in their mountings. 14*There were* twelve stones according to the names of the sons of Israel: according to their names, *engraved like* a signet, each one with its own name according to the twelve tribes. 15And they made chains for the breastplate at the ends, like braided cords of pure gold. 16They also made two settings of gold and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. 17And they put the two braided *chains* of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate. 18The two ends of the two braided *chains* they fastened in the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front. 19And they made two rings of gold and put *them* on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which *was* on the inward side of the ephod. 20They made two *other* gold rings and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the intricately woven band of the ephod. 21And they bound the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord, so that it would

39:1 [a]Or *woven garments*

be above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate would not come loose from the ephod, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

MAKING THE OTHER PRIESTLY GARMENTS

22He made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. 23And *there was* an opening in the middle of the robe, like the opening in a coat of mail, *with* a woven binding all around the opening, so that it would not tear. 24They made on the hem of the robe pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, and of fine woven *linen.* 25And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates on the hem of the robe all around between the pomegranates: 26a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe to minister in, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

> ***Exodus 39:24–26***
> In ancient times, purple was worn only by the wealthy. The dye came from a shellfish that lived in the Mediterranean Sea. Preparing it was difficult and expensive. Red and blue dyes were also very valuable.

27They made tunics, artistically woven of fine linen, for Aaron and his sons, 28a turban of fine linen, exquisite hats of fine linen, short trousers of fine woven linen, 29and a sash of fine woven linen with blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* made by a weaver, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30Then they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription *like* the engraving of a signet:

HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

31And they tied to it a blue cord, to fasten *it* above on the turban, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

THE WORK COMPLETED

32Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished. And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did. 33And they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its furnishings: its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; 34the covering of ram skins dyed red, the covering of badger skins, and the veil of the covering; 35the ark of the Testimony with its poles, and the mercy seat; 36the table, all its utensils, and the showbread; 37the pure *gold* lampstand with its lamps (the lamps set in order), all its utensils, and the oil for light; 38the gold altar, the anointing oil, and the sweet incense; the screen for the tabernacle door; 39the bronze altar, its grate of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils; the laver with its base; 40the hangings of the court, its pillars and its sockets, the screen for the court gate, its cords, and its pegs; all the utensils for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; 41and the garments of ministry,[a] to minister in the holy *place:* the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister as priests.

42According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. 43Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, just so they had done it. And Moses blessed them.

THE TABERNACLE ERECTED AND ARRANGED

40 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. 3You shall put in it the ark of the Testimony, and partition off the ark with the veil. 4You shall bring in the table and arrange the things that are to be set in order on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and light its lamps. 5You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the Testimony, and put up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. 6Then you shall set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. 7And you shall set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. 8You shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen at the court gate.

39:41 [a]Or *woven garments*

9"And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that *is* in it; and you shall hallow it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy. 10You shall anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar. The altar shall be most holy. 11And you shall anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it.

12"Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. 13You shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. 14And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. 15You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations."

16Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

17And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the tabernacle was raised up. 18So Moses raised up the tabernacle, fastened its sockets, set up its boards, put in its bars, and raised up its pillars. 19And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 20He took the Testimony and put *it* into the ark, inserted the poles through the rings of the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. 21And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the Testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22He put the table in the tabernacle of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil; 23and he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 24He put the lampstand in the tabernacle of meeting, across from the table, on the south side of the tabernacle; 25and he lit the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 26He put the gold altar in the tabernacle of meeting in front of the veil; 27and he burned sweet incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 28He hung up the screen *at* the door of the tabernacle. 29And he put the altar of burnt offering *before* the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 30He set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water there for washing; 31and Moses, Aaron, and his sons would wash their hands and their feet *with water* from it. 32Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 33And he raised up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the screen of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

THE CLOUD AND THE GLORY

34Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. 37But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. 38For the cloud of the LORD *was* above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

Leviticus

DATE OF WRITING: 1445–1440 B.C.
AUTHOR: TRADITIONALLY, MOSES
THEME: THE SANCTITY OF GOD AND HOLINESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE
PURPOSE: WE WORSHIP GOD BY THE WAY WE LIVE AS WELL AS BY CELEBRATING HIS GOODNESS.

OUTLINE

1:1—7:38 .....Laws About Offerings
8:1–36 .....Anointing the Priests
9:1–24 .....Aaron's First Offerings
10:1–20 .....Two Priests Are Killed
11:1—15:33 .....Laws About What Is Clean and Unclean
16:1–34 .....Laws About the Day of Atonement
17:1—20:27 .....Laws on Various Subjects
21:1—22:33 .....Rules for Priests to Follow
23:1—25:55 .....Instructions for Religious Feasts
26:1–46 .....Blessings and Punishments
27:1–34 .....Laws About Promises and Offerings to the Lord

KEY VERSE:

"Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you" (Leviticus 20:7, 8).

THEN /// When you hear someone say, "I never knew *that* was in the Bible!" they could be talking about the Book of Leviticus. Leviticus was like a "Basic Holiness & Survival Guide" for the Hebrews as they wandered through the wilderness. It was an instruction manual for the priests. It discussed everything from mildew to baldness to skin disease to sacrifices to holiness.

This group of people was on a forty-year camping trip. Just staying alive, clean, and well was a huge task, not to mention maintaining their faith and a right relationship with God.

So God introduced the concept of clean and unclean. He applied it to their lives in this housekeeping/faith-keeping book. To us it can seem a bit nit-picky, but to them it was life changing. God wanted them to know how to live and prosper as people set apart to Him. And all the good results from living this way would testify to all the people around them of God's power and holiness.

NOW /// It may seem difficult at first to wade through all the instructions in Leviticus. But we can learn from this entire book more about the holiness of God and how much He loves His people. We can learn about how generous God is, and how His people can be generous as well. We can learn the importance of living holy lives in response to this great love from God.

Because Jesus Christ has become our ultimate sacrifice, we don't have to look to Leviticus for each small ritual to perform. But we can look to Leviticus to show us how amazing the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was on our behalf. We can look to Leviticus to be reminded what a great privilege it is to give our best to God.

REALITY CHECK /// We read a lot about sacrifices in the Old Testament books. In fact, the tabernacle and the temple were both built around places where people slaughtered and then barbecued animals, sacrificing them to God. Does this seem a little barbaric in our modern world? There are two things you might consider:

First, the sacrifices in the temple were a picture of the sacrifice that Jesus eventually made for all of us. He basically put Himself on that wooden altar (the cross) and spilled His blood and gave His life.

Second, as gross as a sacrifice might seem to you—that's how gross our sin is to a holy God. We should be just that repulsed by our own sin. It's something to think about.

THE BURNT OFFERING

Leviticus 1:1–4

The animal being sacrificed represented the person who was offering it to God. The death of the animal was payment for the person's sins. Touching the animal on the head was one of many symbolic gestures included in the sacrifice.

1 Now the LORD called to Moses, and
spoke to him from the tabernacle of
meeting, saying, 2"Speak to the chil-
dren of Israel, and say to them: 'When any
one of you brings an offering to the LORD,
you shall bring your offering of the live-
stock—of the herd and of the flock.

3'If his offering *is* a burnt sacrifice of the
herd, let him offer a male without blemish;
he shall offer it of his own free will at the
door of the tabernacle of meeting before
the LORD. 4Then he shall put his hand on
the head of the burnt offering, and it will be
accepted on his behalf to make atonement
for him. 5He shall kill the bull before the
LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall
bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all
around on the altar that *is by* the door of
the tabernacle of meeting. 6And he shall
skin the burnt offering and cut it into its
pieces. 7The sons of Aaron the priest shall
put fire on the altar, and lay the wood in
order on the fire. 8Then the priests, Aaron's
sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the
fat in order on the wood that *is* on the

fire upon the altar; 9but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

10'If his offering *is* of the flocks—of the sheep or of the goats—as a burnt sacrifice, he shall bring a male without blemish. 11He shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. 12And he shall cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat; and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that *is* on the fire upon the altar; 13but he shall wash the entrails and the legs with water. Then the priest shall bring *it* all and burn *it* on the altar; it *is* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

14'And if the burnt sacrifice of his offering to the LORD *is* of birds, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves or young pigeons. 15The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off its head, and burn *it* on the altar; its blood shall be drained out at the side of the altar. 16And he shall remove its crop with its feathers and cast it beside the altar on the east side, into the place for ashes. 17Then he shall split it at its wings, *but* shall not divide *it* completely; and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that *is* on the fire. It *is* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

THE GRAIN OFFERING

2 'When anyone offers a grain offering to the LORD, his offering shall be *of* fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. 2He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn *it as* a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. 3The rest of the grain offering *shall be* Aaron's and his sons'. *It is* most holy of the offerings to the LORD made by fire.

4'And if you bring as an offering a grain offering baked in the oven, *it shall be* unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. 5But if your offering *is* a grain offering *baked* in a pan, *it shall be of* fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil. 6You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it *is* a grain offering.

> ***Leviticus 2:1***
> Blood was used only in sacrifices that were made for the forgiveness of sins. The sacrifices to give thanks to the Lord, also known as grain offerings, served as a reminder of how the Lord cared for the Israelites as He led them out of Egypt.

7'If your offering *is* a grain offering *baked* in a covered pan, it shall be made *of* fine flour with oil. 8You shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to the LORD. And when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. 9Then the priest shall take from the grain offering a memorial portion, and burn *it* on the altar. *It is* an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. 10And what is left of the grain offering *shall be* Aaron's and his sons'. *It is* most holy of the offerings to the LORD made by fire.

11'No grain offering which you bring to the LORD shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to the LORD made by fire. 12As for the offering of the firstfruits, you shall offer them to the LORD, but they shall not be burned on the altar for a sweet aroma. 13And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.

14'If you offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to the LORD, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits green heads of grain roasted on the fire, grain beaten from full heads. 15And you shall put oil on it, and lay frankincense on it. It *is* a grain offering. 16Then the priest shall burn the memorial portion: *part* of its beaten grain and *part* of its oil, with all the frankincense, as an offering made by fire to the LORD.

THE PEACE OFFERING

3 'When his offering *is* a sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers *it* of the herd, whether male or female, he

shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. 2And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. 3Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the LORD. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that *is* on the entrails, 4the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 5and Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which *is* on the wood that *is* on the fire, *as* an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

6"If his offering as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD *is* of the flock, *whether* male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. 7If he offers a lamb as his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD. 8And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar.

9"Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as an offering made by fire to the LORD, its fat *and* the whole fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone. And the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that *is* on the entrails, 10the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 11and the priest shall burn *them* on the altar *as* food, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

12"And if his offering *is* a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD. 13He shall lay his hand on its head and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. 14Then he shall offer from it his offering, as an offering made by fire to the LORD. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that *is* on the entrails, 15the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 16and the priest shall burn them on the altar *as* food, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma; all the fat *is* the LORD's.

17"*This shall be* a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood.'"

THE SIN OFFERING

4 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which ought not to be done, and does any of them, 3if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD for his sin which he has sinned a young bull without blemish as a sin offering. 4He shall bring the bull to the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, lay his hand on the bull's head, and kill the bull before the LORD. 5Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting. 6The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil of the sanctuary. 7And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood of the bull at the base of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 8He shall take from it all the fat of the bull as the sin offering. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat which *is* on the entrails, 9the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove, 10as it was taken from the bull of the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn them on the altar of the burnt offering. 11But the bull's hide and all its flesh, with its head and legs, its entrails and offal— 12the whole bull he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.

13"Now if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which should not be done, and are guilty; 14when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and bring it

before the tabernacle of meeting. 15And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the LORD. Then the bull shall be killed before the LORD. 16The anointed priest shall bring some of the bull's blood to the tabernacle of meeting. 17Then the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle *it* seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil. 18And he shall put *some* of the blood on the horns of the altar which *is* before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 19He shall take all the fat from it and burn *it* on the altar. 20And he shall do with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. 21Then he shall carry the bull outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first bull. It *is* a sin offering for the assembly.

22"When a ruler has sinned, and done *something* unintentionally *against* any of the commandments of the LORD his God *in anything* which should not be done, and is guilty, 23or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a male without blemish. 24And he shall lay his hand on the head of the goat, and kill it at the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD. It *is* a sin offering. 25The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. 26And he shall burn all its fat on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of the peace offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

27"If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which ought not to be done, and is guilty, 28or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. 29And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. 30Then the priest shall take *some* of its blood with his finger, put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all *the remaining* blood at the base of the altar. 31He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

32"If he brings a lamb as his sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish. 33Then he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill it as a sin offering at the place where they kill the burnt offering. 34The priest shall take *some* of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all *the remaining* blood at the base of the altar. 35He shall remove all its fat, as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering. Then the priest shall burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for his sin that he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

THE TRESPASS OFFERING

5 "If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and *is* a witness, whether he has seen or known *of the matter*—if he does not tell *it*, he bears guilt.

2"Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether *it is* the carcass of an unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean livestock, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and he is unaware of it, he also shall be unclean and guilty. 3Or if he touches human uncleanness—whatever uncleanness with which a man may be defiled, and he is unaware of it—when he realizes *it*, then he shall be guilty.

4"Or if a person swears, speaking thoughtlessly with *his* lips to do evil or to do good, whatever *it is* that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of it—when he realizes *it*, then he shall be guilty in any of these *matters*.

5"And it shall be, when he is guilty in any of these *matters*, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that *thing*; 6and he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats

as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin.

7"If he is not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD, for his trespass which he has committed, two turtledoves or two young pigeons: one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. 8And he shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer *that* which *is* for the sin offering first, and wring off its head from its neck, but shall not divide *it* completely. 9Then he shall sprinkle *some* of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, and the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar. It *is* a sin offering. 10And he shall offer the second *as* a burnt offering according to the prescribed manner. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin which he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

11"But if he is not able to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring for his offering one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, nor shall he put frankincense on it, for it *is* a sin offering. 12Then he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as a memorial portion, and burn *it* on the altar according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a sin offering. 13The priest shall make atonement for him, for his sin that he has committed in any of these matters; and it shall be forgiven him. *The rest* shall be the priest's as a grain offering.'"

OFFERINGS WITH RESTITUTION

14Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 15"If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of the LORD, then he shall bring to the LORD as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks, with your valuation in shekels of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass offering. 16And he shall make restitution for the harm that he has done in regard to the holy thing, and shall add one-fifth to it and give it to the priest. So the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.

17"If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD, though he does not know *it*, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity. 18And he shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the flock, with your valuation, as a trespass offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him regarding his ignorance in which he erred and did not know *it*, and it shall be forgiven him. 19It is a trespass offering; he has certainly trespassed against the LORD."

6 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"If a person sins and commits a trespass against the LORD by lying to his neighbor about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbor, 3or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely—in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins: 4then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore what he has stolen, or the thing which he has extorted, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, 5or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, *and* give it to whomever it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering. 6And he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, a ram without blemish from the flock, with your valuation, as a trespass offering, to the priest. 7So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he shall be forgiven for any one of these things that he may have done in which he trespasses."

THE LAW OF THE BURNT OFFERING

8Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 9"Command Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This *is* the law of the burnt offering: The burnt offering *shall be* on the hearth upon the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. 10And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen trousers he shall put on his body, and take up the ashes of the burnt offering which the fire has consumed on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. 11Then he shall take off his garments, put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. 12And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and

lay the burnt offering in order on it; and he shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. 13A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out.

THE LAW OF THE GRAIN OFFERING

14"This *is* the law of the grain offering: The sons of Aaron shall offer it on the altar before the LORD. 15He shall take from it his handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, with its oil, and all the frankincense which *is* on the grain offering, and shall burn *it* on the altar *for* a sweet aroma, as a memorial to the LORD. 16And the remainder of it Aaron and his sons shall eat; with unleavened bread it shall be eaten in a holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of meeting they shall eat it. 17It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it *as* their portion of My offerings made by fire; it *is* most holy, like the sin offering and the trespass offering. 18All the males among the children of Aaron may eat it. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations concerning the offerings made by fire to the LORD. Everyone who touches them must be holy.'"[a]

19And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 20"This *is* the offering of Aaron and his sons, which they shall offer to the LORD, *beginning* on the day when he is anointed: one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a daily grain offering, half of it in the morning and half of it at night. 21It shall be made in a pan with oil. *When it is* mixed, you shall bring it in. The baked pieces of the grain offering you shall offer *for* a sweet aroma to the LORD. 22The priest from among his sons, who is anointed in his place, shall offer it. *It is* a statute forever to the LORD. It shall be wholly burned. 23For every grain offering for the priest shall be wholly burned. It shall not be eaten."

THE LAW OF THE SIN OFFERING

24Also the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 25"Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'This *is* the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed, the sin offering shall be killed before the LORD. It *is* most holy. 26The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of meeting. 27Everyone who touches its flesh must be holy.[a] And when its blood is sprinkled on any garment, you shall wash that on which it was sprinkled, in a holy place. 28But the earthen vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken. And if it is boiled in a bronze pot, it shall be both scoured and rinsed in water. 29All the males among the priests may eat it. It *is* most holy. 30But no sin offering from which *any* of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of meeting, to make atonement in the holy *place*,[a] shall be eaten. It shall be burned in the fire.

THE LAW OF THE TRESPASS OFFERING

7 'Likewise this *is* the law of the trespass offering (it *is* most holy): 2In the place where they kill the burnt offering they shall kill the trespass offering. And its blood he shall sprinkle all around on the altar. 3And he shall offer from it all its fat. The fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails, 4the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 5and the priest shall burn them on the altar *as* an offering made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a trespass offering. 6Every male among the priests may eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place. It *is* most holy. 7The trespass offering *is* like the sin offering; *there is* one law for them both: the priest who makes atonement with it shall have *it*. 8And the priest who offers anyone's burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has offered. 9Also every grain offering that is baked in the oven and all that is prepared in the covered pan, or in a pan, shall be the priest's who offers it. 10Every grain offering, *whether* mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to one *as much* as the other.

THE LAW OF PEACE OFFERINGS

11"This *is* the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which he shall offer to the LORD: 12If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened

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6:18 [a]Compare Numbers 4:15 and Haggai 2:11–13 **6:27** [a]Compare Numbers 4:15 and Haggai 2:11–13 **6:30** [a]The Most Holy Place when capitalized

wafers anointed with oil, or cakes of blended flour mixed with oil. 13Besides the cakes, *as* his offering he shall offer leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offering. 14And from it he shall offer one cake from each offering *as* a heave offering to the LORD. It shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offering.

15"'The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning. 16But if the sacrifice of his offering *is* a vow or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day the remainder of it also may be eaten; 17the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day must be burned with fire. 18And if *any* of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering is eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, nor shall it be imputed to him; it shall be an abomination *to* him who offers it, and the person who eats of it shall bear guilt.

19"'The flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten. It shall be burned with fire. And as for the *clean* flesh, all who are clean may eat of it. 20But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that *belongs* to the LORD, while he is unclean, that person shall be cut off from his people. 21Moreover the person who touches any unclean thing, *such as* human uncleanness, *an* unclean animal, or any abominable unclean thing,[a] and who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that *belongs* to the LORD, that person shall be cut off from his people.'"

FAT AND BLOOD MAY NOT BE EATEN

22And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 23"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'You shall not eat any fat, of ox or sheep or goat. 24And the fat of an animal that dies *naturally*, and the fat of what is torn by wild beasts, may be used in any other way; but you shall by no means eat it. 25For whoever eats the fat of the animal of which men offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, the person who eats *it* shall be cut off from his people. 26Moreover you shall not eat any blood in any of your dwellings, *whether* of bird or beast. 27Whoever eats any blood, that person shall be cut off from his people.'"

THE PORTION OF AARON AND HIS SONS

28Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 29"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offering to the LORD shall bring his offering to the LORD from the sacrifice of his peace offering. 30His own hands shall bring the offerings made by fire to the LORD. The fat with the breast he shall bring, that the breast may be waved *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 31And the priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'. 32Also the right thigh you shall give to the priest *as* a heave offering from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. 33He among the sons of Aaron, who offers the blood of the peace offering and the fat, shall have the right thigh for *his* part. 34For the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering I have taken from the children of Israel, from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and I have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons from the children of Israel by a statute forever.'"

35This *is* the consecrated portion for Aaron and his sons, from the offerings made by fire to the LORD, on the day when *Moses* presented them to minister to the LORD as priests. 36The LORD commanded this to be given to them by the children of Israel, on the day that He anointed them, *by* a statute forever throughout their generations.

37This *is* the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the consecrations, and the sacrifice of the peace offering, 38which the LORD commanded Moses on Mount Sinai, on the day when He commanded the children of Israel to offer their offerings to the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai.

AARON AND HIS SONS CONSECRATED

8 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, the anointing

7:21 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, and Targum read *swarming thing* (compare 5:2).

oil, a bull as the sin offering, two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; 3and gather all the congregation together at the door of the tabernacle of meeting."

4So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. And the congregation was gathered together at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 5And Moses said to the congregation, "This *is* what the LORD commanded to be done."

6Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. 7And he put the tunic on him, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the intricately woven band of the ephod, and with it tied *the ephod* on him. 8Then he put the breastplate on him, and he put the Urim and the Thummim[a] in the breastplate. 9And he put the turban on his head. Also on the turban, on its front, he put the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

10Also Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that *was* in it, and consecrated them. 11He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, to consecrate them. 12And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him, to consecrate him.

13Then Moses brought Aaron's sons and put tunics on them, girded them with sashes, and put hats on them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

14And he brought the bull for the sin offering. Then Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull for the sin offering, 15and Moses killed *it*. Then he took the blood, and put *some* on the horns of the altar all around with his finger, and purified the altar. And he poured the blood at the base of the altar, and consecrated it, to make atonement for it. 16Then he took all the fat that *was* on the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver, and the two kidneys with their fat, and Moses burned *them* on the altar. 17But the bull, its hide, its flesh, and its offal, he burned with fire outside the camp, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

18Then he brought the ram as the burnt offering. And Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram, 19and Moses killed *it*. Then he sprinkled the blood all around on the altar. 20And he cut the ram into pieces; and Moses burned the head, the pieces, and the fat. 21Then he washed the entrails and the legs in water. And Moses burned the whole ram on the altar. It *was* a burnt sacrifice for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22And he brought the second ram, the ram of consecration. Then Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram, 23and Moses killed *it*. Also he took *some* of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. 24Then he brought Aaron's sons. And Moses put *some* of the blood on the tips of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. And Moses sprinkled the blood all around on the altar. 25Then he took the fat and the fat tail, all the fat that *was* on the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver, the two kidneys and their fat, and the right thigh; 26and from the basket of unleavened bread that was before the LORD he took one unleavened cake, a cake of bread *anointed with* oil, and one wafer, and put *them* on the fat and on the right thigh; 27and he put all *these* in Aaron's hands and in his sons' hands, and waved them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 28Then Moses took them from their hands and burned *them* on the altar, on the burnt offering. They *were* consecration offerings for a sweet aroma. That *was* an offering made by fire to the LORD. 29And Moses took the breast and waved it *as* a wave offering before the LORD. It was Moses' part of the ram of consecration, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which *was* on the altar, and sprinkled *it* on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, his sons, and the garments of his sons with him.

31And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the flesh *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and eat it there with the bread that *is* in the basket of consecration

8:8 [a]Literally *the Lights and the Perfections* (compare Exodus 28:30)

offerings, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it.' 32What remains of the flesh and of the bread you shall burn with fire. 33And you shall not go outside the door of the tabernacle of meeting *for* seven days, until the days of your consecration are ended. For seven days he shall consecrate you. 34As he has done this day, *so* the LORD has commanded to do, to make atonement for you. 35Therefore you shall stay *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting day and night for seven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, so that you may not die; for so I have been commanded." 36So Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses.

THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY BEGINS

9 It came to pass on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. 2And he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer *them* before the LORD. 3And to the children of Israel you shall speak, saying, 'Take a kid of the goats as a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, *both* of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering, 4also a bull and a ram as peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil; for today the LORD will appear to you.'"

5So they brought what Moses commanded before the tabernacle of meeting. And all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. 6Then Moses said, "This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded you to do, and the glory of the LORD will appear to you." 7And Moses said to Aaron, "Go to the altar, offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself and for the people. Offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them, as the LORD commanded."

8Aaron therefore went to the altar and killed the calf of the sin offering, which *was* for himself. 9Then the sons of Aaron brought the blood to him. And he dipped his finger in the blood, put *it* on the horns of the altar, and poured the blood at the base of the altar. 10But the fat, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe from the liver of the sin offering he burned on the altar, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 11The flesh and the hide he burned with fire outside the camp.

12And he killed the burnt offering; and Aaron's sons presented to him the blood, which he sprinkled all around on the altar. 13Then they presented the burnt offering to him, with its pieces and head, and he burned *them* on the altar. 14And he washed the entrails and the legs, and burned *them* with the burnt offering on the altar.

15Then he brought the people's offering, and took the goat, which *was* the sin offering for the people, and killed it and offered it for sin, like the first one. 16And he brought the burnt offering and offered it according to the prescribed manner. 17Then he brought the grain offering, took a handful of it, and burned *it* on the altar, besides the burnt sacrifice of the morning.

18He also killed the bull and the ram *as* sacrifices of peace offerings, which *were* for the people. And Aaron's sons presented to him the blood, which he sprinkled all around on the altar, 19and the fat from the bull and the ram—the fatty tail, what covers *the entrails* and the kidneys, and the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver; 20and they put the fat on the breasts. Then he burned the fat on the altar; 21but the breasts and the right thigh Aaron waved *as* a wave offering before the LORD, as Moses had commanded.

22Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings. 23And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, 24and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw *it*, they shouted and fell on their faces.

THE PROFANE FIRE OF NADAB AND ABIHU

10 Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the

LORD. 3And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying:

'By those who come near Me
I must be regarded as holy;
And before all the people
I must be glorified.'"

So Aaron held his peace.

4Then Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp." 5So they went near and carried them by their tunics out of the camp, as Moses had said.

Leviticus 10:6

Uncovered heads and torn clothes were signs of mourning in ancient Israel. The mourning began as soon as a loved one died and continued indefinitely. Both family members and neighbors alike joined in expressing their grief and sorrow.

6And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, "Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the people. But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD has kindled. 7You shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die, for the anointing oil of the LORD *is* upon you." And they did according to the word of Moses.

CONDUCT PRESCRIBED FOR PRIESTS

8Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: 9"Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. *It shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations, 10that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, 11and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses."

12And Moses spoke to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons who were left: "Take the grain offering that remains of the offerings made by fire to the LORD, and eat it without leaven beside the altar; for it *is* most holy. 13You shall eat it in a holy place, because it *is* your due and your sons' due, of the sacrifices made by fire to the LORD; for so I have been commanded. 14The breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering you shall eat in a clean place, you, your sons, and your daughters with you; for *they are* your due and your sons' due, *which* are given from the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel. 15The thigh of the heave offering and the breast of the wave offering they shall bring with the offerings of fat made by fire, to offer *as* a wave offering before the LORD. And it shall be yours and your sons' with you, by a statute forever, as the LORD has commanded."

16Then Moses made careful inquiry about the goat of the sin offering, and there it was—burned up. And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron *who were* left, saying, 17"Why have you not eaten the sin offering in a holy place, since it *is* most holy, and *God* has given it to you to bear the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? 18See! Its blood was not brought inside the *holy place*;[a] indeed you should have eaten it in a holy *place*, as I commanded."

19And Aaron said to Moses, "Look, this day they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, and such things have befallen me! *If* I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?" 20So when Moses heard *that*, he was content.

FOODS PERMITTED AND FORBIDDEN

11 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'These *are* the animals which you may eat among all the animals that *are* on the earth: 3Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves *and* chewing the cud—that you may eat. 4Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews

10:18 [a]The Most Holy Place when capitalized

the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you; 5the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you; 6the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you; 7and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, *is* unclean to you. 8Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They *are* unclean to you.

9"These you may eat of all that *are* in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat. 10But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which *is* in the water, they *are* an abomination to you. 11They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination. 12Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales—that *shall be* an abomination to you.

13"And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they *are* an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, 14the kite, and the falcon after its kind; 15every raven after its kind, 16the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind; 17the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl; 18the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture; 19the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.

20"All flying insects that creep on *all* fours *shall be* an abomination to you. 21Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on *all* fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth. 22These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. 23But all *other* flying insects which have four feet *shall be* an abomination to you.

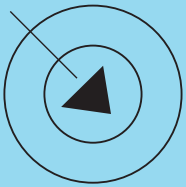
UNCLEAN ANIMALS

24"By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening; 25whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening: 26*The carcass* of any animal which divides the foot, but is not cloven-hoofed or does not chew the cud, *is* unclean to you. Everyone who touches it shall be unclean. 27And whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on *all* fours, those *are* unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening. 28Whoever carries *any such* carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It *is* unclean to you.

29"These also *shall be* unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind; 30the gecko, the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. 31These *are* unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening. 32Anything on which *any* of them falls, when they are dead shall be unclean, whether *it is* any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack, whatever item *it is*, in which *any* work is done, it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean. 33Any earthen vessel into which *any* of them falls you shall break; and whatever *is* in it shall be unclean: 34in such a vessel, any edible food upon which water falls becomes unclean, and any drink that may be drunk from it becomes unclean. 35And everything on which *a part* of *any such* carcass falls shall be unclean; *whether it is* an oven or cooking stove, it shall be broken down; *for* they *are* unclean, and shall be unclean to you. 36Nevertheless a spring or a cistern, *in which there is* plenty of water, shall be clean, but whatever touches any such carcass becomes unclean. 37And if a part of *any such* carcass falls on any planting seed which is to be sown, it *remains* clean. 38But if water is put on the seed, and if *a part* of *any such* carcass falls on it, it *becomes* unclean to you.

39"And if any animal which you may eat dies, he who touches its carcass shall be unclean until evening. 40He who eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. He also who carries its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.

41"And every creeping thing that creeps on the earth *shall be* an abomination. It shall not be eaten. 42Whatever crawls on its belly, whatever goes on *all* fours, or whatever has many feet among all creeping



PROMISE

God promises that He is holy.

"I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44a).

It's the bottom of the ninth inning, bases loaded, and your team's down 4–1. The best hitter's at bat with two outs and two strikes. The pitch . . . grand slam! Your team wins 5–4. "HOLY COW!" screams the announcer. "Holy cow!"

The word holy is taken lightly by a lot of people—not just sports announcers. Let's find out what God says about being holy.

We must realize that we serve a holy God. Psalm 111:9 says, "He has sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever: Holy and awesome is His name." Psalm 99:5 tells us that the Lord is a God of holiness.

God wants us to strive to be holy as well, so we can be like Him (Eph. 5:1). Do you want to be like Jesus? Live like Him? Talk like Him? Act like Him? Think like Him? That's what being holy is: being devoted to God and obeying His Word.

As you spend time with God, He will make Himself known to you. There's nothing greater than spending time in the presence of Almighty God! Spend time today praising Him because He is the One who is holy (Ps. 71:22).

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Leviticus 20:7; 1 Peter 1:15, 16

things that creep on the earth—these you shall not eat, for they *are* an abomination. 43You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps; nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them. 44For I *am* the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I *am* holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. 45For I *am* the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

46'This *is* the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, 47to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.'"

THE RITUAL AFTER CHILDBIRTH

12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. 3And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. 4She shall then continue in the blood of *her* purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.

5'But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of *her* purification sixty-six days.

6'When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 7Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This *is* the law for her who has borne a male or a female.

8'And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'"

THE LAW CONCERNING LEPROSY

13 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2"When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of his body *like* a leprous[a] sore, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. 3The priest shall examine the sore on the skin of the body; and if the hair on the sore has turned white, and the sore appears to *be* deeper than the skin of his body, it *is* a leprous sore. Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him unclean. 4But if the bright spot *is* white on the skin of his body, and does not appear *to be* deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the sore seven days. 5And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day; and indeed *if* the sore appears to be as it was, *and* the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him another seven days. 6Then the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and indeed *if* the sore has faded, *and* the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it *is only* a scab, and he shall wash his clothes and be clean. 7But if the scab should at all spread over the skin, after he has been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again. 8And *if* the priest sees that the scab has indeed spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* leprosy.

9"When the leprous sore is on a person, then he shall be brought to the priest. 10And the priest shall examine *him;* and indeed *if* the swelling on the skin *is* white, and it has turned the hair white, and *there is* a spot of raw flesh in the swelling, 11it *is* an old leprosy on the skin of his body. The priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not isolate him, for he *is* unclean.

12"And if leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of the *one who has* the sore, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks, 13then the priest shall consider; and indeed *if* the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce *him* clean *who has* the sore. It has all turned white. He *is* clean. 14But when raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean. 15And the priest shall examine the raw flesh and pronounce him to be unclean; *for* the raw flesh *is* unclean. It *is* leprosy. 16Or if the raw flesh changes and turns white again, he shall come to the priest. 17And the priest shall examine him; and indeed *if* the sore has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce *him* clean *who has* the sore. He *is* clean.

18"If the body develops a boil in the skin, and it is healed, 19and in the place of the boil there comes a white swelling or a bright spot, reddish-white, then it shall be shown to the priest; 20and *if,* when the priest sees it, it indeed appears deeper than the skin, and its hair has turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore which has broken out of the boil. 21But if the priest examines it, and indeed *there are* no white hairs in it, and it *is* not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days; 22and if it should at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore. 23But if the bright spot stays in one place, *and* has not spread, it *is* the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

24"Or if the body receives a burn on its skin by fire, and the raw *flesh* of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white or white, 25then the priest shall examine it; and indeed *if* the hair of the bright spot has turned white, and it appears deeper than the skin, it *is* leprosy broken out in the burn. Therefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore. 26But if the priest examines it, and indeed *there are* no white hairs in the bright spot, and it *is* not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days. 27And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day. If it has at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore. 28But if the bright spot stays in one place, *and* has not spread on the skin, but has faded, it *is* a swelling from the burn. The priest shall pronounce him clean, for it *is* the scar from the burn.

29"If a man or woman has a sore on the head or the beard, 30then the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed if it appears

13:2 [a]Hebrew *saraath,* disfiguring skin diseases, including leprosy, and so in verses 2–46 and 14:2–32

deeper than the skin, *and there is* in it thin yellow hair, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a scaly leprosy of the head or beard. 31But if the priest examines the scaly sore, and indeed it does not appear deeper than the skin, and *there is* no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the scale seven days. 32And on the seventh day the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed *if* the scale has not spread, and there is no yellow hair in it, and the scale does not appear deeper than the skin, 33he shall shave himself, but the scale he shall not shave. And the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the scale another seven days. 34On the seventh day the priest shall examine the scale; and indeed *if* the scale has not spread over the skin, and does not appear deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. He shall wash his clothes and be clean. 35But if the scale should at all spread over the skin after his cleansing, 36then the priest shall examine him; and indeed *if* the scale has spread over the skin, the priest need not seek for yellow hair. He *is* unclean. 37But if the scale appears to be at a standstill, and there is black hair grown up in it, the scale has healed. He *is* clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

38"If a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, *specifically* white bright spots, 39then the priest shall look; and indeed *if* the bright spots on the skin of the body *are* dull white, it *is* a white spot *that* grows on the skin. He *is* clean.

40"As for the man whose hair has fallen from his head, he *is* bald, *but* he *is* clean. 41He whose hair has fallen from his forehead, he *is* bald on the forehead, *but* he *is* clean. 42And if there is on the bald head or bald forehead a reddish-white sore, it *is* leprosy breaking out on his bald head or his bald forehead. 43Then the priest shall examine it; and indeed *if* the swelling of the sore *is* reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, as the appearance of leprosy on the skin of the body, 44he is a leprous man. He *is* unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean; his sore *is* on his head.

45"Now the leper on whom the sore *is*, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' 46He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He *is* unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling *shall be* outside the camp.

THE LAW CONCERNING LEPROUS GARMENTS

47"Also, if a garment has a leprous plague[a] in it, *whether it is* a woolen garment or a linen garment, 48whether *it is* in the warp or woof of linen or wool, whether in leather or in anything made of leather, 49and if the plague is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it *is* a leprous plague and shall be shown to the priest. 50The priest shall examine the plague and isolate *that which has* the plague seven days. 51And he shall examine the plague on the seventh day. If the plague has spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, in the leather *or* in anything made of leather, the plague *is* an active leprosy. It *is* unclean. 52He shall therefore burn that garment in which is the plague, whether warp or woof, in wool or in linen, or anything of leather, for it *is* an active leprosy; *the garment* shall be burned in the fire.

53"But if the priest examines *it*, and indeed the plague has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, 54then the priest shall command that they wash *the thing* in which *is* the plague; and he shall isolate it another seven days. 55Then the priest shall examine the plague after it has been washed; and indeed *if* the plague has not changed its color, though the plague has not spread, it *is* unclean, and you shall burn it in the fire; it continues eating away, *whether* the damage *is* outside or inside. 56If the priest examines *it*, and indeed the plague has faded after washing it, then he shall tear it out of the garment, whether out of the warp or out of the woof, or out of the leather. 57But if it appears again in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it *is* a spreading *plague*; you shall burn with fire that in which is the plague. 58And if you wash the garment, either warp or woof, or

13:47 [a]A mold, fungus, or similar infestation, and so in verses 47–59

whatever is made of leather, if the plague has disappeared from it, then it shall be washed a second time, and shall be clean.

59"This *is* the law of the leprous plague in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp or woof, or in anything made of leather, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean."

THE RITUAL FOR CLEANSING HEALED LEPERS

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. 3And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine *him;* and indeed, *if* the leprosy is healed in the leper, 4then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living *and* clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. 5And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. 6As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird *that was* killed over the running water. 7And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field. 8He who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay outside his tent seven days. 9But on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows—all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean.

10"And on the eighth day he shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and one log of oil. 11Then the priest who makes *him* clean shall present the man who is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD, *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 12And the priest shall take one male lamb and offer it as a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 13Then he shall kill the lamb in the place where he kills the sin offering and the burnt offering, in a holy place; for as the sin offering *is* the priest's, so *is* the trespass offering. It *is* most holy. 14The priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put *it* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. 15And the priest shall take *some* of the log of oil, and pour *it* into the palm of his own left hand. 16Then the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that *is* in his left hand, and shall sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD. 17And of the rest of the oil in his hand, the priest shall put *some* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass offering. 18The rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD.

> ***Leviticus 14:14***
> After making his sacrifice, the unclean person received a dab of blood on his ear, his thumb, and his toe. These three places symbolized the three main activities of life: thinking, working, and walking.

19"Then the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Afterward he shall kill the burnt offering. 20And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

21"But if he *is* poor and cannot afford it, then he shall take one male lamb *as* a trespass offering to be waved, to make atonement for him, one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, a log of oil, 22and two turtledoves or two young pigeons, such as he is able to afford: one shall be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering. 23He shall bring them to the priest on the eighth day for his cleansing, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, before the LORD. 24And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering

and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 25Then he shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering, and the priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering and put *it* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. 26And the priest shall pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand. 27Then the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger *some* of the oil that *is* in his left hand seven times before the LORD. 28And the priest shall put *some* of the oil that *is* in his hand on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the trespass offering. 29The rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before the LORD. 30And he shall offer one of the turtledoves or young pigeons, such as he can afford— 31such as he is able to afford, the one *as* a sin offering and the other *as* a burnt offering, with the grain offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him who is to be cleansed before the LORD. 32This *is* the law *for one* who had a leprous sore, who cannot afford the usual cleansing."

THE LAW CONCERNING LEPROUS HOUSES

33And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 34"When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and I put the leprous plague[a] in a house in the land of your possession, 35and he who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, 'It seems to me that *there is* some plague in the house,' 36then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest goes *into it* to examine the plague, that all that *is* in the house may not be made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to examine the house. 37And he shall examine the plague; and indeed *if* the plague *is* on the walls of the house with ingrained streaks, greenish or reddish, which appear to be deep in the wall, 38then the priest shall go out of the house, to the door of the house, and shut up the house seven days. 39And the priest shall come again on the seventh day and look; and indeed *if* the plague has spread on the walls of the house, 40then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which *is* the plague, and they shall cast them into an unclean place outside the city. 41And he shall cause the house to be scraped inside, all around, and the dust that they scrape off they shall pour out in an unclean place outside the city. 42Then they shall take other stones and put *them* in the place of *those* stones, and he shall take other mortar and plaster the house.

43"Now if the plague comes back and breaks out in the house, after he has taken away the stones, after he has scraped the house, and after it is plastered, 44then the priest shall come and look; and indeed *if* the plague has spread in the house, it *is* an active leprosy in the house. It *is* unclean. 45And he shall break down the house, its stones, its timber, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall carry *them* outside the city to an unclean place. 46Moreover he who goes into the house at all while it is shut up shall be unclean until evening. 47And he who lies down in the house shall wash his clothes, and he who eats in the house shall wash his clothes.

48"But if the priest comes in and examines *it,* and indeed the plague has not spread in the house after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed. 49And he shall take, to cleanse the house, two birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. 50Then he shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water; 51and he shall take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. 52And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird and the running water and the living bird, with the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet. 53Then he shall let the living bird loose outside the city in the open field, and make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean.

54"This *is* the law for any leprous sore and scale, 55for the leprosy of a garment and of a house, 56for a swelling and a scab and a bright spot, 57to teach when *it*

14:34 [a]Decomposition by mildew, mold, dry rot, etc., and so in verses 34–53

is unclean and when *it is* clean. This *is* the law of leprosy."

THE LAW CONCERNING BODILY DISCHARGES

15 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge *is* unclean. 3And this shall be his uncleanness in regard to his discharge—whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it *is* his uncleanness. 4Every bed is unclean on which he who has the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean. 5And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 6He who sits on anything on which he who has the discharge sat shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 7And he who touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 8If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 9Any saddle on which he who has the discharge rides shall be unclean. 10Whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until evening. He who carries *any of* those things shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 11And whomever the one who has the discharge touches, and has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 12The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.

13'And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean. 14On the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and give them to the priest. 15Then the priest shall offer them, the one *as* a sin offering and the other *as* a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD because of his discharge.

16'If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening. 17And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. 18Also, when a woman lies with a man, and *there is* an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

19'If a woman has a discharge, *and* the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. 20Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. 21Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 22And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 23If *anything* is on *her* bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. 24And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

25'If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her *customary* impurity, or if it runs beyond her *usual time of* impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her *customary* impurity. She *shall be* unclean. 26Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. 27Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

28'But if she is cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. 29And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 30Then the priest shall offer the one *as* a sin offering and the other *as* a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before the LORD for the discharge of her uncleanness.

31"Thus you shall separate the children
of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they
die in their uncleanness when they defile
My tabernacle that *is* among them. 32This
is the law for one who has a discharge, and
for him who emits semen and is unclean
thereby, 33and for her who is indisposed
because of her *customary* impurity, and
for one who has a discharge, either man or
woman, and for him who lies with her who
is unclean.'"

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

16 Now the LORD spoke to Moses
after the death of the two sons
of Aaron, when they offered
profane fire before the LORD, and died;
2and the LORD said to Moses: "Tell Aaron
your brother not to come at *just* any time
into the Holy *Place* inside the veil, before
the mercy seat which *is* on the ark, lest he
die; for I will appear in the cloud above the
mercy seat.

3"Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy
Place: with *the blood of* a young bull as a
sin offering, and *of* a ram as a burnt offer-
ing. 4He shall put the holy linen tunic and
the linen trousers on his body; he shall be
girded with a linen sash, and with the linen
turban he shall be attired. These *are* holy
garments. Therefore he shall wash his body
in water, and put them on. 5And he shall
take from the congregation of the children
of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offer-
ing, and one ram as a burnt offering.

Leviticus 16:7–10

Goats were all-purpose animals, as far as the ancient Israelites were concerned. The milk the Israelites drank, the clothes they wore, and the containers they used to hold their water and wine all came from goats. And if that weren't enough, goats were also used as sacrifices in burnt offerings and in sin offerings.

6"Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin of-
fering, which *is* for himself, and make
atonement for himself and for his house.
7He shall take the two goats and present
them before the LORD *at* the door of the
tabernacle of meeting. 8Then Aaron shall
cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the
LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat.
9And Aaron shall bring the goat on which
the LORD's lot fell, and offer it *as* a sin of-
fering. 10But the goat on which the lot fell
to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive
before the LORD, to make atonement upon
it, *and* to let it go as the scapegoat into the
wilderness.

11"And Aaron shall bring the bull of the
sin offering, which is for himself, and make
atonement for himself and for his house,
and shall kill the bull as the sin offering
which *is* for himself. 12Then he shall take
a censer full of burning coals of fire from
the altar before the LORD, with his hands
full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring
it inside the veil. 13And he shall put the in-
cense on the fire before the LORD, that the
cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat
that *is* on the Testimony, lest he die. 14He
shall take some of the blood of the bull and
sprinkle *it* with his finger on the mercy seat
on the east *side;* and before the mercy seat
he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his
finger seven times.

15"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin
offering, which *is* for the people, bring its
blood inside the veil, do with that blood
as he did with the blood of the bull, and
sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the
mercy seat. 16So he shall make atonement
for the Holy *Place*, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because
of their transgressions, for all their sins;
and so he shall do for the tabernacle of
meeting which remains among them in the
midst of their uncleanness. 17There shall be
no man in the tabernacle of meeting when
he goes in to make atonement in the Holy
Place, until he comes out, that he may
make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel.
18And he shall go out to the altar that *is*
before the LORD, and make atonement for
it, and shall take some of the blood of the
bull and some of the blood of the goat, and
put it on the horns of the altar all around.
19Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood
on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it,
and consecrate it from the uncleanness of
the children of Israel.

20"And when he has made an end of
atoning for the Holy *Place*, the tabernacle
of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the

live goat. 21Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. 22The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

23"Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy *Place*, and shall leave them there. 24And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people. 25The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar. 26And he who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. 27The bull *for* the sin offering and the goat *for* the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy *Place*, shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal. 28Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.

29"*This* shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether* a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. 30For on that day *the priest* shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31It *is* a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. *It is* a statute forever. 32And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; 33then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary,[a] and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. 34This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year." And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

THE SANCTITY OF BLOOD

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to Aaron, to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them, 'This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying: 3"Whatever man of the house of Israel who kills an ox or lamb or goat in the camp, or who kills *it* outside the camp, 4and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting to offer an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, the guilt of bloodshed shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people, 5to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to the priest, and offer them *as* peace offerings to the LORD. 6And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet aroma to the LORD. 7They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations." '

8"Also you shall say to them: 'Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, 9and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to offer it to the LORD, that man shall be cut off from among his people.

10"And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 11For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.' 12Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.'

13"Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among

16:33 [a]That is, the Most Holy Place

you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; 14for *it is* the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.'

15"And every person who eats what died *naturally* or what was torn *by beasts*, *whether he is* a native of your own country or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Then he shall be clean. 16But if he does not wash *them* or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt."

LAWS OF SEXUAL MORALITY

18 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. 3According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. 4You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I *am* the LORD your God. 5You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the LORD.

Leviticus 18:3

The Canaanites worshiped a fertility god named Baal. Male and female prostitutes lived in Baal's temple. Both the Egyptians and Canaanites believed that if they had sex with the temple prostitutes, they would be blessed with more children, animals, and crops. God wanted His people to have nothing to do with those kinds of practices.

6'None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I *am* the LORD. 7The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She *is* your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. 8The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it *is* your father's nakedness. 9The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, *whether* born at home or elsewhere, their nakedness you shall not uncover. 10The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for theirs *is* your own nakedness. 11The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father—she *is* your sister—you shall not uncover her nakedness. 12You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she *is* near of kin to your father. 13You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she *is* near of kin to your mother. 14You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother. You shall not approach his wife; she *is* your aunt. 15You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law—she *is* your son's wife—you shall not uncover her nakedness. 16You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it *is* your brother's nakedness. 17You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness. They *are* near of kin to her. It *is* wickedness. 18Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive.

19'Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her *customary* impurity. 20Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her. 21And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through *the fire* to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I *am* the LORD. 22You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It *is* an abomination. 23Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It *is* perversion.

HOMOSEXUALITY
What does God say about homosexual behavior?
Leviticus 18:22

24'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.

25For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the
punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the
land vomits out its inhabitants. 26You shall
therefore keep My statutes and My judg-
ments, and shall not commit *any* of these
abominations, *either* any of your own nation
or any stranger who dwells among you 27(for
all these abominations the men of the land
have done, who *were* before you, and thus
the land is defiled), 28lest the land vomit you
out also when you defile it, as it vomited out
the nations that *were* before you. 29For who-
ever commits any of these abominations,
the persons who commit *them* shall be cut
off from among their people.

30"Therefore you shall keep My ordi-
nance, so that *you* do not commit *any* of
these abominable customs which were
committed before you, and that you do not
defile yourselves by them: I *am* the LORD
your God.'"

MORAL AND CEREMONIAL LAWS

19 And the LORD spoke to Moses,
saying, 2"Speak to all the con-
gregation of the children of Is-
rael, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for
I the LORD your God *am* holy.

3"Every one of you shall revere his
mother and his father, and keep My Sab-
baths: I *am* the LORD your God.

RESPECT
Do we need to respect our parents?
Leviticus 19:3

4"Do not turn to idols, nor make for
yourselves molded gods: I *am* the LORD
your God.

5"And if you offer a sacrifice of a peace of-
fering to the LORD, you shall offer it of your
own free will. 6It shall be eaten the same
day you offer *it,* and on the next day. And
if any remains until the third day, it shall
be burned in the fire. 7And if it is eaten at
all on the third day, it *is* an abomination. It
shall not be accepted. 8Therefore *everyone*
who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because
he has profaned the hallowed *offering* of
the LORD; and that person shall be cut off
from his people.

9"When you reap the harvest of your
land, you shall not wholly reap the corners
of your field, nor shall you gather the glean-
ings of your harvest. 10And you shall not
glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather
every grape of your vineyard; you shall
leave them for the poor and the stranger: I
am the LORD your God.

11"You shall not steal, nor deal falsely,
nor lie to one another. 12And you shall not
swear by My name falsely, nor shall you pro-
fane the name of your God: I *am* the LORD.

13"You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor
rob *him.* The wages of him who is hired
shall not remain with you all night until
morning. 14You shall not curse the deaf, nor
put a stumbling block before the blind, but
shall fear your God: I *am* the LORD.

15"You shall do no injustice in judgment.
You shall not be partial to the poor, nor
honor the person of the mighty. In right-
eousness you shall judge your neighbor.
16You shall not go about *as* a talebearer
among your people; nor shall you take a
stand against the life of your neighbor: I
am the LORD.

GOSSIP
What does God think of talking about other people?
Leviticus 19:16

17"You shall not hate your brother in
your heart. You shall surely rebuke your
neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.
18You shall not take vengeance, nor bear
any grudge against the children of your
people, but you shall love your neighbor as
yourself: I *am* the LORD.

REVENGE
Should God's people seek revenge?
Leviticus 19:18

19"You shall keep My statutes. You shall
not let your livestock breed with another
kind. You shall not sow your field with
mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed
linen and wool come upon you.

20"Whoever lies carnally with a woman
who *is* betrothed to a man as a concubine,

MAKING IT REAL // LEVITICUS 19:18

What's Really "In"? Relationships can be tricky sometimes. People can seem one way today and totally different tomorrow. You might be BFFs with someone today, and tomorrow they'll ignore your texts and block your posts online. High schools are infamous for cliques and clubs and exclusive groups. Sometimes even when you're "in" you get treated like you're "out."

God knows about high school. He knows what it's like to be tight with a group and have your back stabbed. Don't play those games. He says not to be angry and not to take revenge. Stuff hurts. So hurt, but don't be angry and don't start thinking about how you're going to get back at someone. The Lord says love. That means you have to love the haters, too—not with just any kind of love, either. God says to love them as much as you love yourself. Whoa! Is that even possible? You may not be able to muster up one ounce of love on your own, but ask God to help you love and He will. Be slow to get angry and quick to forgive. That's God's good advice, His way of always being "in" with Him. You'll be much happier and others will be less able to ruin your day if you take His advice and love even the ones who seem unlovable. It will take away their power to hurt you, and they'll most likely stop trying. (See also: John 15:12; 2 Cor. 2:6–8; Eph. 4:31, 32.)

Words to Live By

Love: The Old Testament word translated in Leviticus 19:18 as "love" is *ahab* (aw-habe'). It means "to have affection for someone and care for them as you would care for family." This kind of love is loyal and always wants the best for the one loved. Without God, we can't give this kind of love to anyone, especially not our enemies. With God, we can give love to anyone and everyone. God is love, so He is perfectly capable of loving others through us.

and who has not at all been redeemed
nor given her freedom, for this there shall
be scourging; *but* they shall not be put to
death, because she was not free. 21And he
shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD,
to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, a
ram as a trespass offering. 22The priest shall
make atonement for him with the ram of the
trespass offering before the LORD for his sin
which he has committed. And the sin which
he has committed shall be forgiven him.

23"When you come into the land, and
have planted all kinds of trees for food,
then you shall count their fruit as uncir-
cumcised. Three years it shall be as uncir-
cumcised to you. *It* shall not be eaten. 24But
in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy,
a praise to the LORD. 25And in the fifth year
you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to
you its increase: I *am* the LORD your God.

26"You shall not eat *anything* with the
blood, nor shall you practice divination or
soothsaying. 27You shall not shave around
the sides of your head, nor shall you disfig-
ure the edges of your beard. 28You shall not
make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead,
nor tattoo any marks on you: I *am* the LORD.

OCCULT
Should we avoid the occult?
Leviticus 19:26

29"Do not prostitute your daughter, to
cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall
into harlotry, and the land become full of
wickedness.

30"You shall keep My Sabbaths and rev-
erence My sanctuary: I *am* the LORD.

31"Give no regard to mediums and fa-
miliar spirits; do not seek after them, to be
defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God.

32"You shall rise before the gray headed
and honor the presence of an old man, and
fear your God: I *am* the LORD.

33"And if a stranger dwells with you in
your land, you shall not mistreat him.
34The stranger who dwells among you



WORLD APP

Business / Leviticus 19:36, 37

These days, it seems like every time we turn on the TV or pull up our home page, we are bombarded by stories about unfair business dealings. Someone has cheated investors out of millions of dollars in a Ponzi scheme. A CEO gives himself a raise while employees are losing their jobs and retirement funds. A global company borders on bankruptcy because an executive embezzled a majority of the profits. It seems the desire for wealth and power has turned the business world into an environment of "survival of the greediest." Enough is never enough when greed has taken root in the heart.

But is this how it has to be? Is this just the price of doing business? No, it's not! In Leviticus 19:36, 37, God describes the way all business dealings should be done: "You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I *am* the LORD." The command God gave to the Israelites still goes for us. He is still God, and He still desires honest dealings.

Modern businesses may not literally weigh things out on a scale for every business deal, but they should conduct every transaction with that same honesty. The Lord is not blind to shady business practices anywhere in the world. He does not miss it when the innocent are double-crossed by the greedy. He is not looking somewhere else when the proud declare their authority to do as they please. They may believe they are free and clear, but Galatians 6:7 tells us: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

If one day God calls you into the business world, don't fall for the lie that the greediest one wins. Conduct every deal with honesty and integrity. That is godly business.

shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

35"You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. 36You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37"Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I *am* the LORD.'"

PENALTIES FOR BREAKING THE LAW

20 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: 'Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives *any* of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. 3I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given *some* of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name. 4And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives *some* of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, 5then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech.

Leviticus 20:2

Intentionally disobeying God was a capital offense in ancient Israel. Death by stoning was the normal sentence. Offenders were taken outside the camp where the men of the community threw rocks at them until they died.

6"And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people. 7Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I *am* the LORD your God. 8And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you.

9"For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood *shall be* upon him.

10"The man who commits adultery with *another* man's wife, *he* who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death. 11The man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death. Their blood *shall be* upon them. 12If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death. They have committed perversion. Their blood *shall be* upon them. 13If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *shall be* upon them. 14If a man marries a woman and her mother, it *is* wickedness. They shall be burned with fire, both he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you. 15If a man mates with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. 16If a woman approaches any animal and mates with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *is* upon them.

17"If a man takes his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it *is* a wicked thing. And they shall be cut off in the sight of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness. He shall bear his guilt. 18If a man lies with a woman during her sickness and uncovers her nakedness, he has exposed her flow, and she has uncovered the flow of her blood. Both of them shall be cut off from their people.

19"You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister nor of your father's sister, for that would uncover his near of kin. They shall bear their guilt. 20If a man lies with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness. They shall bear their sin; they shall die childless. 21If a man takes his brother's wife, it *is* an unclean thing. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They shall be childless.

22"You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. 23And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for

MAKING IT REAL // LEVITICUS 20:6

Finding the Answers How many times have you flipped through the channels and seen television shows about witchcraft or wizardry, or seen an advertisement trying to convince you to call a 1-900 number that will put you in touch with your very own psychic? How often have you been surfing the Internet and found sites that make horoscopes, witchcraft, or other forms of the occult sound exciting and tempting?

We live in a world that is fascinated with the occult. Rather than turning to God or His Word for answers, many people turn to "mediums and familiar spirits," that is, to psychics, astrologists, fortune-tellers, witches, channelers, and others who receive their power from Satan, not God. God's Word calls this kind of stuff an abomination; and in this particular verse, God says that He is against (or the enemy of) those who even visit someone who practices this kind of evil. Don't associate with such people or allow your curiosity to lead you into experimenting with the occult. Instead, turn to Jesus. He really is the *only* One who can give you answers; He's the One who controls your future.

When you need answers, go to God. He will speak to you through His Word and by His Holy Spirit. Listen to what God says and follow where He leads. He will always make sure you are in the right place at the right time and your future is a winning one. In fact, the Bible says you're more than a conqueror (Rom. 8:37), and God is on your side. (See also: 2 Chr. 33:6; Gal. 5:19–21.)

Words to Live By

Set My face against: This phrase may be a bit difficult to understand, but it's not hard to get the idea God is not pleased when He sets His "face against" a person. The whole idea here is that God is extremely displeased and His holy, powerful presence is in opposition to those who turn to occult practices. For a person to put themselves in a position where Almighty God is an enemy is dangerous and foolish. Whether or not we recognize His power and authority, God is always in control. Looking to anything or anyone else to find answers about life will never lead to anything good.

they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. 24But I have said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I *am* the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. 25You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclear. 26And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD *am* holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

27"A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood *shall be* upon them.'"

REGULATIONS FOR CONDUCT OF PRIESTS

21 And the LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'None shall defile himself for the dead among his people, 2except for his relatives who are nearest to him: his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, and his brother; 3also his virgin sister who is near to him, who has had no husband, for her he may defile himself. 4*Otherwise* he shall not defile himself, *being* a chief man among his people, to profane himself.

5"They shall not make any bald *place* on their heads, nor shall they shave the edges of their beards nor make any cuttings in their flesh. 6They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for

they offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire, *and* the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy. 7They shall not take a wife *who is* a harlot or a defiled woman, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for *the priest*[a] is holy to his God. 8Therefore you shall consecrate him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I the LORD, who sanctify you, *am* holy. 9The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be burned with fire.

10"*He who is* the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes; 11nor shall he go near any dead body, nor defile himself for his father or his mother; 12nor shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God *is* upon him: I *am* the LORD. 13And he shall take a wife in her virginity. 14A widow or a divorced woman or a defiled woman *or* a harlot—these he shall not marry; but he shall take a virgin of his own people as wife. 15Nor shall he profane his posterity among his people, for I the LORD sanctify him.'"

16And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 17"Speak to Aaron, saying: 'No man of your descendants in *succeeding* generations, who has *any* defect, may approach to offer the bread of his God. 18For any man who has a defect shall not approach: a man blind or lame, who has a marred *face* or any *limb* too long, 19a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, 20or is a hunchback or a *dwarf*, or *a man* who has a defect in his eye, or eczema or scab, or is a eunuch. 21No man of the descendants of Aaron the priest, who has a defect, shall come near to offer the offerings made by fire to the LORD. He has a defect; he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God. 22He may eat the bread of his God, *both* the most holy and the holy; 23only he shall not go near the veil or approach the altar, because he has a defect, lest he profane My sanctuaries; for I the LORD sanctify them.'"

24And Moses told *it* to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel.

22 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they do not profane My holy name *by* what they dedicate to Me: I *am* the LORD. 3Say to them: 'Whoever of all your descendants throughout your generations, who goes near the holy things which the children of Israel dedicate to the LORD, while he has uncleanness upon him, that person shall be cut off from My presence: I *am* the LORD.

4"Whatever man of the descendants of Aaron, who *is* a leper or has a discharge, shall not eat the holy offerings until he is clean. And whoever touches anything made unclean *by* a corpse, or a man who has had an emission of semen, 5or whoever touches any creeping thing by which he would be made unclean, or any person by whom he would become unclean, whatever his uncleanness may be— 6the person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat the holy *offerings* unless he washes his body with water. 7And when the sun goes down he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat the holy *offerings*, because it *is* his food. 8Whatever dies *naturally* or is torn *by beasts* he shall not eat, to defile himself with it: I *am* the LORD.

9"They shall therefore keep My ordinance, lest they bear sin for it and die thereby, if they profane it: I the LORD sanctify them.

10"No outsider shall eat the holy *offering;* one who dwells with the priest, or a hired servant, shall not eat the holy thing. 11But if the priest buys a person with his money, he may eat it; and one who is born in his house may eat his food. 12If the priest's daughter is married to an outsider, she may not eat of the holy offerings. 13But if the priest's daughter is a widow or divorced, and has no child, and has returned to her father's house as in her youth, she may eat her father's food; but no outsider shall eat it.

14"And if a man eats the holy *offering* unintentionally, then he shall restore a holy *offering* to the priest, and add one-fifth to it. 15They shall not profane the holy *offerings* of the children of Israel, which they offer to the LORD, 16or allow them to bear the guilt

21:7 [a]Literally *he*

of trespass when they eat their holy *offerings;* for I the LORD sanctify them.'"

OFFERINGS ACCEPTED AND NOT ACCEPTED

17And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
18"Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: 'Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, who offers his sacrifice for any of his vows or for any of his freewill offerings, which they offer to the LORD as a burnt offering— 19*you shall offer* of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats. 20Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. 21And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill *his* vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. 22Those *that are* blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the LORD. 23Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer *as* a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted.

24'You shall not offer to the LORD what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make *any offering of them* in your land. 25Nor from a foreigner's hand shall you offer any of these as the bread of your God, because their corruption *is* in them, *and* defects *are* in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf.'"

26And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
27"When a bull or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall be seven days with its mother; and from the eighth day and thereafter it shall be accepted as an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28*Whether it is* a cow or ewe, do not kill both her and her young on the same day. 29And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer *it* of your own free will. 30On the same day it shall be eaten; you shall leave none of it until morning: I *am* the LORD.

31"Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I *am* the LORD. 32You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you, 33who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD."

FEASTS OF THE LORD

23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, these *are* My feasts.

THE SABBATH

3'Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it;* it *is* the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

THE PASSOVER AND UNLEAVENED BREAD

4"These *are* the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. 5On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* the LORD's Passover. 6And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. 7On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. 8But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work *on it.*'"

> ***Leviticus 23:4, 5***
> When the angel of death came for every firstborn son in Egypt, he passed over those houses that had been marked with the blood of a lamb. The Israelites celebrated this event by eating a special Passover meal that included bread made without leavening. Jews still celebrate Passover every spring as a reminder of how God rescued their people from slavery.

THE FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS

9And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
10"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you

shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. 11He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. 13Its grain offering *shall be* two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering *shall be* of wine, one-fourth of a hin. 14You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

THE FEAST OF WEEKS

15'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. 16Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. 17You shall bring from your dwellings two wave *loaves* of two-tenths *of an ephah*. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. *They are* the firstfruits to the LORD. 18And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be *as* a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. 19Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. 20The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits *as* a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. 21And you shall proclaim on the same day *that* it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on *it*. *It shall be* a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

22'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.'"

THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

23Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a sabbath-*rest*, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25You shall do no customary work *on it;* and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.'"

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

26And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 27"Also the tenth *day* of this seventh month *shall be* the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28And you shall do no work on that same day, for it *is* the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. 29For any person who is not afflicted *in soul* on that same day shall be cut off from his people. 30And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. 31You shall do no manner of work; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 32It *shall be* to you a sabbath of *solemn* rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth *day* of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

33Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 34"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles *for* seven days to the LORD. 35On the first day *there shall* be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it*. 36*For* seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a sacred assembly, *and* you shall do no customary work *on it*.

37'These *are* the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day— 38besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your

vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD.

39"Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD *for* seven days; on the first day *there shall be* a sabbath-*rest*, and on the eighth day a sabbath-*rest*. 40And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. 41You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, 43that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.'"

44So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

CARE OF THE TABERNACLE LAMPS

24 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually. 3Outside the veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle of meeting, Aaron shall be in charge of it from evening until morning before the LORD continually; *it shall be* a statute forever in your generations. 4He shall be in charge of the lamps on the pure *gold* lampstand before the LORD continually.

THE BREAD OF THE TABERNACLE

5"And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths *of an ephah* shall be in each cake. 6You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure *gold* table before the LORD. 7And you shall put pure frankincense on *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 8Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. 9And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it *is* most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute."

THE PENALTY FOR BLASPHEMY

10Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father *was* an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite *woman's* son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp. 11And the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name of *the* LORD and cursed; and so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name *was* Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) 12Then they put him in custody, that the mind of the LORD might be shown to them.

13And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 14"Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard *him* lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him.

15"Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. 16And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name *of the* LORD, he shall be put to death.

17'Whoever kills any man shall surely be put to death. 18Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, animal for animal.

19'If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him— 20fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him. 21And whoever kills an animal shall restore it; but whoever kills a man shall be put to death. 22You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I *am* the LORD your God.'"

23Then Moses spoke to the children of Israel; and they took outside the camp him who had cursed, and stoned him with stones. So the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

THE SABBATH OF THE SEVENTH YEAR

25 And the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the

land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD. 3Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; 4but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. 5What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, *for* it is a year of rest for the land. 6And the sabbath *produce* of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, 7for your livestock and the beasts that *are* in your land—all its produce shall be for food.

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

8"And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. 9Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. 10And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. 11That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather *the grapes* of your untended vine. 12For it *is* the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat its produce from the field.

13"In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession. 14And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not oppress one another. 15According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years of crops he shall sell to you. 16According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you *according* to the number *of the years* of the crops. 17Therefore you shall not oppress one another, but you shall fear your God; for I *am* the LORD your God.

Leviticus 25:14, 15

The Year of Jubilee was a time to start over again economically and socially! God wanted His people to be free—including free from debt. The Year of Jubilee was a way of reminding the Israelites of this.

PROVISIONS FOR THE SEVENTH YEAR

18"So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety. 19Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety.

20"And if you say, "What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?" 21Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. 22And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat *of* the old *harvest.*

REDEMPTION OF PROPERTY

23"The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land *is* Mine; for you *are* strangers and sojourners with Me. 24And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.

25"If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold *some* of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold. 26Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, 27then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. 28But if he is not able to have *it* restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession.

29"If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; *within* a full year he may redeem it. 30But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to

him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee. 31However the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be counted as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee. 32Nevertheless the cities of the Levites, *and* the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. 33And if a man purchases a house from the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall be released in the Jubilee; for the houses in the cities of the Levites *are* their possession among the children of Israel. 34But the field of the common-land of their cities may not be sold, for it *is* their perpetual possession.

LENDING TO THE POOR

35'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. 36Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. 37You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit. 38I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan *and* to be your God.

THE LAW CONCERNING SLAVERY

39'And if *one of* your brethren *who dwells* by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. 40As a hired servant *and* a sojourner he shall be with you, *and* shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee. 41And *then* he shall depart from you—he and his children with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers. 42For they *are* My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. 43You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God. 44And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have—from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves. 45Moreover you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property. 46And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them as* a possession; they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor.

47'Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and *one of* your brethren *who dwells* by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger *or* sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family, 48after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; 49or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or *anyone* who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself. 50Thus he shall reckon with him who bought him: The price of his release shall be according to the number of years, from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Jubilee; *it shall be* according to the time of a hired servant for him. 51If *there are* still many years *remaining*, according to them he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought. 52And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, *and* according to his years he shall repay him the price of his redemption. 53He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight. 54And if he is not redeemed in these *years*, then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee—he and his children with him. 55For the children of Israel *are* servants to Me; they *are* My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

PROMISE OF BLESSING AND RETRIBUTION

26 'You shall not make idols for yourselves;
neither a carved image nor a *sacred* pillar shall you rear up for yourselves;
nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it;
for I *am* the LORD your God.
2You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary:
I *am* the LORD.

3'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them,

4then I will give you rain in its season, the
land shall yield its produce, and
the trees of the field shall yield
their fruit.
5Your threshing shall last till the time of
vintage, and the vintage shall last
till the time of sowing;
you shall eat your bread to the full, and
dwell in your land safely.

BLESSING
What type of life does God bless?
Leviticus 26:3–5

6I will give peace in the land, and you
shall lie down, and none will
make *you* afraid;
I will rid the land of evil beasts,
and the sword will not go through your
land.
7You will chase your enemies, and they
shall fall by the sword before you.
8Five of you shall chase a hundred, and
a hundred of you shall put ten
thousand to flight;
your enemies shall fall by the sword be-
fore you.

9"For I will look on you favorably and make
you fruitful, multiply you and con-
firm My covenant with you.
10You shall eat the old harvest, and clear
out the old because of the new.
11I will set My tabernacle among you, and
My soul shall not abhor you.
12I will walk among you and be your God,
and you shall be My people.
13I *am* the LORD your God, who brought
you out of the land of Egypt, that
you should not be their slaves;
I have broken the bands of your yoke
and made you walk upright.

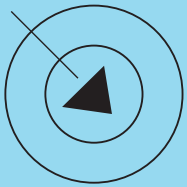
14"But if you do not obey Me, and do not ob-
serve all these commandments,
15and if you despise My statutes, or if your
soul abhors My judgments, so
that you do not perform all My
commandments, *but* break My
covenant,
16I also will do this to you:
I will even appoint terror over you, wast-
ing disease and fever which shall
consume the eyes and cause sor-
row of heart.
And you shall sow your seed in vain, for
your enemies shall eat it.
17I will set My face against you, and you
shall be defeated by your enemies.
Those who hate you shall reign over you,
and you shall flee when no one
pursues you.

18"And after all this, if you do not obey Me,
then I will punish you seven times
more for your sins.
19I will break the pride of your power;
I will make your heavens like iron and
your earth like bronze.
20And your strength shall be spent in
vain;
for your land shall not yield its produce,
nor shall the trees of the land yield
their fruit.

21"Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are
not willing to obey Me, I will bring
on you seven times more plagues,
according to your sins.
22I will also send wild beasts among you,
which shall rob you of your chil-
dren, destroy your livestock, and
make you few in number;
and your highways shall be desolate.

23"And if by these things you are not re-
formed by Me, but walk contrary
to Me,
24then I also will walk contrary to you, and
I will punish you yet seven times
for your sins.
25And I will bring a sword against you that
will execute the vengeance of the
covenant;
when you are gathered together within
your cities I will send pestilence
among you;
and you shall be delivered into the hand
of the enemy.
26When I have cut off your supply of bread,
ten women shall bake your bread
in one oven, and they shall bring
back your bread by weight, and
you shall eat and not be satisfied.

27"And after all this, if you do not obey Me,
but walk contrary to Me,
28then I also will walk contrary to you in
fury;



PROMISE

God promises to punish sin.

"But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart . . . And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins" (Lev. 26:14–16a, 18).

Wow! God really means business. He intends for us to obey His laws; and it's for our own good. He gave us laws in order to give us guidance and boundaries. God designed our lives, so He knows better than anyone how they need to operate. Think of Him as the "manufacturer." The manufacturer has set the specs, knowing how everything functions at its best and at what point the whole system will crash and burn. When we don't follow the specs God has given us for life (His laws), we will find our lives out of order and, sooner or later, we, too, will crash and burn.

Breaking God's law is sin, and God punishes sin for the same reason a parent disciplines a child for disobedience. He wants us to live fully productive, successful lives because He loves us. So sin brings discipline in order for us to learn to live as God wants—the only way we will ever know real success. Sometimes, the consequence of the sin is the punishment. Other times, punishment may come in another form. The promise of punishment is enough to encourage some people to try to stay out of sin. However, our motivation for living right and avoiding sin should not be to simply avoid punishment. Rather, our motivation should be our love for God and our desire to serve Him and be like Him. Even if we forget or fail to be motivated by our love for and desire to please God, He will give us reminders that are hard to ignore. And He knows that once we've had to face the consequences of our sin, or once we've been punished, we won't be quick to make the same mistake again. God's discipline helps us remember to say to temptation: "Been there, done that, no thanks."

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 89:32, 33; Lamentations 4:22; Hosea 9:9

and I, even I, will chastise you seven
times for your sins.
29 You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and
you shall eat the flesh of your
daughters.
30 I will destroy your high places, cut down
your incense altars, and cast your
carcasses on the lifeless forms of
your idols;
and My soul shall abhor you.
31 I will lay your cities waste and bring your
sanctuaries to desolation, and
I will not smell the fragrance of
your sweet aromas.
32 I will bring the land to desolation, and
your enemies who dwell in it shall
be astonished at it.
33 I will scatter you among the nations and
draw out a sword after you;
your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.
34 Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as
long as it lies desolate and you *are*
in your enemies' land;
then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths.
35 As long as *it* lies desolate it shall rest—
for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it.

36 'And as for those of you who are left, I will
send faintness into their hearts in
the lands of their enemies;
the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause
them to flee;

they shall flee as though fleeing from a
sword, and they shall fall when no
one pursues.
37 They shall stumble over one another, as
it were before a sword, when no
one pursues;
and you shall have no *power* to stand be-
fore your enemies.
38 You shall perish among the nations, and
the land of your enemies shall eat
you up.
39 And those of you who are left shall waste
away in their iniquity in your en-
emies' lands;
also in their fathers' iniquities, which are
with them, they shall waste away.

40 "*But* if they confess their iniquity and the
iniquity of their fathers, with their
unfaithfulness in which they were
unfaithful to Me, and that they
also have walked contrary to Me,
41 and *that* I also have walked contrary to
them and have brought them into
the land of their enemies;
if their uncircumcised hearts are hum-
bled, and they accept their guilt—
42 then I will remember My covenant with
Jacob, and My covenant with
Isaac and My covenant with Abra-
ham I will remember;
I will remember the land.
43 The land also shall be left empty by them,
and will enjoy its sabbaths while it
lies desolate without them;
they will accept their guilt, because
they despised My judgments and
because their soul abhorred My
statutes.
44 Yet for all that, when they are in the
land of their enemies, I will not
cast them away, nor shall I abhor
them, to utterly destroy them and
break My covenant with them;
for I *am* the LORD their God.
45 But for their sake I will remember the
covenant of their ancestors, whom
I brought out of the land of Egypt
in the sight of the nations, that I
might be their God:
I *am* the LORD.'"

46 These *are* the statutes and judgments
and laws which the LORD made between
Himself and the children of Israel on
Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.

REDEEMING PERSONS AND PROPERTY DEDICATED TO GOD

27 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When a man consecrates by a vow certain persons to the LORD, according to your valuation, 3 if your valuation is of a male from twenty years old up to sixty years old, then your valuation shall be fifty shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. 4 If it *is* a female, then your valuation shall be thirty shekels; 5 and if from five years old up to twenty years old, then your valuation for a male shall be twenty shekels, and for a female ten shekels; 6 and if from a month old up to five years old, then your valuation for a male shall be five shekels of silver, and for a female your valuation shall be three shekels of silver; 7 and if from sixty years old and above, if *it is* a male, then your valuation shall be fifteen shekels, and for a female ten shekels.

8 "But if he is too poor to pay your valuation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall set a value for him; according to the ability of him who vowed, the priest shall value him.

9 "If *it is* an animal that men may bring as an offering to the LORD, all that *anyone* gives to the LORD shall be holy. 10 He shall not substitute it or exchange it, good for bad or bad for good; and if he at all exchanges animal for animal, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy. 11 If *it is* an unclean animal which they do not offer as a sacrifice to the LORD, then he shall present the animal before the priest; 12 and the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as you, the priest, value it, so it shall be. 13 But if he *wants* at all *to* redeem it, then he must add one-fifth to your valuation.

14 "And when a man dedicates his house *to be* holy to the LORD, then the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. 15 If he who dedicated it *wants to* redeem his house, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall be his.

16 "If a man dedicates to the LORD *part* of a field of his possession, then your valuation shall be according to the seed for it. A

homer of barley seed *shall be valued* at fifty shekels of silver. 17If he dedicates his field from the Year of Jubilee, according to your valuation it shall stand. 18But if he dedicates his field after the Jubilee, then the priest shall reckon to him the money due according to the years that remain till the Year of Jubilee, and it shall be deducted from your valuation. 19And if he who dedicates the field ever wishes to redeem it, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall belong to him. 20But if he does not want to redeem the field, or if he has sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed anymore; 21but the field, when it is released in the Jubilee, shall be holy to the LORD, as a devoted field; it shall be the possession of the priest.

22'And if a man dedicates to the LORD a field which he has bought, which is not the field of his possession, 23then the priest shall reckon to him the worth of your valuation, up to the Year of Jubilee, and he shall give your valuation on that day *as* a holy *offering* to the LORD. 24In the Year of Jubilee the field shall return to him from whom it was bought, to the one who *owned* the land as a possession. 25And all your valuations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs to the shekel.

26'But the firstborn of the animals, which should be the LORD's firstborn, no man shall dedicate; whether *it is* an ox or sheep, it *is* the LORD's. 27And if *it is* an unclean animal, then he shall redeem *it* according to your valuation, and shall add one-fifth to it; or if it is not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to your valuation.

28'Nevertheless no devoted *offering* that a man may devote to the LORD of all that he has, *both* man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted *offering is* most holy to the LORD. 29No person under the ban, who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, *but* shall surely be put to death. 30And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land *or* of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD's. It *is* holy to the LORD. 31If a man wants at all to redeem *any* of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. 32And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. 33He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.'"

34These *are* the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai.

Numbers

DATE OF WRITING: 1445–1440 B.C.
AUTHOR: TRADITIONALLY, MOSES
THEME: GOD'S GUIDING PRESENCE
PURPOSE: ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES THAT EVEN THE FORGIVEN CANNOT ESCAPE.

OUTLINE

1:1—4:49 ..... The People of Israel Are Counted
5:1—8:26 ..... Various Laws and the Cleansing of the Levites
9:1–23 ..... Passover Is Celebrated and a Cloud Covers the Tabernacle
10:1–36 ..... The People Begin Their Journey
11:1–35 ..... The People Complain
12:1–16 ..... Miriam and Aaron Are Jealous of Moses
13:1–33 ..... Twelve Men Are Sent into Canaan
14:1–45 ..... The People Rebel and Are Punished
15:1–41 ..... Laws and Punishments
16:1—17:13 ..... The People Rebel
18:1–32 ..... Priests and Levites
19:1–22 ..... Becoming Clean
20:1—21:35 ..... On the Way to Moab
22:1—24:25 ..... The Messages of Balaam
25:1–18 ..... The People Are Unfaithful
26:1–65 ..... The People of Israel Are Counted a Second Time
27:1–11 ..... The Daughters of Zelophehad Are Given Land
27:12–23 ..... Joshua Is Appointed Israel's Leader
28:1—30:16 ..... Various Laws and Sacrifices for Israel's Feasts
31:1—36:13 ..... Israel Defeats Midian and Prepares to Cross the Jordan River

KEY VERSE:

Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them" (Numbers 20:12).

THEN /// The title, Numbers, refers to the two times that Moses took a census of (or counted) the people. The book itself is really about the time period in between the two censuses.

After God miraculously brought the Hebrews out of Egypt, they traveled for about twenty-four months on a journey to the border of the Promised Land, and now they were about to collect their long-awaited heritage. There was just one catch: they would first have to drive out the Canaanites who lived there. Moses had taken the first census to see how many fighting men the Hebrews had, and it was time to finally conquer the Promised Land. However, instead of going in, the people freaked out with fear, even after all God had done to get them there. The consequence for their lack of faith was that they put the camels in reverse and cruised the wilderness for almost forty long, hot, dry years.

NOW /// The Book of Numbers is about the nasty parts of life that we bring on ourselves when we refuse to believe that God will come through for us. It's about the weak parts of us that don't believe even when God has been faithful. It's about the part of us that grumbles because we want God's blessings the easy way; we don't want to work to keep our part of our agreement to worship Him. It's about us learning from the Hebrews' mistakes so that maybe we won't make the same ones.

REALITY CHECK /// The desert wandering isn't the end of the story in Numbers. After those forty years, it was time for the next generation's chance to enter the Holy Land. Would they succeed where their parents had failed? The Book of Numbers, which relays the sad story of fear and consequences and wandering, actually ends with some positive expectations that the new generation would, in fact, finally enter the Promised Land.

God had not abandoned His people, and His plan was not ultimately overcome by their fear and complaining. So we can take heart that even if we have given in to the temptation to fear the future and grumble about our lives, that doesn't have to be the end of the story. God does not abandon us; there is always hope for the future.

THE FIRST CENSUS OF ISRAEL

1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the
Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle
of meeting, on the first *day* of the sec-
ond month, in the second year after they
had come out of the land of Egypt, saying:
2"Take a census of all the congregation of
the children of Israel, by their families,
by their fathers' houses, according to the
number of names, every male individu-
ally, 3from twenty years old and above—all
who *are able to* go to war in Israel. You and
Aaron shall number them by their armies.
4And with you there shall be a man from
every tribe, each one the head of his fa-
ther's house.

5"These are the names of the men
who shall stand with you: from Reuben,

Elizur the son of Shedeur; 6from Simeon,
Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; 7from
Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab; 8from Issachar, Nethanel the son
of Zuar; 9from Zebulun, Eliab the son of
Helon; 10from the sons of Joseph: from
Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud;
from Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; 11from Benjamin, Abidan the son
of Gideoni; 12from Dan, Ahiezer the son
of Ammishaddai; 13from Asher, Pagiel the
son of Ocran; 14from Gad, Eliasaph the son
of Deuel;[a] 15from Naphtali, Ahira the son of
Enan." 16These *were* chosen from the congregation, leaders of their fathers' tribes,
heads of the divisions in Israel.

17Then Moses and Aaron took these
men who had been mentioned by name,
18and they assembled all the congregation
together on the first *day* of the second
month; and they recited their ancestry by
families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty
years old and above, each one individually. 19As the LORD commanded Moses,
so he numbered them in the Wilderness
of Sinai.

20Now the children of Reuben, Israel's
oldest son, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to
the number of names, every male individually, from twenty years old and above, all
who *were able to* go to war: 21those who
were numbered of the tribe of Reuben *were*
forty-six thousand five hundred.

Numbers 1:20–46

Don't underestimate the size of the Israelite nation. The 603,550 people counted in the census were all men. Throw in the women and children, and you probably had a total population of two million or more!

22From the children of Simeon, their
genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, of those who were numbered,
according to the number of names, every
male individually, from twenty years old
and above, all who *were able to* go to war:
23those who were numbered of the tribe
of Simeon *were* fifty-nine thousand three
hundred.

24From the children of Gad, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers'
house, according to the number of names,
from twenty years old and above, all who
were able to go to war: 25those who were
numbered of the tribe of Gad *were* forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty.

26From the children of Judah, their
genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of
names, from twenty years old and above,
all who *were able to* go to war: 27those who
were numbered of the tribe of Judah *were*
seventy-four thousand six hundred.

28From the children of Issachar, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers'
house, according to the number of names,
from twenty years old and above, all who
were able to go to war: 29those who were
numbered of the tribe of Issachar *were*
fifty-four thousand four hundred.

30From the children of Zebulun, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers'
house, according to the number of names,
from twenty years old and above, all who
were able to go to war: 31those who were
numbered of the tribe of Zebulun *were*
fifty-seven thousand four hundred.

32From the sons of Joseph, the children
of Ephraim, their genealogies by their
families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty
years old and above, all who *were able to* go
to war: 33those who were numbered of the
tribe of Ephraim *were* forty thousand five
hundred.

34From the children of Manasseh, their
genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of
names, from twenty years old and above,
all who *were able to* go to war: 35those who
were numbered of the tribe of Manasseh
were thirty-two thousand two hundred.

36From the children of Benjamin, their
genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of
names, from twenty years old and above,
all who *were able to* go to war: 37those who
were numbered of the tribe of Benjamin
were thirty-five thousand four hundred.

38From the children of Dan, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers'
house, according to the number of names,
from twenty years old and above, all who

1:14 [a]Spelled *Reuel* in 2:14

were able to go to war: 39those who were numbered of the tribe of Dan *were* sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

40From the children of Asher, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 41those who were numbered of the tribe of Asher *were* forty-one thousand five hundred.

42From the children of Naphtali, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 43those who were numbered of the tribe of Naphtali *were* fifty-three thousand four hundred.

44These are the ones who were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, with the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each one representing his father's house. 45So all who were numbered of the children of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war in Israel— 46all who were numbered were six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.

47But the Levites were not numbered among them by their fathers' tribe; 48for the LORD had spoken to Moses, saying: 49"Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor take a census of them among the children of Israel; 50but you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the Testimony, over all its furnishings, and over all things that belong to it; they shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they shall attend to it and camp around the tabernacle. 51And when the tabernacle is to go forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall set it up. The outsider who comes near shall be put to death. 52The children of Israel shall pitch their tents, everyone by his own camp, everyone by his own standard, according to their armies; 53but the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the Testimony, that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the children of Israel; and the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony."

54Thus the children of Israel did; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so they did.

THE TRIBES AND LEADERS BY ARMIES

2 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2"Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father's house; they shall camp some distance from the tabernacle of meeting. 3On the east side, toward the rising of the sun, those of the standard of the forces with Judah shall camp according to their armies; and Nahshon the son of Amminadab *shall be* the leader of the children of Judah." 4And his army was numbered at seventy-four thousand six hundred.

5"Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Issachar, and Nethanel the son of Zuar *shall be* the leader of the children of Issachar." 6And his army was numbered at fifty-four thousand four hundred.

7"Then *comes* the tribe of Zebulun, and Eliab the son of Helon *shall be* the leader of the children of Zebulun." 8And his army was numbered at fifty-seven thousand four hundred. 9"All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Judah, one hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred—these shall break camp first.

10"On the south side *shall be* the standard of the forces with Reuben according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Reuben *shall be* Elizur the son of Shedeur." 11And his army was numbered at forty-six thousand five hundred.

12"Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Simeon, and the leader of the children of Simeon *shall be* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai." 13And his army was numbered at fifty-nine thousand three hundred.

14"Then *comes* the tribe of Gad, and the leader of the children of Gad *shall be* Eliasaph the son of Reuel."[a] 15And his army was numbered at forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty. 16"All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Reuben, one hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and fifty—they shall be the second to break camp.

17"And the tabernacle of meeting shall move out with the camp of the Levites in the middle of the camps; as they camp, so they shall move out, everyone in his place, by their standards.

2:14 [a]Spelled *Deuel* in 1:14 and 7:42

18"On the west side *shall be* the standard of the forces with Ephraim according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Ephraim *shall be* Elishama the son of Ammihud." 19And his army was numbered at forty thousand five hundred.

20"Next to him *comes* the tribe of Manasseh, and the leader of the children of Manasseh *shall be* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur." 21And his army was numbered at thirty-two thousand two hundred.

22"Then *comes* the tribe of Benjamin, and the leader of the children of Benjamin *shall be* Abidan the son of Gideoni." 23And his army was numbered at thirty-five thousand four hundred. 24"All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Ephraim, one hundred and eight thousand one hundred—they shall be the third to break camp.

25"The standard of the forces with Dan *shall be* on the north side according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Dan *shall be* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai." 26And his army was numbered at sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

27"Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Asher, and the leader of the children of Asher *shall be* Pagiel the son of Ocran." 28And his army was numbered at forty-one thousand five hundred.

29"Then *comes* the tribe of Naphtali, and the leader of the children of Naphtali *shall be* Ahira the son of Enan." 30And his army was numbered at fifty-three thousand four hundred. 31"All who were numbered of the forces with Dan, one hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred—they shall break camp last, with their standards."

32These *are* the ones who were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' houses. All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces *were* six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. 33But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

34Thus the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses; so they camped by their standards and so they broke camp, each one by his family, according to their fathers' houses.

THE SONS OF AARON

3 Now these *are* the records of Aaron and Moses when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. 2And these *are* the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab, the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3These *are* the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he consecrated to minister as priests. 4Nadab and Abihu had died before the LORD when they offered profane fire before the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children. So Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests in the presence of Aaron their father.

THE LEVITES SERVE IN THE TABERNACLE

5And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 6"Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him. 7And they shall attend to his needs and the needs of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of meeting, to do the work of the tabernacle. 8Also they shall attend to all the furnishings of the tabernacle of meeting, and to the needs of the children of Israel, to do the work of the tabernacle. 9And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they *are* given entirely to him[a] from among the children of Israel. 10So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

11Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 12"Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine, 13because all the firstborn *are* Mine. On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They shall be Mine: I *am* the LORD."

CENSUS OF THE LEVITES COMMANDED

14Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, saying: 15"Number the

3:9 [a]Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint read *Me.*

children of Levi by their fathers' houses, by their families; you shall number every male from a month old and above."

16So Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded. 17These were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 18And these *are* the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei. 19And the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram, Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 20And the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These *are* the families of the Levites by their fathers' houses.

21From Gershon *came* the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimites; these *were* the families of the Gershonites. 22Those who were numbered, according to the number of all the males from a month old and above—of those who were numbered *there were* seven thousand five hundred. 23The families of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle westward. 24And the leader of the father's house of the Gershonites *was* Eliasaph the son of Lael. 25The duties of the children of Gershon in the tabernacle of meeting *included* the tabernacle, the tent with its covering, the screen for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, 26the screen for the door of the court, the hangings of the court which *are* around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords, according to all the work relating to them.

27From Kohath *came* the family of the Amramites, the family of the Izharites, the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites; these *were* the families of the Kohathites. 28According to the number of all the males, from a month old and above, *there were* eight thousand six[a] hundred keeping charge of the sanctuary. 29The families of the children of Kohath were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle. 30And the leader of the fathers' house of the families of the Kohathites *was* Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. 31Their duty *included* the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the utensils of the sanctuary with which they ministered, the screen, and all the work relating to them.

32And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *was to be* chief over the leaders of the Levites, *with* oversight of those who kept charge of the sanctuary.

33From Merari *came* the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites; these *were* the families of Merari. 34And those who were numbered, according to the number of all the males from a month old and above, *were* six thousand two hundred. 35The leader of the fathers' house of the families of Merari *was* Zuriel the son of Abihail. These *were* to camp on the north side of the tabernacle. 36And the appointed duty of the children of Merari *included* the boards of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, its utensils, all the work relating to them, 37and the pillars of the court all around, with their sockets, their pegs, and their cords.

38Moreover those who were to camp before the tabernacle on the east, before the tabernacle of meeting, *were* Moses, Aaron, and his sons, keeping charge of the sanctuary, to meet the needs of the children of Israel; but the outsider who came near was to be put to death. 39All who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, by their families, all the males from a month old and above, *were* twenty-two thousand.

LEVITES DEDICATED INSTEAD OF THE FIRSTBORN

40Then the LORD said to Moses: "Number all the firstborn males of the children of Israel from a month old and above, and take the number of their names. 41And you shall take the Levites for Me—I *am* the LORD—instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the livestock of the children of Israel." 42So Moses numbered all the firstborn among the children of Israel, as the LORD commanded him. 43And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names from a month old and above, of those who were numbered of them, were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three.

44Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 45"Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of their livestock. The Levites shall be Mine: I *am*

3:28 [a]Some manuscripts of the Septuagint read *three*.

the LORD. 46And for the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three of the firstborn of the children of Israel, who are more than the number of the Levites, 47you shall take five shekels for each one individually; you shall take *them* in the currency of the shekel of the sanctuary, the shekel of twenty gerahs. 48And you shall give the money, with which the excess number of them is redeemed, to Aaron and his sons."

49So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above those who were redeemed by the Levites. 50From the firstborn of the children of Israel he took the money, one thousand three hundred and sixty-five *shekels,* according to the shekel of the sanctuary. 51And Moses gave their redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

DUTIES OF THE SONS OF KOHATH

4 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2"Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the children of Levi, by their families, by their fathers' house, 3from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting.

4"This *is* the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of meeting, *relating to* the most holy things: 5When the camp prepares to journey, Aaron and his sons shall come, and they shall take down the covering veil and cover the ark of the Testimony with it. 6Then they shall put on it a covering of badger skins, and spread over *that* a cloth entirely of blue; and they shall insert its poles.

7"On the table of showbread they shall spread a blue cloth, and put on it the dishes, the pans, the bowls, and the pitchers for pouring; and the showbread[a] shall be on it. 8They shall spread over them a scarlet cloth, and cover the same with a covering of badger skins; and they shall insert its poles. 9And they shall take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand of the light, with its lamps, its wick-trimmers, its trays, and all its oil vessels, with which they service it. 10Then they shall put it with all its utensils in a covering of badger skins, and put *it* on a carrying beam.

11"Over the golden altar they shall spread a blue cloth, and cover it with a covering of badger skins; and they shall insert its poles. 12Then they shall take all the utensils of service with which they minister in the sanctuary, put *them* in a blue cloth, cover them with a covering of badger skins, and put *them* on a carrying beam. 13Also they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth over it. 14They shall put on it all its implements with which they minister there—the firepans, the forks, the shovels, the basins, and all the utensils of the altar—and they shall spread on it a covering of badger skins, and insert its poles. 15And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then the sons of Kohath shall come to carry *them;* but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die.

"These *are* the things in the tabernacle of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

16"The appointed duty of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *is* the oil for the light, the sweet incense, the daily grain offering, the anointing oil, the oversight of all the tabernacle, of all that *is* in it, with the sanctuary and its furnishings."

17Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 18"Do not cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites; 19but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task. 20But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, lest they die."

DUTIES OF THE SONS OF GERSHON

21Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 22"Also take a census of the sons of Gershon, by their fathers' house, by their families. 23From thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, you shall number them, all who enter to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting. 24This *is* the service of the families of the Gershonites, in serving and carrying: 25They shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle and the tabernacle of meeting *with* its covering,

4:7 [a]Literally *the continual bread*

the covering of badger skins that *is* on it, the screen for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, 26the screen for the door of the gate of the court, the hangings of the court which *are* around the tabernacle and altar, and their cords, all the furnishings for their service and all that is made for these things: so shall they serve.

27"Aaron and his sons shall assign all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, all their tasks and all their service. And you shall appoint to them all their tasks as their duty. 28This *is* the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of meeting. And their duties *shall be* under the authority[a] of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

DUTIES OF THE SONS OF MERARI

29"*As for* the sons of Merari, you shall number them by their families and by their fathers' house. 30From thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, you shall number them, everyone who enters the service to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting. 31And this *is* what they must carry as all their service for the tabernacle of meeting: the boards of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, 32and the pillars around the court with their sockets, pegs, and cords, with all their furnishings and all their service; and you shall assign *to each man* by name the items he must carry. 33This *is* the service of the families of the sons of Merari, as all their service for the tabernacle of meeting, under the authority[a] of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest."

CENSUS OF THE LEVITES

34And Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites by their families and by their fathers' house, 35from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tabernacle of meeting; 36and those who were numbered by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty. 37These *were* the ones who were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all who might serve in the tabernacle of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

38And those who were numbered of the sons of Gershon, by their families and by their fathers' house, 39from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tabernacle of meeting— 40those who were numbered by their families, by their fathers' house, were two thousand six hundred and thirty. 41These *are* the ones who were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all who might serve in the tabernacle of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the LORD.

42Those of the families of the sons of Merari who were numbered, by their families, by their fathers' house, 43from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tabernacle of meeting— 44those who were numbered by their families were three thousand two hundred. 45These *are* the ones who were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

46All who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of Israel numbered, by their families and by their fathers' houses, 47from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who came to do the work of service and the work of bearing burdens in the tabernacle of meeting— 48those who were numbered were eight thousand five hundred and eighty.

49According to the commandment of the LORD they were numbered by the hand of Moses, each according to his service and according to his task; thus were they numbered by him, as the LORD commanded Moses.

CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN PERSONS ISOLATED

5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, everyone who has a discharge, and whoever becomes defiled by a corpse. 3You shall put out both male and female; you shall put them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camps in the

4:28 [a]Literally *hand* **4:33** [a]Literally *hand*

midst of which I dwell." 4And the children of Israel did so, and put them outside the camp; as the LORD spoke to Moses, so the children of Israel did.

CONFESSION AND RESTITUTION

5Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6"Speak to the children of Israel: 'When a man or woman commits any sin that men commit in unfaithfulness against the LORD, and that person is guilty, 7then he shall confess the sin which he has committed. He shall make restitution for his trespass in full, plus one-fifth of it, and give *it* to the one he has wronged. 8But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for the wrong *must go* to the LORD for the priest, in addition to the ram of the atonement with which atonement is made for him. 9Every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his. 10And every man's holy things shall be his; whatever any man gives the priest shall be his.'"

CONCERNING UNFAITHFUL WIVES

11And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'If any man's wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him, 13and a man lies with her carnally, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and it is concealed that she has defiled herself, and *there was* no witness against her, nor was she caught— 14if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, who has defiled herself; or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, although she has not defiled herself— 15then the man shall bring his wife to the priest. He shall bring the offering required for her, one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil on it and put no frankincense on it, because it *is* a grain offering of jealousy, an offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance.

16'And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD. 17The priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put *it* into the water. 18Then the priest shall stand the woman before the LORD, uncover the woman's head, and put the offering for remembering in her hands, which *is* the grain offering of jealousy. And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. 19And the priest shall put her under oath, and say to the woman, "If no man has lain with you, and if you have not gone astray to uncleanness *while* under your husband's *authority,* be free from this bitter water that brings a curse. 20But if you have gone astray *while* under your husband's *authority,* and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has lain with you"— 21then the priest shall put the woman under the oath of the curse, and he shall say to the woman—"the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the LORD makes your thigh rot and your belly swell; 22and may this water that causes the curse go into your stomach, and make *your* belly swell and *your* thigh rot."

'Then the woman shall say, "Amen, so be it."

23'Then the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall scrape *them* off into the bitter water. 24And he shall make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter her *to become* bitter. 25Then the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, shall wave the offering before the LORD, and bring it to the altar; 26and the priest shall take a handful of the offering, as its memorial portion, burn *it* on the altar, and afterward make the woman drink the water. 27When he has made her drink the water, then it shall be, if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, that the water that brings a curse will enter her *and become* bitter, and her belly will swell, her thigh will rot, and the woman will become a curse among her people. 28But if the woman has not defiled herself, and is clean, then she shall be free and may conceive children.

29'This *is* the law of jealousy, when a wife, *while* under her husband's *authority,* goes astray and defiles herself, 30or when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man, and he becomes jealous of his wife; then he shall stand the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute all this

law upon her. 31Then the man shall be free from iniquity, but that woman shall bear her guilt.'"

THE LAW OF THE NAZIRITE

6 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, 3he shall separate himself from wine and *similar* drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from *similar* drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. 4All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.

Numbers 6:2–12

The vow to become a Nazirite was like a contract to dedicate a portion of one's life specifically to serving God. All Israelites were free to make the vow. The only people we know of in the Bible who were lifelong Nazirites were Samson (and he did not always live up to the vow's requirements), Samuel, and John the Baptist.

5'All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. *Then* he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. 6All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. 7He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God *is* on his head. 8All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.

9'And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. 10Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting; 11and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and *the* other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned in regard to the corpse; and he shall sanctify his head that same day. 12He shall consecrate to the LORD the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb in its first year as a trespass offering; but the former days shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.

13'Now this *is* the law of the Nazirite: When the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 14And he shall present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb in its first year without blemish as a burnt offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish as a sin offering, one ram without blemish as a peace offering, 15a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their grain offering with their drink offerings.

16Then the priest shall bring *them* before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering; 17and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer its grain offering and its drink offering. 18Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put *it* on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering.

19'And the priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put *them* upon the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated *hair,* 20and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD; they *are* holy for the priest, together with the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering. After that the Nazirite may drink wine.'

21"'This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to the LORD the offering for his separation, and besides that, whatever else his hand is able to provide; according to the vow which he takes, so he must do according to the law of his separation.'"

THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

22And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 23"Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:

24 "The LORD bless you and keep you;
25 The LORD make His face shine upon
you,
And be gracious to you;
26 The LORD lift up His countenance
upon you,
And give you peace."'

27 "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

OFFERINGS OF THE LEADERS

7 Now it came to pass, when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, that he anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings, and the altar and all its utensils; so he anointed them and consecrated them. 2 Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers' houses, who *were* the leaders of the tribes and over those who were numbered, made an offering. 3 And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart for *every* two of the leaders, and for each one an ox; and they presented them before the tabernacle.

4 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 5 "Accept *these* from them, that they may be used in doing the work of the tabernacle of meeting; and you shall give them to the Levites, *to* every man according to his service." 6 So Moses took the carts and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites. 7 Two carts and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service; 8 and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the authority[a] of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. 9 But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because theirs *was* the service of the holy things, *which* they carried on their shoulders.

10 Now the leaders offered the dedication *offering* for the altar when it was anointed; so the leaders offered their offering before the altar. 11 For the LORD said to Moses, "They shall offer their offering, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar."

12 And the one who offered his offering on the first day *was* Nahshon the son of Amminadab, from the tribe of Judah. 13 His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 14 one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 15 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 16 one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 17 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

18 On the second day Nethanel the son of Zuar, leader of Issachar, presented *an offering.* 19 *For* his offering he offered one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 20 one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 21 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 22 one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 23 and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Nethanel the son of Zuar.

24 On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, leader of the children of Zebulun, *presented an offering.* 25 His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 26 one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 27 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 28 one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 29 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

30 On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, leader of the children of Reuben, *presented an offering.* 31 His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 32 one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 33 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering;

7:8 [a] Literally *hand*

34one kid of the goats as a sin offering;
35and as the sacrifice of peace offerings:
two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and
five male lambs in their first year. This *was*
the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

36On the fifth day Shelumiel the son
of Zurishaddai, leader of the children of
Simeon, *presented an offering.* 37His offer-
ing *was* one silver platter, the weight of
which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,*
and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, ac-
cording to the shekel of the sanctuary, both
of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a
grain offering; 38one gold pan of ten *shekels,*
full of incense; 39one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb in its first year, as a
burnt offering; 40one kid of the goats as a
sin offering; 41and as the sacrifice of peace
offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male
goats, and five male lambs in their first
year. This *was* the offering of Shelumiel the
son of Zurishaddai.

42On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of
Deuel,[a] leader of the children of Gad, *pre-*
sented an offering. 43His offering *was* one
silver platter, the weight of which *was* one
hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver
bowl of seventy shekels, according to the
shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full
of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offer-
ing; 44one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of in-
cense; 45one young bull, one ram, and one
male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offer-
ing; 46one kid of the goats as a sin offering;
47and as the sacrifice of peace offerings:
two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and
five male lambs in their first year. This *was*
the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

48On the seventh day Elishama the son
of Ammihud, leader of the children of
Ephraim, *presented an offering.* 49His of-
fering *was* one silver platter, the weight of
which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,*
and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, ac-
cording to the shekel of the sanctuary, both
of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a
grain offering; 50one gold pan of ten *shekels,*
full of incense; 51one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb in its first year, as a
burnt offering; 52one kid of the goats as a
sin offering; 53and as the sacrifice of peace
offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male
goats, and five male lambs in their first
year. This *was* the offering of Elishama the
son of Ammihud.

54On the eighth day Gamaliel the son
of Pedahzur, leader of the children of
Manasseh, *presented an offering.* 55His of-
fering *was* one silver platter, the weight of
which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,*
and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, ac-
cording to the shekel of the sanctuary, both
of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a
grain offering; 56one gold pan of ten *shekels,*
full of incense; 57one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb in its first year, as a
burnt offering; 58one kid of the goats as a
sin offering; 59and as the sacrifice of peace
offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male
goats, and five male lambs in their first
year. This *was* the offering of Gamaliel the
son of Pedahzur.

60On the ninth day Abidan the son of
Gideoni, leader of the children of Benja-
min, *presented an offering.* 61His offering
was one silver platter, the weight of which
was one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and
one silver bowl of seventy shekels, accord-
ing to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a
grain offering; 62one gold pan of ten *shekels,*
full of incense; 63one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb in its first year, as a
burnt offering; 64one kid of the goats as a
sin offering; 65and as the sacrifice of peace
offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male
goats, and five male lambs in their first
year. This *was* the offering of Abidan the
son of Gideoni.

66On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of
Ammishaddai, leader of the children of
Dan, *presented an offering.* 67His offering
was one silver platter, the weight of which
was one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and
one silver bowl of seventy shekels, accord-
ing to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a
grain offering; 68one gold pan of ten *shekels,*
full of incense; 69one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb in its first year, as a
burnt offering; 70one kid of the goats as a
sin offering; 71and as the sacrifice of peace
offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male
goats, and five male lambs in their first
year. This *was* the offering of Ahiezer the
son of Ammishaddai.

72On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of
Ocran, leader of the children of Asher, *pre-*

7:42 [a]Spelled *Reuel* in 2:14

sented an offering. 73His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 74one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 75one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 76one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 77and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

78On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, leader of the children of Naphtali, *presented an offering.* 79His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 80one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 81one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 82one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 83and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

84This *was* the dedication *offering* for the altar from the leaders of Israel, when it was anointed: twelve silver platters, twelve silver bowls, and twelve gold pans. 85Each silver platter *weighed* one hundred and thirty *shekels* and each bowl seventy *shekels.* All the silver of the vessels *weighed* two thousand four hundred *shekels,* according to the shekel of the sanctuary. 86The twelve gold pans full of incense *weighed* ten *shekels* apiece, according to the shekel of the sanctuary; all the gold of the pans *weighed* one hundred and twenty *shekels.* 87All the oxen for the burnt offering *were* twelve young bulls, the rams twelve, the male lambs in their first year twelve, with their grain offering, and the kids of the goats as a sin offering twelve. 88And all the oxen for the sacrifice of peace offerings were twenty-four bulls, the rams sixty, the male goats sixty, and the lambs in their first year sixty. This *was* the dedication *offering* for the altar after it was anointed.

89Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that *was* on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE LAMPS

8 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Speak to Aaron, and say to him, 'When you arrange the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand.'" 3And Aaron did so; he arranged the lamps to face toward the front of the lampstand, as the LORD commanded Moses. 4Now this workmanship of the lampstand *was* hammered gold; from its shaft to its flowers it *was* hammered work. According to the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.

CLEANSING AND DEDICATION OF THE LEVITES

5Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 6"Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them *ceremonially.* 7Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purification on them, and let them shave all their body, and let them wash their clothes, and *so* make themselves clean. 8Then let them take a young bull with its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and you shall take another young bull as a sin offering. 9And you shall bring the Levites before the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall gather together the whole congregation of the children of Israel. 10So you shall bring the Levites before the LORD, and the children of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites; 11and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD *like* a wave offering from the children of Israel, that they may perform the work of the LORD. 12Then the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the young bulls, and you shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites.

13"And you shall stand the Levites before Aaron and his sons, and then offer them *like* a wave offering to the LORD. 14Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine. 15After that the Levites shall go

in to service the tabernacle of meeting. So you shall cleanse them and offer them *like* a wave offering. 16For they *are* wholly given to Me from among the children of Israel; I have taken them for Myself instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the children of Israel. 17For all the firstborn among the children of Israel *are* Mine, *both* man and beast; on the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them to Myself. 18I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn of the children of Israel. 19And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the work for the children of Israel in the tabernacle of meeting, and to make atonement for the children of Israel, that there be no plague among the children of Israel when the children of Israel come near the sanctuary."

20Thus Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel did to the Levites; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so the children of Israel did to them. 21And the Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes; then Aaron presented them *like* a wave offering before the LORD, and Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them. 22After that the Levites went in to do their work in the tabernacle of meeting before Aaron and his sons; as the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them.

23Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24"This *is* what *pertains* to the Levites: From twenty-five years old and above one may enter to perform service in the work of the tabernacle of meeting; 25and at the age of fifty years they must cease performing this work, and shall work no more. 26They may minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of meeting, to attend to needs, but they *themselves* shall do no work. Thus you shall do to the Levites regarding their duties."

THE SECOND PASSOVER

9 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying: 2"Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. 3On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time. According to all its rites and ceremonies you shall keep it." 4So Moses told the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover. 5And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, at twilight, in the Wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did.

6Now there were *certain* men who were defiled by a human corpse, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day; and they came before Moses and Aaron that day. 7And those men said to him, "We *became* defiled by a human corpse. Why are we kept from presenting the offering of the LORD at its appointed time among the children of Israel?"

8And Moses said to them, "Stand still, that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you."

9Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or *is* far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD's Passover. 11On the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones. According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it. 13But the man who *is* clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin.

14'And if a stranger dwells among you, and would keep the LORD's Passover, he must do so according to the rite of the Passover and according to its ceremony; you shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger and the native of the land.'"

THE CLOUD AND THE FIRE

15Now on the day that the tabernacle was raised up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the Testimony; from evening until morning it was above the tabernacle like the appearance of fire. 16So it was always: the cloud covered it *by day,* and the appearance of fire by night. 17Whenever

the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey; and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel would pitch their tents. 18At the command of the LORD the children of Israel would journey, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud stayed above the tabernacle they remained encamped. 19Even when the cloud continued long, many days above the tabernacle, the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD and did not journey. 20So it was, when the cloud was above the tabernacle a few days: according to the command of the LORD they would remain encamped, and according to the command of the LORD they would journey. 21So it was, when the cloud remained only from evening until morning: when the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they would journey; whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud was taken up, they would journey. 22*Whether it was* two days, a month, or a year that the cloud remained above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would remain encamped and not journey; but when it was taken up, they would journey. 23At the command of the LORD they remained encamped, and at the command of the LORD they journeyed; they kept the charge of the LORD, at the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

TWO SILVER TRUMPETS

10 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. 3When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 4But if they blow *only* one, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you. 5When you sound the advance, the camps that lie on the east side shall then begin their journey. 6When you sound the advance the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall begin their journey; they shall sound the call for them to begin their journeys. 7And when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but not sound the advance. 8The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and these shall be to you as an ordinance forever throughout your generations.

9"When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the LORD your God, and you will be saved from your enemies. 10Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I *am* the LORD your God."

DEPARTURE FROM SINAI

11Now it came to pass on the twentieth *day* of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. 12And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran. 13So they started out for the first time according to the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

14The standard of the camp of the children of Judah set out first according to their armies; over their army was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. 15Over the army of the tribe of the children of Issachar *was* Nethanel the son of Zuar. 16And over the army of the tribe of the children of Zebulun *was* Eliab the son of Helon.

17Then the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set out, carrying the tabernacle.

18And the standard of the camp of Reuben set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Elizur the son of Shedeur. 19Over the army of the tribe of the children of Simeon *was* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 20And over the army of the tribe of the children of Gad *was* Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

21Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things. (The tabernacle would be prepared for their arrival.)

22And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Elishama the son of Ammihud. 23Over the army of

the tribe of the children of Manasseh *was* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 24And over the army of the tribe of the children of Benjamin *was* Abidan the son of Gideoni.

25Then the standard of the camp of the children of Dan (the rear guard of all the camps) set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 26Over the army of the tribe of the children of Asher *was* Pagiel the son of Ocran. 27And over the army of the tribe of the children of Naphtali *was* Ahira the son of Enan.

28Thus *was* the order of march of the children of Israel, according to their armies, when they began their journey.

29Now Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel[a] the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the LORD has promised good things to Israel."

30And he said to him, "I will not go, but I will depart to my *own* land and to my relatives."

31So *Moses* said, "Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes. 32And it shall be, if you go with us—indeed it shall be—that whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same we will do to you."

33So they departed from the mountain of the LORD on a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. 34And the cloud of the LORD *was* above them by day when they went out from the camp.

35So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said:

"Rise up, O LORD!
Let Your enemies be scattered,
And let those who hate You flee before You."

36And when it rested, he said:

"Return, O LORD,
To the many thousands of Israel."

THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN

11 Now *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard *it,* and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed *some* in the outskirts of the camp. 2Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the LORD, the fire was quenched. 3So he called the name of the place Taberah,[a] because the fire of the LORD had burned among them.

4Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? 5We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; 6but now our whole being *is* dried up; *there is* nothing at all except this manna *before* our eyes!"

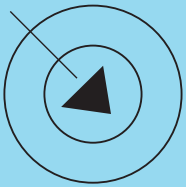
7Now the manna *was* like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium. 8The people went about and gathered *it,* ground *it* on millstones or beat *it* in the mortar, cooked *it* in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil. 9And when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it.

10Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. 11So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me? 12Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing child,' to the land which You swore to their fathers? 13Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' 14I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden *is* too heavy for me. 15If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in Your sight—and do not let me see my wretchedness!"

THE SEVENTY ELDERS

16So the LORD said to Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom

10:29 [a]Septuagint reads *Raguel* (compare Exodus 2:18). **11:3** [a]Literally *Burning*



PROMISE

God promises that He can do anything.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Has the LORD's arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not" (Num. 11:23).

The eleventh chapter of Numbers is powerful! It starts out with a report of all the Israelites' complaints. They grumbled to Moses about the lack of food. They complained that they were sick of having only manna to eat and reminded Moses they had all the fish they wanted when they were slaves in Egypt. God heard the Israelites' complaints and told Moses to tell them to purify themselves because He was going to send meat. Moses replied by asking God how such a feat was possible because there were six hundred thousand men to feed, not to mention all the women and children. Moses knew that the meat from their animals wouldn't be enough to feed all of them. That's when the Lord replied, "Has the LORD's arm been shortened?" In other words, "I can do anything!"

Let this verse encourage you today. Nothing is beyond reach with God on your side, because He is the One who can do anything. What's your need today? Do you need a miracle? God is just waiting for you to bring that need to Him.

In 2 Peter 1:3 we read God's promise to give us "all things that pertain to life and godliness." That includes all our needs: spiritual, physical, emotional, financial—whatever the need, God will supply. His name given in Scripture is El Shaddai, which means the God who is more than enough! He is bigger than any problem you can encounter. Begin to seek Him first and watch Him give you everything you need. He promises that He can do anything!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Matthew 19:26; Mark 9:23; 10:27; Luke 18:27; Romans 8:32

you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. 17Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that *is* upon you and will put *the same* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear *it* yourself alone. 18Then you shall say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For *it was* well with us in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. 19You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, 20but *for* a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the LORD who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?"'"

21And Moses said, "The people whom I *am* among *are* six hundred thousand men on foot; yet You have said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat *for* a whole month.' 22Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to provide enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to provide enough for them?"

23And the LORD said to Moses, "Has the LORD's arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not."

24So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. 25Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that *was* upon him, and placed *the same* upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did *so* again.[a]

11:25 [a]Targum and Vulgate read *did not cease.*

26But two men had remained in the
camp: the name of one *was* Eldad, and the
name of the other Medad. And the Spirit
rested upon them. Now they *were* among
those listed, but who had not gone out to
the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the
camp. 27And a young man ran and told Mo-
ses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are proph-
esying in the camp."
28So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assis-
tant, *one* of his choice men, answered and
said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!"
29Then Moses said to him, "Are you zeal-
ous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD's
people were prophets *and* that the LORD
would put His Spirit upon them!" 30And
Moses returned to the camp, he and the
elders of Israel.

THE LORD SENDS QUAIL

31Now a wind went out from the LORD,
and it brought quail from the sea and left
them fluttering near the camp, about a
day's journey on this side and about a day's
journey on the other side, all around the
camp, and about two cubits above the sur-
face of the ground. 32And the people stayed
up all that day, all night, and all the next
day, and gathered the quail (he who gath-
ered least gathered ten homers); and they
spread *them* out for themselves all around
the camp. 33But while the meat *was* still
between their teeth, before it was chewed,
the wrath of the LORD was aroused against
the people, and the LORD struck the people
with a very great plague. 34So he called the
name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah,[a]
because there they buried the people who
had yielded to craving.
35From Kibroth Hattaavah the people
moved to Hazeroth, and camped at Ha-
zeroth.

DISSENSION OF AARON AND MIRIAM

12 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke
against Moses because of the
Ethiopian woman whom he
had married; for he had married an Ethio-
pian woman. 2So they said, "Has the LORD
indeed spoken only through Moses? Has
He not spoken through us also?" And the
LORD heard *it.* 3(Now the man Moses *was*
very humble, more than all men who *were*
on the face of the earth.)

4Suddenly the LORD said to Moses,
Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three,
to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three
came out. 5Then the LORD came down in
the pillar of cloud and stood *in* the door of
the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Mir-
iam. And they both went forward. 6Then
He said,

"Hear now My words:
If there is a prophet among you,
I, the LORD, make Myself known to
him in a vision;
I speak to him in a dream.
7Not so with My servant Moses;
He *is* faithful in all My house.
8I speak with him face to face,
Even plainly, and not in dark sayings;
And he sees the form of the LORD.
Why then were you not afraid
To speak against My servant Moses?"

9So the anger of the LORD was aroused
against them, and He departed. 10And
when the cloud departed from above the
tabernacle, suddenly Miriam *became* lep-
rous, as *white as* snow. Then Aaron turned
toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper.
11So Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord!
Please do not lay *this* sin on us, in which
we have done foolishly and in which
we have sinned. 12Please do not let her
be as one dead, whose flesh is half con-
sumed when he comes out of his mother's
womb!"
13So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying,
"Please heal her, O God, I pray!"
14Then the LORD said to Moses, "If her
father had but spit in her face, would she
not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut
out of the camp seven days, and afterward
she may be received *again.*" 15So Miriam
was shut out of the camp seven days, and
the people did not journey till Miriam was
brought in *again.* 16And afterward the peo-
ple moved from Hazeroth and camped in
the Wilderness of Paran.

SPIES SENT INTO CANAAN

13 And the LORD spoke to Moses,
saying, 2"Send men to spy out
the land of Canaan, which I am
giving to the children of Israel; from each

11:34 [a]Literally *Graves of Craving*



PROFILE
CALEB

Caleb would make anyone's Top Ten list of people who have successfully resisted peer pressure. He served on a special twelve-man unit sent into the Promised Land by Moses to spy and bring back a report. When the unit returned, they had a unanimous report; but they were seriously divided in their recommendations. They all agreed that the land was fertile, wonderful, and settled by powerful peoples. Ten of the spies concluded the invasion should be called off immediately. The enemy was simply too powerful to defeat. Caleb, along with Joshua, offered a minority opinion: "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30).

In the short term, majorities often get their way. Such was the case when the people of Israel rejected Caleb and Joshua's confidence. They accepted the fearful opinion of the majority. However, they soon discovered that God's plan included Caleb's perspective. The people's lack of trust led directly to forty years of wilderness wandering. Because he spoke the truth under intense pressure, Caleb was rewarded by God. From their generation, only Joshua and Caleb crossed the Jordan. The rest died in the desert.

Although they were right and were rewarded for their consistency, Caleb and Joshua shared forty years in the desert with everyone else. Even that disappointment didn't wear Caleb down. When he did receive his portion in the Promised Land (at age eighty-five!), he was as fit, able, and as trusting in God as he had been as a young man.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

One of the important lessons from Caleb's life deals with the purpose of standing alone. You can probably think of several people in your life who are willing to stand alone for clothing styles, haircuts, or negative attitudes. Caleb's purpose wasn't to stand alone; it was to stand with God. Because Caleb wanted God's way, any other way didn't have much appeal to him.

Trusting in God and living for Him will create minority situations. Taking God seriously in your life will quickly show you where the majority stands. Like Caleb's, your words may not seem to make a difference to those around you. But God hears. And eventually you will find that standing with God does make a difference!

? WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Caleb's adventures and his faithful attitude in Numbers 13 and 14 and in Joshua 14 and 15.

Caleb's trust in God was real; even when it meant standing alone against the majority. No matter what anyone else said, Caleb trusted God. Even though others refused to listen to him, his faith and courage made a huge difference in his own life. That can be true of you, too!

tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them."

3So Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who *were* heads of the children of Israel. 4Now these *were* their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; 5from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; 6from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 7from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; 8from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea[a] the son of Nun;

13:8 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Oshea.*

9from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son
of Raphu; 10from the tribe of Zebulun, Gad-
diel the son of Sodi; 11from the tribe of Jo-
seph, *that is,* from the tribe of Manasseh,
Gaddi the son of Susi; 12from the tribe of
Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; 13from the
tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael;
14from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son
of Vophsi; 15from the tribe of Gad, Geuel
the son of Machi.

16These *are* the names of the men whom
Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses
called Hoshea[a] the son of Nun, Joshua.

17Then Moses sent them to spy out the
land of Canaan, and said to them, "Go up
this *way* into the South, and go up to the
mountains, 18and see what the land is like:
whether the people who dwell in it *are*
strong or weak, few or many; 19whether the
land they dwell in *is* good or bad; whether
the cities they inhabit *are* like camps or
strongholds; 20whether the land *is* rich or
poor; and whether there are forests there
or not. Be of good courage. And bring some
of the fruit of the land." Now the time *was*
the season of the first ripe grapes.

21So they went up and spied out the
land from the Wilderness of Zin as far as
Rehob, near the entrance of Hamath. 22And
they went up through the South and came
to Hebron; Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai,
the descendants of Anak, *were* there. (Now
Hebron was built seven years before Zoan
in Egypt.) 23Then they came to the Valley
of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch
with one cluster of grapes; they carried it
between two of them on a pole. *They* also
brought some of the pomegranates and
figs. 24The place was called the Valley of
Eshcol,[a] because of the cluster which the
men of Israel cut down there. 25And they
returned from spying out the land after
forty days.

26Now they departed and came back to
Moses and Aaron and all the congregation
of the children of Israel in the Wilderness
of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back
word to them and to all the congregation,
and showed them the fruit of the land.
27Then they told him, and said: "We went
to the land where you sent us. It truly
flows with milk and honey, and this *is* its
fruit. 28Nevertheless the people who dwell
in the land *are* strong; the cities *are* forti-
fied *and* very large; moreover we saw the
descendants of Anak there. 29The Amalek-
ites dwell in the land of the South; the
Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites
dwell in the mountains; and the Canaan-
ites dwell by the sea and along the banks
of the Jordan."

30Then Caleb quieted the people before
Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and
take possession, for we are well able to
overcome it."

31But the men who had gone up with
him said, "We are not able to go up against
the people, for they *are* stronger than we."
32And they gave the children of Israel a bad
report of the land which they had spied
out, saying, "The land through which we
have gone as spies *is* a land that devours its
inhabitants, and all the people whom we
saw in it *are* men of *great* stature. 33There
we saw the giants[a] (the descendants of
Anak came from the giants); and we were
like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so
we were in their sight."

ISRAEL REFUSES TO ENTER CANAAN

14 So all the congregation lifted
up their voices and cried, and
the people wept that night.
2And all the children of Israel complained
against Moses and Aaron, and the whole
congregation said to them, "If only we had
died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we
had died in this wilderness! 3Why has the
LORD brought us to this land to fall by the
sword, that our wives and children should
become victims? Would it not be better for
us to return to Egypt?" 4So they said to one
another, "Let us select a leader and return
to Egypt."

ATTITUDE
What affect does a negative attitude have on life?
Numbers 14:1–4

5Then Moses and Aaron fell on their
faces before all the assembly of the congre-
gation of the children of Israel.

13:16 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Oshea.*
13:24 [a]Literally *Cluster* **13:33** [a]Hebrew *nephilim*

6But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb
the son of Jephunneh, *who were* among
those who had spied out the land, tore their
clothes; 7and they spoke to all the congre-
gation of the children of Israel, saying: "The
land we passed through to spy out *is* an ex-
ceedingly good land. 8If the LORD delights
in us, then He will bring us into this land
and give it to us, 'a land which flows with
milk and honey.'[a] 9Only do not rebel against
the LORD, nor fear the people of the land,
for they *are* our bread; their protection has
departed from them, and the LORD *is* with
us. Do not fear them."

10And all the congregation said to stone
them with stones. Now the glory of the
LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meet-
ing before all the children of Israel.

MOSES INTERCEDES FOR THE PEOPLE

11Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long
will these people reject Me? And how long
will they not believe Me, with all the signs
which I have performed among them? 12I
will strike them with the pestilence and
disinherit them, and I will make of you a
nation greater and mightier than they."

13And Moses said to the LORD: "Then
the Egyptians will hear *it,* for by Your might
You brought these people up from among
them, 14and they will tell *it* to the inhabit-
ants of this land. They have heard that
You, LORD, *are* among these people; that
You, LORD, are seen face to face and Your
cloud stands above them, and You go be-
fore them in a pillar of cloud by day and
in a pillar of fire by night. 15Now *if* You kill
these people as one man, then the nations
which have heard of Your fame will speak,
saying, 16'Because the LORD was not able
to bring this people to the land which He
swore to give them, therefore He killed
them in the wilderness.' 17And now, I pray,
let the power of my Lord be great, just as
You have spoken, saying, 18'The LORD is
longsuffering and abundant in mercy, for-
giving iniquity and transgression; but He
by no means clears *the guilty,* visiting the
iniquity of the fathers on the children to
the third and fourth *generation.*'[a] 19Pardon
the iniquity of this people, I pray, according
to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You
have forgiven this people, from Egypt even
until now."

20Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned,
according to your word; 21but truly, as I live,
all the earth shall be filled with the glory of
the LORD— 22because all these men who
have seen My glory and the signs which I
did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have
put Me to the test now these ten times, and
have not heeded My voice, 23they certainly
shall not see the land of which I swore to
their fathers, nor shall any of those who
rejected Me see it. 24But My servant Caleb,
because he has a different spirit in him and
has followed Me fully, I will bring into the
land where he went, and his descendants
shall inherit it. 25Now the Amalekites and
the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomor-
row turn and move out into the wilderness
by the Way of the Red Sea."

DEATH SENTENCE ON THE REBELS

26And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron,
saying, 27"How long *shall I bear with* this
evil congregation who complain against
Me? I have heard the complaints which
the children of Israel make against Me.
28Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD,
'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so
I will do to you: 29The carcasses of you who
have complained against Me shall fall in
this wilderness, all of you who were num-
bered, according to your entire number,
from twenty years old and above. 30Except
for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua
the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter
the land which I swore I would make you
dwell in. 31But your little ones, whom you
said would be victims, I will bring in, and
they shall know the land which you have
despised. 32But *as for* you, your carcasses
shall fall in this wilderness. 33And your sons
shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty
years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity,
until your carcasses are consumed in the
wilderness. 34According to the number of
the days in which you spied out the land,
forty days, for each day you shall bear your
guilt one year, *namely* forty years, and you
shall know My rejection. 35I the LORD have
spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil
congregation who are gathered together
against Me. In this wilderness they shall be
consumed, and there they shall die.'"

36Now the men whom Moses sent to spy

14:8 [a]Exodus 3:8 **14:18** [a]Exodus 34:6, 7

out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, 37those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD. 38But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

A FUTILE INVASION ATTEMPT

39Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. 40And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised, for we have sinned!"

41And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed. 42Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD *is* not among you. 43For the Amalekites and the Canaanites *are* there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."

44But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed from the camp. 45Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.

LAWS OF GRAIN AND DRINK OFFERINGS

15 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving to you, 3and you make an offering by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or in your appointed feasts, to make a sweet aroma to the LORD, from the herd or the flock, 4then he who presents his offering to the LORD shall bring a grain offering of one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil; 5and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering you shall prepare with the burnt offering or the sacrifice, for each lamb. 6Or for a ram you shall prepare as a grain offering two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with one-third of a hin of oil; 7and as a drink offering you shall offer one-third of a hin of wine as a sweet aroma to the LORD. 8And when you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering, or as a sacrifice to fulfill a vow, or as a peace offering to the LORD, 9then shall be offered with the young bull a grain offering of three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil; 10and you shall bring as the drink offering half a hin of wine as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

11'Thus it shall be done for each young bull, for each ram, or for each lamb or young goat. 12According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do with everyone according to their number. 13All who are native-born shall do these things in this manner, in presenting an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. 14And if a stranger dwells with you, or whoever *is* among you throughout your generations, and would present an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD, just as you do, so shall he do. 15One ordinance *shall be* for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells *with you,* an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. 16One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you.'"[a]

17Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 18"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land to which I bring you, 19then it will be, when you eat of the bread of the land, that you shall offer up a heave offering to the LORD. 20You shall offer up a cake of the first of your ground meal *as* a heave offering; as a heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall you offer it up. 21Of the first of your ground meal you shall give to the LORD a heave offering throughout your generations.

LAWS CONCERNING UNINTENTIONAL SIN

22"If you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments which the LORD has spoken to Moses— 23all that the LORD has commanded you by the hand

15:16 [a]Compare Exodus 12:49

of Moses, from the day the LORD gave commandment and onward throughout your generations— 24then it will be, if it is unintentionally committed, without the knowledge of the congregation, that the whole congregation shall offer one young bull as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one kid of the goats as a sin offering. 25So the priest shall make atonement for the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them, for it was unintentional; they shall bring their offering, an offering made by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their unintended sin. 26It shall be forgiven the whole congregation of the children of Israel and the stranger who dwells among them, because all the people *did it* unintentionally.

27"And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering. 28So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally, when he sins unintentionally before the LORD, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. 29You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, *for* him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them.

LAW CONCERNING PRESUMPTUOUS SIN

30"But the person who does *anything* presumptuously, *whether he is* native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people. 31Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt *shall be* upon him.'"

PENALTY FOR VIOLATING THE SABBATH

32Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. 33And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. 34They put him under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him.

35Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." 36So, as the LORD commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died.

TASSELS ON GARMENTS

37Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 38"Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. 39And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you *may* not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, 40and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. 41I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD your God."

REBELLION AGAINST MOSES AND AARON

16 Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men;* 2and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. 3They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "*You take* too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation *is* holy, every one of them, and the LORD *is* among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"

4So when Moses heard *it,* he fell on his face; 5and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who *is* His and *who is* holy, and will cause *him* to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him. 6Do this: Take censers, Korah and all your company; 7put fire in them and put incense in them before the LORD tomorrow, and it shall be *that* the man whom the LORD chooses *is* the holy

one. *You take* too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!"

8Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: 9*Is it* a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; 10and that He has brought you near *to Himself,* you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also? 11Therefore you and all your company *are* gathered together against the LORD. And what *is* Aaron that you complain against him?"

12And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not come up! 13*Is it* a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us? 14Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!"

15Then Moses was very angry, and said to the LORD, "Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them."

16And Moses said to Korah, "Tomorrow, you and all your company be present before the LORD—you and they, as well as Aaron. 17Let each take his censer and put incense in it, and each of you bring his censer before the LORD, two hundred and fifty censers; both you and Aaron, each *with* his censer." 18So every man took his censer, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and stood at the door of the tabernacle of meeting with Moses and Aaron. 19And Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.

20And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 21"Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

22Then they fell on their faces, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the congregation?"

23So the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24"Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.'"

25Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. 26And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins." 27So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children.

28And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for *I have* not *done them* of my own will. 29If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, *then* the LORD has not sent me. 30But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD."

31Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, 32and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all *their* goods. 33So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly. 34Then all Israel who *were* around them fled at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up *also!*"

35And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense.

36Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 37"Tell Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, to pick up the censers out of the blaze, for they are holy, and scatter the fire some distance away. 38The censers of these men who sinned against their own souls, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar. Because they presented them before the LORD, therefore they are holy; and they shall be a sign to the children of Israel." 39So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned up had presented, and they were hammered out as a covering on the

altar, [40]*to be* a memorial to the children of Israel that no outsider, who *is* not a descendant of Aaron, should come near to offer incense before the LORD, that he might not become like Korah and his companions, just as the LORD had said to him through Moses.

COMPLAINTS OF THE PEOPLE

[41]On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD." [42]Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. [43]Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting.

[44]And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [45]"Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

And they fell on their faces.

[46]So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense *on it,* and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the LORD. The plague has begun." [47]Then Aaron took *it* as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. [48]And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped. [49]Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident. [50]So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped.

THE BUDDING OF AARON'S ROD

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: [2]"Speak to the children of Israel, and get from them a rod from each father's house, all their leaders according to their fathers' houses—twelve rods. Write each man's name on his rod. [3]And you shall write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi. For there shall be one rod for the head of *each* father's house. [4]Then you shall place them in the tabernacle of meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you. [5]And it shall be *that* the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, which they make against you."

[6]So Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron *was* among their rods. [7]And Moses placed the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.

[8]Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. [9]Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD to all the children of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod.

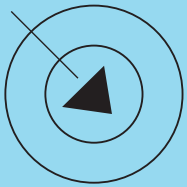
> ***Numbers 17:8***
> Almond trees were popular with the Israelites because almonds were used to make medicine. The Hebrew word for almond means "awakening," probably due to the fact that the almond tree is the first to bloom in the spring. For the Israelites, the almond was a symbol of God's dependability.

[10]And the LORD said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die." [11]Thus did Moses; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

[12]So the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Surely we die, we perish, we all perish! [13]Whoever even comes near the tabernacle of the LORD must die. Shall we all utterly die?"

DUTIES OF PRIESTS AND LEVITES

18 Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear the iniquity *related to* the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity *associated with* your priesthood. [2]Also bring with you your brethren of the



PROMISE

God promises to give you everything you need.

"I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel" (Num. 18:20b).

When God told Aaron that He would be his portion, God meant that He would provide everything Aaron needed. And just as He provided for Aaron, God will provide for us—everything we need.

God is faithful. You can count on Him to keep His Word. When He promises to provide for your needs, you can believe Him. But it's important that you recognize the difference between needs and wants. We all need clothes, but none of us need the hippest, coolest, most expensive gear. We all need to eat lunch every day, but going to expensive restaurants with friends is only a want.

We live in abundant times. A lot of people have a lot of stuff, and they want more. Think about your needs. Learn to separate them from your wants. What do you really need in order to live? Has God provided? Take some time to thank Him. He's given you all you need.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Matthew 6:31–33; Luke 12:29, 30; Philippians 4:19

tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you while you and your sons *are* with you before the tabernacle of witness. 3They shall attend to your needs and all the needs of the tabernacle; but they shall not come near the articles of the sanctuary and the altar, lest they die—they and you also. 4They shall be joined with you and attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, for all the work of the tabernacle; but an outsider shall not come near you. 5And you shall attend to the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of the altar, that there *may* be no more wrath on the children of Israel. 6Behold, I Myself have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel; *they are* a gift to you, given by the LORD, to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting. 7Therefore you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything at the altar and behind the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood *to you* as a gift for service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

OFFERINGS FOR SUPPORT OF THE PRIESTS

8And the LORD spoke to Aaron: "Here, I Myself have also given you charge of My heave offerings, all the holy gifts of the children of Israel; I have given them as a portion to you and your sons, as an ordinance forever. 9This shall be yours of the most holy things *reserved* from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every trespass offering which they render to Me, *shall be* most holy for you and your sons. 10In a most holy *place* you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.

11"This also *is* yours: the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them to you, and your sons and daughters with you, as an ordinance forever. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

12"All the best of the oil, all the best of the new wine and the grain, their firstfruits which they offer to the LORD, I have given them to you. 13Whatever first ripe fruit is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

14"Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours.

15"Everything that first opens the womb of all flesh, which they bring to the LORD, whether man or beast, shall be yours; nevertheless the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean

animals you shall redeem. 16And those redeemed of the devoted things you shall redeem when one month old, according to your valuation, for five shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which *is* twenty gerahs. 17But the firstborn of a cow, the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat you shall not redeem; they *are* holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar, and burn their fat *as* an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. 18And their flesh shall be yours, just as the wave breast and the right thigh are yours.

19"All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and daughters with you as an ordinance forever; it *is* a covenant of salt forever before the LORD with you and your descendants with you."

20Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I *am* your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.

TITHES FOR SUPPORT OF THE LEVITES

21"Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting. 22Hereafter the children of Israel shall not come near the tabernacle of meeting, lest they bear sin and die. 23But the Levites shall perform the work of the tabernacle of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; *it shall be* a statute forever, throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. 24For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up *as* a heave offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore I have said to them, 'Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.'"

THE TITHE OF THE LEVITES

25Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 26"Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: 'When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD, a tenth of the tithe. 27And your heave offering shall be reckoned to you as though *it were* the grain of the threshing floor and as the fullness of the winepress. 28Thus you shall also offer a heave offering to the LORD from all your tithes which you receive from the children of Israel, and you shall give the LORD's heave offering from it to Aaron the priest. 29Of all your gifts you shall offer up every heave offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the consecrated part of them.' 30Therefore you shall say to them: 'When you have lifted up the best of it, then *the rest* shall be accounted to the Levites as the produce of the threshing floor and as the produce of the winepress. 31You may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it *is* your reward for your work in the tabernacle of meeting. 32And you shall bear no sin because of it, when you have lifted up the best of it. But you shall not profane the holy gifts of the children of Israel, lest you die.'"

LAWS OF PURIFICATION

19 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2"This *is* the ordinance of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there *is* no defect *and* on which a yoke has never come. 3You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him; 4and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting. 5Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned. 6And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast *them* into the midst of the fire burning the heifer. 7Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. 8And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening. 9Then a man *who is* clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store *them* outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the

congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification;[a] it *is* for purifying from sin. 10And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them.

11"He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. 12He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; *then* he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. 13Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness *is* still on him.

Numbers 19:11

An unclean person was not allowed to participate in the Israelites' normal religious activities and worship services. One of the most extreme forms of uncleanness came from touching a dead body.

14"This *is* the law when a man dies in a tent: All who come into the tent and all who *are* in the tent shall be unclean seven days; 15and every open vessel, which has no cover fastened on it, *is* unclean. 16Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

17"And for an unclean *person* they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and running water shall be put on them in a vessel. 18A clean person shall take hyssop and dip *it* in the water, sprinkle *it* on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave. 19The clean *person* shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean.

20"But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he *is* unclean. 21It shall be a perpetual statute for them. He who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water of purification shall be unclean until evening. 22Whatever the unclean *person* touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches *it* shall be unclean until evening.'"

MOSES' ERROR AT KADESH

20 Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there.

2Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. 3And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! 4Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? 5And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It *is* not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor *is* there any water to drink." 6So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them.

7Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8"'Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." 9So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.

10And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" 11Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

19:9 [a]Literally *impurity*

12Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

13This *was* the water of Meribah,[a] because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them.

PASSAGE THROUGH EDOM REFUSED

14Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. "Thus says your brother Israel: 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us, 15how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. 16When we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border. 17Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.'"

18Then Edom said to him, "You shall not pass through my *land,* lest I come out against you with the sword."

19So the children of Israel said to him, "We will go by the Highway, and if I or my livestock drink any of your water, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing *more.*"

20Then he said, "You shall not pass through." So Edom came out against them with many men and with a strong hand. 21Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him.

DEATH OF AARON

22Now the children of Israel, the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. 23And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying: 24"Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. 25Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; 26and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; for Aaron shall be gathered *to his people* and die there." 27So Moses did just as the LORD commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. 28Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. 29Now when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.

CANAANITES DEFEATED AT HORMAH

21 The king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim. Then he fought against Israel and took *some* of them prisoners. 2So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." 3And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah.[a]

Numbers 21:6

The Israelites had a deep dislike of snakes. It didn't matter whether they were poisonous ("fiery serpents") or not. To them, all snakes represented evil and sin. In other cultures of the time, the snake was a symbol of life and health.

THE BRONZE SERPENT

4Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is*

20:13 [a]Literally *Contention* **21:3** [a]Literally *Utter Destruction*

no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

7Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery *serpent,* and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." 9So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

FROM MOUNT HOR TO MOAB

10Now the children of Israel moved on and camped in Oboth. 11And they journeyed from Oboth and camped at Ije Abarim, in the wilderness which *is* east of Moab, toward the sunrise. 12From there they moved and camped in the Valley of Zered. 13From there they moved and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which *is* in the wilderness that extends from the border of the Amorites; for the Arnon *is* the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. 14Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD:

"Waheb in Suphah,[a]
The brooks of the Arnon,
15And the slope of the brooks
That reaches to the dwelling of Ar,
And lies on the border of Moab."

16From there *they went* to Beer, which *is* the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." 17Then Israel sang this song:

"Spring up, O well!
All of you sing to it—
18The well the leaders sank,
Dug by the nation's nobles,
By the lawgiver, with their staves."

And from the wilderness *they went* to Mattanah, 19from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth, 20and from Bamoth, *in* the valley that *is* in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah which looks down on the wasteland.[a]

KING SIHON DEFEATED

21Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, 22"Let me pass through your land. We will not turn aside into fields or vineyards; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory." 23But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his people together and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and he came to Jahaz and fought against Israel. 24Then Israel defeated him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the people of Ammon; for the border of the people of Ammon *was* fortified. 25So Israel took all these cities, and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon and in all its villages. 26For Heshbon *was* the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and had taken all his land from his hand as far as the Arnon. 27Therefore those who speak in proverbs say:

"Come to Heshbon, let it be built;
Let the city of Sihon be repaired.

28"For fire went out from Heshbon,
A flame from the city of Sihon;
It consumed Ar of Moab,
The lords of the heights of the Arnon.
29Woe to you, Moab!
You have perished, O people of
Chemosh!
He has given his sons as fugitives,
And his daughters into captivity,
To Sihon king of the Amorites.

30"But we have shot at them;
Heshbon has perished as far as Dibon.
Then we laid waste as far as Nophah,
Which *reaches* to Medeba."

31Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. 32Then Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they took its villages and drove out the Amorites who *were* there.

21:14 [a]Ancient unknown places; Vulgate reads *What He did in the Red Sea.* **21:20** [a]Hebrew *Jeshimon*

KING OG DEFEATED

33And they turned and went up by the way to Bashan. So Og king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. 34Then the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon." 35So they defeated him, his sons, and all his people, until there was no survivor left him; and they took possession of his land.

BALAK SENDS FOR BALAAM

22 Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan *across from* Jericho.

2Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they *were* many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. 4So Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor *was* king of the Moabites at that time. 5Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which *is* near the River[a] in the land of the sons of his people,[b] to call him, saying: "Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! 6Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they *are* too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless *is* blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

7So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner's fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak. 8And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD speaks to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.

9Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who *are* these men with you?"

10So Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, *saying,* 11'Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth. Come now, curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to overpower them and drive them out.'"

12And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they *are* blessed."

13So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to give me permission to go with you."

14And the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak, and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us."

15Then Balak again sent princes, more numerous and more honorable than they. 16And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: 'Please let nothing hinder you from coming to me; 17for I will certainly honor you greatly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Therefore please come, curse this people for me.'"

18Then Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. 19Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me."

20And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men come to call you, rise *and* go with them; but only the word which I speak to you—that you shall do." 21So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.

BALAAM, THE DONKEY, AND THE ANGEL

22Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants *were* with him. 23Now the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road. 24Then the Angel of the LORD stood in

22:5 [a]That is, the Euphrates [b]Or *the people of Amau*

a narrow path between the vineyards, *with* a wall on this side and a wall on that side. 25And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again. 26Then the Angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there *was* no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. 27And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam's anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff.

28Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"

29And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!"

30So the donkey said to Balaam, "*Am* I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since *I became* yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?"

And he said, "No."

31Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face. 32And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because *your* way is perverse before Me. 33The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live."

34And Balaam said to the Angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displeases You, I will turn back."

35Then the Angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but only the word that I speak to you, that you shall speak." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

36Now when Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, which *is* on the border at the Arnon, the boundary of the territory. 37Then Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not earnestly send to you, calling for you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?"

38And Balaam said to Balak, "Look, I have come to you! Now, have I any power at all to say anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak." 39So Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kirjath Huzoth. 40Then Balak offered oxen and sheep, and he sent *some* to Balaam and to the princes who *were* with him.

BALAAM'S FIRST PROPHECY

41So it was, the next day, that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the high places of Baal, that from there he might observe the extent of the people.

23 Then Balaam said to Balak, "Build seven altars for me here, and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams."

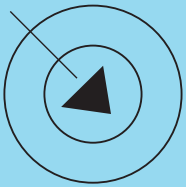
2And Balak did just as Balaam had spoken, and Balak and Balaam offered a bull and a ram on *each* altar. 3Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stand by your burnt offering, and I will go; perhaps the LORD will come to meet me, and whatever He shows me I will tell you." So he went to a desolate height. 4And God met Balaam, and he said to Him, "I have prepared the seven altars, and I have offered on *each* altar a bull and a ram."

5Then the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, "Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak." 6So he returned to him, and there he was, standing by his burnt offering, he and all the princes of Moab.

7And he took up his oracle and said:

"Balak the king of Moab has brought
me from Aram,
From the mountains of the east.
'Come, curse Jacob for me,
And come, denounce Israel!'

8"How shall I curse whom God has not
cursed?
And how shall I denounce *whom* the
LORD has not denounced?
9For from the top of the rocks I see
him,
And from the hills I behold him;
There! A people dwelling alone,
Not reckoning itself among the
nations.



PROMISE

God promises to be faithful to His Word.

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).

Do you know anyone who has *never* broken a promise? It's a fact: somewhere along the line, everyone is going to break a promise. We may be terribly sorry when we don't keep our word, but we are all faulty people who sometimes do wrong things.

The Bible tells us that God is not like people. He always keeps His promises. In fact, God's Word tells us that Christ says yes to *all* His promises for you. And all we have to do is say amen (or, literally, "Let it be") to that promise. If God said it, He'll do it. If He spoke it, He'll bring it to pass. God cannot lie.

So what does all this mean to you? All the promises of the Bible are for you. God's not going to forget one of them. You've been promised not only eternal life but also "all things that pertain to life and godliness" here on earth (2 Pet. 1:3). Accept every one of God's promises for yourself because He is the One who always keeps His Word!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// 1 Kings 8:56; 2 Corinthians 1:20

10 "Who can count the dust[a] of Jacob,
Or number one-fourth of Israel?
Let me die the death of the righteous,
And let my end be like his!"

11 Then Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and look, you have blessed *them* bountifully!"

12 So he answered and said, "Must I not take heed to speak what the LORD has put in my mouth?"

BALAAM'S SECOND PROPHECY

13 Then Balak said to him, "Please come with me to another place from which you may see them; you shall see only the outer part of them, and shall not see them all; curse them for me from there." 14 So he brought him to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bull and a ram on *each* altar.

15 And he said to Balak, "Stand here by your burnt offering while I meet[a] *the LORD* over there."

16 Then the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, "Go back to Balak, and thus you shall speak." 17 So he came to him, and there he was, standing by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab were with him. And Balak said to him, "What has the LORD spoken?"

18 Then he took up his oracle and said:

"Rise up, Balak, and hear!
Listen to me, son of Zippor!

19 "God *is* not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent.
Has He said, and will He not do?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?
20 Behold, I have received *a command* to bless;
He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.

21 "He has not observed iniquity in Jacob,
Nor has He seen wickedness in Israel.
The LORD his God *is* with him,
And the shout of a King *is* among them.
22 God brings them out of Egypt;
He has strength like a wild ox.

23 "For *there is* no sorcery against Jacob,
Nor any divination against Israel.

23:10 [a]Or *dust cloud* **23:15** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Syriac reads *call;* Septuagint reads *go and ask God.*

It now must be said of Jacob
And of Israel, 'Oh, what God has done!'
24Look, a people rises like a lioness,
And lifts itself up like a lion;
It shall not lie down until it devours
the prey,
And drinks the blood of the slain."

25Then Balak said to Balaam, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all!"
26So Balaam answered and said to Balak, "Did I not tell you, saying, 'All that the LORD speaks, that I must do'?"

BALAAM'S THIRD PROPHECY

27Then Balak said to Balaam, "Please come, I will take you to another place; perhaps it will please God that you may curse them for me from there." 28So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, that overlooks the wasteland.[a] 29Then Balaam said to Balak, "Build for me here seven altars, and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams." 30And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bull and a ram on *every* altar.

24 Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times, to seek to use sorcery, but he set his face toward the wilderness. 2And Balaam raised his eyes, and saw Israel encamped according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him.
3Then he took up his oracle and said:

"The utterance of Balaam the son of
Beor,
The utterance of the man whose eyes
are opened,
4The utterance of him who hears the
words of God,
Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Who falls down, with eyes wide open:

5"How lovely are your tents, O Jacob!
Your dwellings, O Israel!
6Like valleys that stretch out,
Like gardens by the riverside,
Like aloes planted by the LORD,
Like cedars beside the waters.
7He shall pour water from his buckets,
And his seed *shall be* in many waters.

"His king shall be higher than Agag,
And his kingdom shall be exalted.

8"God brings him out of Egypt;
He has strength like a wild ox;
He shall consume the nations, his
enemies;
He shall break their bones
And pierce *them* with his arrows.
9He bows down, he lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who shall rouse him?'[a]

"Blessed *is* he who blesses you,
And cursed *is* he who curses you."

10Then Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed *them* these three times! 11Now therefore, flee to your place. I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the LORD has kept you back from honor."
12So Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not also speak to your messengers whom you sent to me, saying, 13'If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD, to do good or bad of my own will. What the LORD says, that I must speak'? 14And now, indeed, I am going to my people. Come, I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the latter days."

BALAAM'S FOURTH PROPHECY

15So he took up his oracle and said:

"The utterance of Balaam the son of
Beor,
And the utterance of the man whose
eyes are opened;
16The utterance of him who hears the
words of God,
And has the knowledge of the Most
High,
Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Who falls down, with eyes wide open:

17"I see Him, but not now;
I behold Him, but not near;
A Star shall come out of Jacob;
A Scepter shall rise out of Israel,
And batter the brow of Moab,
And destroy all the sons of tumult.[a]

23:28 [a]Hebrew *Jeshimon* **24:9** [a]Genesis 49:9
24:17 [a]Hebrew *Sheth* (compare Jeremiah 48:45)

18"And Edom shall be a possession;
Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession,
While Israel does valiantly.
19Out of Jacob One shall have dominion,
And destroy the remains of the city."

20Then he looked on Amalek, and he took up his oracle and said:

"Amalek *was* first among the nations,
But *shall be* last until he perishes."

21Then he looked on the Kenites, and he took up his oracle and said:

"Firm is your dwelling place,
And your nest is set in the rock;
22Nevertheless Kain shall be burned.
How long until Asshur carries you away captive?"

23Then he took up his oracle and said:

"Alas! Who shall live when God does this?
24But ships *shall come* from the coasts of Cyprus,[a]
And they shall afflict Asshur and afflict Eber,
And so shall *Amalek*,[b] until he perishes."

25So Balaam rose and departed and returned to his place; Balak also went his way.

Numbers 25:3–5

Baal, whose name means "lord" or "master," was a fertility god worshiped by the Canaanites. The Canaanites had an odd way of "personalizing" Baal. Because Baal was worshiped throughout Canaan, the Canaanites added the names of their towns to his name. Baal-Peor is an example of this.

ISRAEL'S HARLOTRY IN MOAB

25 Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove,[a] and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.

4Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel."

5So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor."

6And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who *were* weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 7Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it,* he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; 8and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. 9And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

10Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 11"Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. 12Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; 13and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.'"

14Now the name of the Israelite who was killed, who was killed with the Midianite woman, *was* Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father's house among the Simeonites. 15And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed *was* Cozbi the daughter of Zur; he *was* head of the people of a father's house in Midian.

16Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 17"Harass the Midianites, and attack them; 18for they harassed you with their schemes

24:24 [a]Hebrew *Kittim* [b]Literally *he* or *that one*
25:1 [a]Hebrew *Shittim*

by which they seduced you in the matter of Peor and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a leader of Midian, their sister, who was killed in the day of the plague because of Peor."

THE SECOND CENSUS OF ISRAEL

26 And it came to pass, after the plague, that the LORD spoke to Moses and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying: 2"Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel from twenty years old and above, by their fathers' houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel." 3So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho, saying: 4"*Take a census of the people* from twenty years old and above, just as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt."

5Reuben *was* the firstborn of Israel. The children of Reuben *were: of* Hanoch, the family of the Hanochites; *of* Pallu, the family of the Palluites; 6*of* Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; *of* Carmi, the family of the Carmites. 7These *are* the families of the Reubenites: those who were numbered of them were forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty. 8And the son of Pallu *was* Eliab. 9The sons of Eliab *were* Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These *are* the Dathan and Abiram, representatives of the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD; 10and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah when that company died, when the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and they became a sign. 11Nevertheless the children of Korah did not die.

12The sons of Simeon according to their families *were: of* Nemuel,[a] the family of the Nemuelites; *of* Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; *of* Jachin,[b] the family of the Jachinites; 13*of* Zerah,[a] the family of the Zarhites; *of* Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. 14These *are* the families of the Simeonites: twenty-two thousand two hundred.

15The sons of Gad according to their families *were: of* Zephon,[a] the family of the Zephonites; *of* Haggi, the family of the Haggites; *of* Shuni, the family of the Shunites; 16*of* Ozni,[a] the family of the Oznites; *of* Eri, the family of the Erites; 17*of* Arod,[a] the family of the Arodites; *of* Areli, the family of the Arelites. 18These *are* the families of the sons of Gad according to those who were numbered of them: forty thousand five hundred.

19The sons of Judah *were* Er and Onan; and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. 20And the sons of Judah according to their families were: *of* Shelah, the family of the Shelanites; *of* Perez, the family of the Parzites; *of* Zerah, the family of the Zarhites. 21And the sons of Perez were: *of* Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; *of* Hamul, the family of the Hamulites. 22These *are* the families of Judah according to those who were numbered of them: seventy-six thousand five hundred.

23The sons of Issachar according to their families *were: of* Tola, the family of the Tolaites; of Puah,[a] the family of the Punites;[b] 24of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites. 25These *are* the families of Issachar according to those who were numbered of them: sixty-four thousand three hundred.

26The sons of Zebulun according to their families *were:* of Sered, the family of the Sardites; of Elon, the family of the Elonites; of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. 27These *are* the families of the Zebulunites according to those who were numbered of them: sixty thousand five hundred.

28The sons of Joseph according to their families, by Manasseh and Ephraim, *were:* 29The sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir begot Gilead; of Gilead, the family of the Gileadites. 30These *are* the sons of Gilead: *of* Jeezer,[a] the family of the Jeezerites; of Helek, the family of the Helekites; 31*of* Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; *of* Shechem, the family of the Shechemites; 32*of* Shemida,

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26:12 [a]Spelled *Jemuel* in Genesis 46:10 and Exodus 6:15 [b]Called *Jarib* in 1 Chronicles 4:24
26:13 [a]Called *Zohar* in Genesis 46:10
26:15 [a]Called *Ziphion* in Genesis 46:16
26:16 [a]Called *Ezbon* in Genesis 46:16
26:17 [a]Spelled *Arodi* in Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, and Genesis 46:16 **26:23** [a]Hebrew *Puvah* (compare Genesis 46:13 and 1 Chronicles 7:1); Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Puah.* [b]Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Puaites.* **26:30** [a]Called *Abiezer* in Joshua 17:2

the family of the Shemidaites; *of* Hepher, the family of the Hepherites. 33Now Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad *were* Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 34These *are* the families of Manasseh; and those who were numbered of them *were* fifty-two thousand seven hundred.

35These *are* the sons of Ephraim according to their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites; of Becher,[a] the family of the Bachrites; of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites. 36And these *are* the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites. 37These *are* the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those who were numbered of them: thirty-two thousand five hundred.

These *are* the sons of Joseph according to their families.

38The sons of Benjamin according to their families were: of Bela, the family of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites; of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites; 39of Shupham,[a] the family of the Shuphamites; of Hupham,[b] the family of the Huphamites. 40And the sons of Bela were Ard[a] and Naaman: *of Ard,* the family of the Ardites; of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. 41These *are* the sons of Benjamin according to their families; and those who were numbered of them *were* forty-five thousand six hundred.

42These *are* the sons of Dan according to their families: of Shuham,[a] the family of the Shuhamites. These *are* the families of Dan according to their families. 43All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those who were numbered of them, *were* sixty-four thousand four hundred.

44The sons of Asher according to their families *were:* of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites; of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites; of Beriah, the family of the Beriites. 45Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. 46And the name of the daughter of Asher *was* Serah. 47These *are* the families of the sons of Asher according to those who were numbered of them: fifty-three thousand four hundred.

48The sons of Naphtali according to their families *were:* of Jahzeel,[a] the family of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites; 49of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. 50These *are* the families of Naphtali according to their families; and those who were numbered of them *were* forty-five thousand four hundred.

51These *are* those who were numbered of the children of Israel: six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty.

52Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 53"To these the land shall be divided as an inheritance, according to the number of names. 54To a large *tribe* you shall give a larger inheritance, and to a small *tribe* you shall give a smaller inheritance. Each shall be given its inheritance according to those who were numbered of them. 55But the land shall be divided by lot; they shall inherit according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. 56According to the lot their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller."

57And these *are* those who were numbered of the Levites according to their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites. 58These *are* the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, and the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begot Amram. 59The name of Amram's wife *was* Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and to Amram she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam. 60To Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61And Nadab and Abihu died when they offered profane fire before the LORD.

62Now those who were numbered of them were twenty-three thousand, every male from a month old and above; for they were not numbered among the other children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given to them among the children of Israel.

26:35 [a]Called *Bered* in 1 Chronicles 7:20
26:39 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Shephupham,* spelled *Shephuphan* in 1 Chronicles 8:5. [b]Called *Huppim* in Genesis 46:21 **26:40** [a]Called *Addar* in 1 Chronicles 8:3 **26:42** [a]Called *Hushim* in Genesis 46:23 **26:48** [a]Spelled *Jahziel* in 1 Chronicles 7:13

63These *are* those who were numbered
by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who num-
bered the children of Israel in the plains of
Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho.
64But among these there was not a man of
those who were numbered by Moses and
Aaron the priest when they numbered the
children of Israel in the Wilderness of Si-
nai. 65For the LORD had said of them, "They
shall surely die in the wilderness." So there
was not left a man of them, except Caleb
the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son
of Nun.

INHERITANCE LAWS

27 Then came the daughters of
Zelophehad the son of He-
pher, the son of Gilead, the son
of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from the
families of Manasseh the son of Joseph;
and these *were* the names of his daughters:
Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.
2And they stood before Moses, before Elea-
zar the priest, and before the leaders and
all the congregation, *by* the doorway of the
tabernacle of meeting, saying: 3"Our father
died in the wilderness; but he was not in
the company of those who gathered to-
gether against the LORD, in company with
Korah, but he died in his own sin; and he
had no sons. 4Why should the name of our
father be removed from among his family
because he had no son? Give us a posses-
sion among our father's brothers."

Numbers 27:3, 4

Women were not allowed to inherit land in ancient Israelite society. The only exceptions were situations like the one facing Zelophehad's daughters. With no male in the family to take over their father's responsibilities, they were faced with the possibility of losing their land—and their means of supporting themselves.

5So Moses brought their case before the
LORD.
6And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
7"The daughters of Zelophehad speak *what*
is right; you shall surely give them a pos-
session of inheritance among their father's
brothers, and cause the inheritance of
their father to pass to them. 8And you shall
speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a
man dies and has no son, then you shall
cause his inheritance to pass to his daugh-
ter. 9If he has no daughter, then you shall
give his inheritance to his brothers. 10If he
has no brothers, then you shall give his in-
heritance to his father's brothers. 11And if
his father has no brothers, then you shall
give his inheritance to the relative closest
to him in his family, and he shall possess
it.'" And it shall be to the children of Israel a
statute of judgment, just as the LORD com-
manded Moses.

JOSHUA THE NEXT LEADER OF ISRAEL

12Now the LORD said to Moses: "Go up
into this Mount Abarim, and see the land
which I have given to the children of Is-
rael. 13And when you have seen it, you
also shall be gathered to your people, as
Aaron your brother was gathered. 14For
in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife
of the congregation, you rebelled against
My command to hallow Me at the waters
before their eyes." (These *are* the waters of
Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of
Zin.)
15Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying:
16"Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of
all flesh, set a man over the congregation,
17who may go out before them and go in
before them, who may lead them out and
bring them in, that the congregation of the
LORD may not be like sheep which have no
shepherd."

LEADERSHIP
What is the primary responsibilty of a leader?
Numbers 27:16, 17

18And the LORD said to Moses: "Take
Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in
whom *is* the Spirit, and lay your hand on
him; 19set him before Eleazar the priest
and before all the congregation, and inau-
gurate him in their sight. 20And you shall
give *some* of your authority to him, that all
the congregation of the children of Israel
may be obedient. 21He shall stand before
Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before

the LORD for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation."

22So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 23And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

DAILY OFFERINGS

28 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Command the children of Israel, and say to them, 'My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me, you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time.'

3"And you shall say to them, 'This *is* the offering made by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs in their first year without blemish, day by day, as a regular burnt offering. 4The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, the other lamb you shall offer in the evening, 5and one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil. 6*It is* a regular burnt offering which was ordained at Mount Sinai for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 7And its drink offering *shall be* one-fourth of a hin for each lamb; in a holy *place* you shall pour out the drink to the LORD as an offering. 8The other lamb you shall offer in the evening; as the morning grain offering and its drink offering, you shall offer *it* as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

SABBATH OFFERINGS

9'And on the Sabbath day two lambs in their first year, without blemish, and two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, with its drink offering—10*this is* the burnt offering for every Sabbath, besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering.

MONTHLY OFFERINGS

11'At the beginnings of your months you shall present a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish; 12three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull; two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram; 13and one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour, mixed with oil, as a grain offering for each lamb, as a burnt offering of sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 14Their drink offering shall be half a hin of wine for a bull, one-third of a hin for a ram, and one-fourth of a hin for a lamb; this *is* the burnt offering for each month throughout the months of the year. 15Also one kid of the goats as a sin offering to the LORD shall be offered, besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

OFFERINGS AT PASSOVER

16'On the fourteenth day of the first month *is* the Passover of the LORD. 17And on the fifteenth day of this month *is* the feast; unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days. 18On the first day *you shall have* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. 19And you shall present an offering made by fire as a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year. Be sure they are without blemish. 20Their grain offering shall be of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* you shall offer for a bull, and two-tenths for a ram; 21you shall offer one-tenth *of an ephah* for each of the seven lambs; 22also one goat *as* a sin offering, to make atonement for you. 23You shall offer these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which *is* for a regular burnt offering. 24In this manner you shall offer the food of the offering made by fire daily for seven days, as a sweet aroma to the LORD; it shall be offered besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. 25And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work.

OFFERINGS AT THE FEAST OF WEEKS

26'Also on the day of the firstfruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD at your *Feast of* Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. 27You shall present a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in

their first year, [28]with their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for each bull, two-tenths for the one ram, [29]and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; [30]*also* one kid of the goats, to make atonement for you. [31]Be sure they are without blemish. You shall present *them* with their drink offerings, besides the regular burnt offering with its grain offering.

OFFERINGS AT THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS

29 [1]And in the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets. [2]You shall offer a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one young bull, one ram, *and* seven lambs in their first year, without blemish. [3]Their grain offering *shall be* fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, [4]and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; [5]also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, to make atonement for you; [6]besides the burnt offering with its grain offering for the New Moon, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, as a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

OFFERINGS ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

[7]"On the tenth *day* of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall afflict your souls; you shall not do any work. [8]You shall present a burnt offering to the LORD *as* a sweet aroma: one young bull, one ram, *and* seven lambs in their first year. Be sure they are without blemish. [9]Their grain offering *shall be of* fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for the bull, two-tenths for the one ram, [10]and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; [11]also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the sin offering for atonement, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

OFFERINGS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

[12]"On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days. [13]You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD: thirteen young bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year. They shall be without blemish. [14]Their grain offering *shall be of* fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams, [15]and one-tenth for each of the fourteen lambs; [16]also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

[17]"On the second day *present* twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, [18]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; [19]also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

[20]"On the third day *present* eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, [21]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; [22]also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

[23]"On the fourth day *present* ten bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year, without blemish, [24]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; [25]also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

[26]"On the fifth day *present* nine bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, [27]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; [28]also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

[29]"On the sixth day *present* eight bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, [30]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the

bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; 31also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

32"On the seventh day *present* seven bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, 33and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; 34also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

35"On the eighth day you shall have a sacred assembly. You shall do no customary work. 36You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, seven lambs in their first year without blemish, 37and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bull, for the ram, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; 38also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

39"These you shall present to the LORD at your appointed feasts (besides your vowed offerings and your freewill offerings) as your burnt offerings and your grain offerings, as your drink offerings and your peace offerings.'"

40So Moses told the children of Israel everything, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

THE LAW CONCERNING VOWS

30 Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, "This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded: 2If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

3"Or if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds *herself* by some agreement while in her father's house in her youth, 4and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father holds his peace, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand. 5But if her father overrules her on the day that he hears, then none of her vows nor her agreements by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will release her, because her father overruled her.

6"If indeed she takes a husband, while bound by her vows or by a rash utterance from her lips by which she bound herself, 7and her husband hears *it,* and makes no response to her on the day that he hears, then her vows shall stand, and her agreements by which she bound herself shall stand. 8But if her husband overrules her on the day that he hears *it,* he shall make void her vow which she took and what she uttered with her lips, by which she bound herself, and the LORD will release her.

9"Also any vow of a widow or a divorced woman, by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her.

10"If she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself by an agreement with an oath, 11and her husband heard *it,* and made no response to her *and* did not overrule her, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement by which she bound herself shall stand. 12But if her husband truly made them void on the day he heard *them,* then whatever proceeded from her lips concerning her vows or concerning the agreement binding her, it shall not stand; her husband has made them void, and the LORD will release her. 13Every vow and every binding oath to afflict her soul, her husband may confirm it, or her husband may make it void. 14Now if her husband makes no response whatever to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all the agreements that bind her; he confirms them, because he made no response to her on the day that he heard *them.* 15But if he does make them void after he has heard *them,* then he shall bear her guilt."

16These *are* the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, and between a father and his daughter in her youth in her father's house.

VENGEANCE ON THE MIDIANITES

31 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2"Take vengeance on the Midianites for the children of Israel. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people."

3So Moses spoke to the people, saying,

"Arm some of yourselves for war, and let them go against the Midianites to take vengeance for the LORD on Midian. 4A thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war."

5So there were recruited from the divisions of Israel one thousand from *each* tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. 6Then Moses sent them to the war, one thousand from *each* tribe; he sent them to the war with Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, with the holy articles and the signal trumpets in his hand. 7And they warred against the Midianites, just as the LORD commanded Moses, and they killed all the males. 8They killed the kings of Midian with *the rest of* those who were killed—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword.

9And the children of Israel took the women of Midian captive, with their little ones, and took as spoil all their cattle, all their flocks, and all their goods. 10They also burned with fire all the cities where they dwelt, and all their forts. 11And they took all the spoil and all the booty—of man and beast.

RETURN FROM THE WAR

12Then they brought the captives, the booty, and the spoil to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the congregation of the children of Israel, to the camp in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho. 13And Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders of the congregation, went to meet them outside the camp. 14But Moses was angry with the officers of the army, *with* the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, who had come from the battle.

15And Moses said to them: "Have you kept all the women alive? 16Look, these *women* caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD. 17Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known a man intimately. 18But keep alive for yourselves all the young girls who have not known a man intimately. 19And as for you, remain outside the camp seven days; whoever has killed any person, and whoever has touched any slain, purify yourselves and your captives on the third day and on the seventh day. 20Purify every garment, everything made of leather, everything woven of goats' *hair,* and everything made of wood."

Numbers 31:17, 18

God's orders to kill any woman who was not a virgin may seem extreme, but remember, the Midianites used sex as part of their idol worship. The people who had been exposed to this type of "religious" ceremony might have brought those influences to the Israelites' worship of God.

21Then Eleazar the priest said to the men of war who had gone to the battle, "This *is* the ordinance of the law which the LORD commanded Moses: 22Only the gold, the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin, and the lead, 23everything that can endure fire, you shall put through the fire, and it shall be clean; and it shall be purified with the water of purification. But all that cannot endure fire you shall put through water. 24And you shall wash your clothes on the seventh day and be clean, and afterward you may come into the camp."

DIVISION OF THE PLUNDER

25Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 26"Count up the plunder that was taken—of man and beast—you and Eleazar the priest and the chief fathers of the congregation; 27and divide the plunder into two parts, between those who took part in the war, who went out to battle, and all the congregation. 28And levy a tribute for the LORD on the men of war who went out to battle: one of every five hundred of the persons, the cattle, the donkeys, and the sheep; 29take *it* from their half, and give *it* to Eleazar the priest as a heave offering to the LORD. 30And from the children of Israel's half you shall take one of every fifty, drawn from the persons, the cattle, the donkeys, and the sheep, from all the livestock, and give them to the Levites who keep charge of the tabernacle of the LORD." 31So Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

32The booty remaining from the plunder,

which the men of war had taken, was six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, 33seventy-two thousand cattle, 34sixty-one thousand donkeys, 35and thirty-two thousand persons in all, of women who had not known a man intimately. 36And the half, the portion for those who had gone out to war, was in number three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep; 37and the LORD's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and seventy-five. 38The cattle *were* thirty-six thousand, of which the LORD's tribute *was* seventy-two. 39The donkeys *were* thirty thousand five hundred, of which the LORD's tribute *was* sixty-one. 40The persons *were* sixteen thousand, of which the LORD's tribute *was* thirty-two persons. 41So Moses gave the tribute *which was* the LORD's heave offering to Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses.

42And from the children of Israel's half, which Moses separated from the men who fought— 43now the half belonging to the congregation was three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep, 44thirty-six thousand cattle, 45thirty thousand five hundred donkeys, 46and sixteen thousand persons— 47and from the children of Israel's half Moses took one of every fifty, drawn from man and beast, and gave them to the Levites, who kept charge of the tabernacle of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

48Then the officers who *were* over thousands of the army, the captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, came near to Moses; 49and they said to Moses, "Your servants have taken a count of the men of war who *are* under our command, and not a man of us is missing. 50Therefore we have brought an offering for the LORD, what every man found of ornaments of gold: armlets and bracelets and signet rings and earrings and necklaces, to make atonement for ourselves before the LORD." 51So Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from them, all the fashioned ornaments. 52And all the gold of the offering that they offered to the LORD, from the captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. 53(The men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.) 54And Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of meeting as a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.

THE TRIBES SETTLING EAST OF THE JORDAN

32 Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region *was* a place for livestock, 2the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, 3"Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo, and Beon, 4the country which the LORD defeated before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock." 5Therefore they said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan."

6And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: "Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here? 7Now why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them? 8Thus your fathers did when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. 9For when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them. 10So the LORD's anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, 11'Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, 12except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.' 13So the LORD's anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was gone. 14And look! You have risen in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the LORD against Israel. 15For if you turn away from following Him, He will once

again leave them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people."

16Then they came near to him and said: "We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, 17but we ourselves will be armed, ready *to go* before the children of Israel until we have brought them to their place; and our little ones will dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. 18We will not return to our homes until every one of the children of Israel has received his inheritance. 19For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this eastern side of the Jordan."

20Then Moses said to them: "If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the LORD for the war, 21and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD until He has driven out His enemies from before Him, 22and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you may return and be blameless before the LORD and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. 23But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out. 24Build cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep, and do what has proceeded out of your mouth."

25And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying: "Your servants will do as my lord commands. 26Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our livestock will be there in the cities of Gilead; 27but your servants will cross over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, just as my lord says."

28So Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. 29And Moses said to them: "If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession. 30But if they do not cross over armed with you, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan."

31Then the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying: "As the LORD has said to your servants, so we will do. 32We will cross over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, but the possession of our inheritance *shall remain* with us on this side of the Jordan."

33So Moses gave to the children of Gad, to the children of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with its cities within the borders, the cities of the surrounding country. 34And the children of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer, 35Atroth and Shophan and Jazer and Jogbehah, 36Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran, fortified cities, and folds for sheep. 37And the children of Reuben built Heshbon and Elealeh and Kirjathaim, 38Nebo and Baal Meon (*their* names being changed) and Shibmah; and they gave *other* names to the cities which they built.

39And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who *were* in it. 40So Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he dwelt in it. 41Also Jair the son of Manasseh went and took its small towns, and called them Havoth Jair.[a] 42Then Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and he called it Nobah, after his own name.

ISRAEL'S JOURNEY FROM EGYPT REVIEWED

33 These *are* the journeys of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt by their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. 2Now Moses wrote down the starting points of their journeys at the command of the LORD. And these *are* their journeys according to their starting points:

3They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians. 4For the Egyptians were burying all *their* firstborn, whom the LORD had killed among them. Also on their gods the LORD had executed judgments.

5Then the children of Israel moved from Rameses and camped at Succoth. 6They

32:41 [a]Literally *Towns of Jair*

departed from Succoth and camped at Etham, which *is* on the edge of the wilderness. 7They moved from Etham and turned back to Pi Hahiroth, which *is* east of Baal Zephon; and they camped near Migdol. 8They departed from before Hahiroth[a] and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, went three days' journey in the Wilderness of Etham, and camped at Marah. 9They moved from Marah and came to Elim. At Elim *were* twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there.

10They moved from Elim and camped by the Red Sea. 11They moved from the Red Sea and camped in the Wilderness of Sin. 12They journeyed from the Wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah. 13They departed from Dophkah and camped at Alush. 14They moved from Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.

15They departed from Rephidim and camped in the Wilderness of Sinai. 16They moved from the Wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah. 17They departed from Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth. 18They departed from Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah. 19They departed from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez. 20They departed from Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah. 21They moved from Libnah and camped at Rissah. 22They journeyed from Rissah and camped at Kehelathah. 23They went from Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher. 24They moved from Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah. 25They moved from Haradah and camped at Makheloth. 26They moved from Makheloth and camped at Tahath. 27They departed from Tahath and camped at Terah. 28They moved from Terah and camped at Mithkah. 29They went from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah. 30They departed from Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth. 31They departed from Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan. 32They moved from Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Hagidgad. 33They went from Hor Hagidgad and camped at Jotbathah. 34They moved from Jotbathah and camped at Abronah. 35They departed from Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber. 36They moved from Ezion Geber and camped in the Wilderness of Zin, which *is* Kadesh. 37They moved from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, on the boundary of the land of Edom.

38Then Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor at the command of the LORD, and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first *day* of the fifth month. 39Aaron *was* one hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.

40Now the king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel.

41So they departed from Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah. 42They departed from Zalmonah and camped at Punon. 43They departed from Punon and camped at Oboth. 44They departed from Oboth and camped at Ije Abarim, at the border of Moab. 45They departed from Ijim[a] and camped at Dibon Gad. 46They moved from Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim. 47They moved from Almon Diblathaim and camped in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. 48They departed from the mountains of Abarim and camped in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho. 49They camped by the Jordan, from Beth Jesimoth as far as the Abel Acacia Grove[a] in the plains of Moab.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

50Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho, saying, 51"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 52then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places; 53you shall dispossess *the inhabitants of* the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess. 54And you shall divide the land by lot as an inheritance among your families; to the larger you shall give a larger inheritance,

33:8 [a]Many Hebrew manuscripts, Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *from Pi Hahiroth* (compare verse 7).
33:45 [a]Same as *Ije Abarim,* verse 44
33:49 [a]Hebrew *Abel Shittim*

and to the smaller you shall give a smaller inheritance; there everyone's *inheritance* shall be whatever falls to him by lot. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers. 55But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain *shall be* irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell. 56Moreover it shall be *that* I will do to you as I thought to do to them.'"

THE APPOINTED BOUNDARIES OF CANAAN

34 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"Command the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land of Canaan, this *is* the land that shall fall to you as an inheritance—the land of Canaan to its boundaries. 3Your southern border shall be from the Wilderness of Zin along the border of Edom; then your southern border shall extend eastward to the end of the Salt Sea; 4your border shall turn from the southern side of the Ascent of Akrabbim, continue to Zin, and be on the south of Kadesh Barnea; then it shall go on to Hazar Addar, and continue to Azmon; 5the border shall turn from Azmon to the Brook of Egypt, and it shall end at the Sea.

6'As for the western border, you shall have the Great Sea for a border; this shall be your western border.

7'And this shall be your northern border: From the Great Sea you shall mark out your *border* line to Mount Hor; 8from Mount Hor you shall mark out *your border* to the entrance of Hamath; then the direction of the border shall be toward Zedad; 9the border shall proceed to Ziphron, and it shall end at Hazar Enan. This shall be your northern border.

10'You shall mark out your eastern border from Hazar Enan to Shepham; 11the border shall go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain; the border shall go down and reach to the eastern side of the Sea of Chinnereth; 12the border shall go down along the Jordan, and it shall end at the Salt Sea. This shall be your land with its surrounding boundaries.'"

13Then Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying: "This *is* the land which you shall inherit by lot, which the LORD has commanded to give to the nine tribes and to the half-tribe. 14For the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers, have received *their inheritance;* and the half-tribe of Manasseh has received its inheritance. 15The two tribes and the half-tribe have received their inheritance on this side of the Jordan, *across from* Jericho eastward, toward the sunrise."

THE LEADERS APPOINTED TO DIVIDE THE LAND

16And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 17"These *are* the names of the men who shall divide the land among you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. 18And you shall take one leader of every tribe to divide the land for the inheritance. 19These *are* the names of the men: from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 20from the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud; 21from the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon; 22a leader from the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli; 23from the sons of Joseph: a leader from the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod, 24and a leader from the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan; 25a leader from the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach; 26a leader from the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan; 27a leader from the tribe of the children of Asher, Ahihud the son of Shelomi; 28and a leader from the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud."

29These *are* the ones the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance among the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

CITIES FOR THE LEVITES

35 And the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *across from* Jericho, saying: 2"Command the children of Israel that they give the Levites cities to dwell in from the inheritance of their possession, and you shall *also* give the Levites common-land around the cities. 3They shall have the

cities to dwell in; and their common-land shall be for their cattle, for their herds, and for all their animals. 4The common-land of the cities which you will give the Levites *shall extend* from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits all around. 5And you shall measure outside the city on the east side two thousand cubits, on the south side two thousand cubits, on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits. The city *shall be* in the middle. This shall belong to them as common-land for the cities.

6"Now among the cities which you will give to the Levites *you shall appoint* six cities of refuge, to which a manslayer may flee. And to these you shall add forty-two cities. 7So all the cities you will give to the Levites *shall be* forty-eight; these *you shall give* with their common-land. 8And the cities which you will give *shall be* from the possession of the children of Israel; from the larger *tribe* you shall give many, from the smaller you shall give few. Each shall give some of its cities to the Levites, in proportion to the inheritance that each receives."

CITIES OF REFUGE

9Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11then you shall appoint cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person accidentally may flee there. 12They shall be cities of refuge for you from the avenger, that the manslayer may not die until he stands before the congregation in judgment. 13And of the cities which you give, you shall have six cities of refuge. 14You shall appoint three cities on this side of the Jordan, and three cities you shall appoint in the land of Canaan, *which* will be cities of refuge. 15These six cities shall be for refuge for the children of Israel, for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them, that anyone who kills a person accidentally may flee there.

16'But if he strikes him with an iron implement, so that he dies, he *is* a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 17And if he strikes him with a stone in the hand, by which one could die, and he does die, he *is* a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 18Or *if* he strikes him with a wooden hand weapon, by which one could die, and he does die, he *is* a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 19The avenger of blood himself shall put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death. 20If he pushes him out of hatred or, while lying in wait, hurls something at him so that he dies, 21or in enmity he strikes him with his hand so that he dies, the one who struck *him* shall surely be put to death. He *is* a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

22'However, if he pushes him suddenly without enmity, or throws anything at him without lying in wait, 23or uses a stone, by which a man could die, throwing *it* at him without seeing *him,* so that he dies, while he was not his enemy or seeking his harm, 24then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood according to these judgments. 25So the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he had fled, and he shall remain there until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. 26But if the manslayer at any time goes outside the limits of the city of refuge where he fled, 27and the avenger of blood finds him outside the limits of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood, 28because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession.

29'And these *things* shall be a statute of judgment to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 30Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not *sufficient* testimony against a person for the death *penalty.* 31Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who *is* guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. 32And you shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the priest. 33So you shall not pollute the land where you *are;* for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for

the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. 34Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.'"

MARRIAGE OF FEMALE HEIRS

36 Now the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near and spoke before Moses and before the leaders, the chief fathers of the children of Israel. 2And they said: "The LORD commanded my lord *Moses* to give the land as an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel, and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. 3Now if they are married to any of the sons of the *other* tribes of the children of Israel, then their inheritance will be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and it will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; so it will be taken from the lot of our inheritance. 4And when the Jubilee of the children of Israel comes, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; so their inheritance will be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers."

5Then Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying: "What the tribe of the sons of Joseph speaks is right. 6This *is* what the LORD commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, 'Let them marry whom they think best, but they may marry only within the family of their father's tribe.' 7So the inheritance of the children of Israel shall not change hands from tribe to tribe, for every one of the children of Israel shall keep the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. 8And every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel shall be the wife of one of the family of her father's tribe, so that the children of Israel each may possess the inheritance of his fathers. 9Thus no inheritance shall change hands from *one* tribe to another, but every tribe of the children of Israel shall keep its own inheritance."

10Just as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad; 11for Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married to the sons of their father's brothers. 12They were married into the families of the children of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of their father's family.

13These *are* the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded the children of Israel by the hand of Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho.

Deuteronomy

DATE OF WRITING: 1445–1440 B.C.
AUTHOR: TRADITIONALLY, MOSES
THEME: OBEDIENCE BRINGS BLESSING; DISOBEDIENCE BRINGS CURSING
PURPOSE: REMEMBERING GOD'S PAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS TO YOU CAN ENCOURAGE YOUR LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS TO GOD IN THE FUTURE.

OUTLINE

1:1—4:43 ..... The First Speech: Moses Reviews the Past
4:44—28:68 ..... The Second Speech: Moses Tells What the Lord Requires
29:1—30:20 ..... The Third Speech: Israel Must Keep Its Covenant with the Lord
31:1–14 ..... Joshua Is Appointed Leader of Israel
31:15–29 ..... Israel Will Reject the Lord
31:30—32:47 ..... The Song of Moses
32:48—33:29 ..... Moses Sees the Land and Blesses the Tribes of Israel
34:1–12 ..... The Death of Moses

KEY VERSE:

"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?" (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13).

THEN ///

You don't really understand Deuteronomy unless you understand that this book is really a dying man's last words. Let's recap. Moses had just led the Hebrews out of Egypt. Then they wandered around the desert for forty years, trying to get up the courage and the faith to cross the border into the Promised Land.

By the time they finally got to the border, only three of the people who were adults when the Hebrews had left Egypt were still living. To make it worse, one of them was about to die—Moses.

So Moses did what any good leader would do. He gathered the people together and he told them the story all over again. But he didn't just tell them the story; he told them why the story mattered and what they should do about it. It was his last chance, so he talked to them about *real stuff*, the *real-est*. Moses talked to them about their past, present, and future. This was his last chance to encourage the people to be faithful to God, and Moses made the most of it.

NOW ///

Imagine that your country had had the same president your whole life and he was a great and wonderful leader who had led the entire nation through some really challenging times. Imagine this trusted leader said, "I have to go now. But before I leave, let me tell you one last thing . . ."

You'd listen to him, wouldn't you? That's how we should listen to Deuteronomy. Moses' powerful call to the Israelites to be faithful can reach through thousands of years and call us to be faithful as well. Just as the Israelites had experienced deliverance through God's love and faithfulness, we too have experienced deliverance from sin through God's love and faithfulness.

Deuteronomy can help us remember—remember how God has shown up in the past, and remember to be faithful ourselves in the future, even in challenging times. Let Moses' last words to the Israelites encourage and motivate you to faithfully reach the future God has for you.

REALITY CHECK ///

There are a lot of directions in Deuteronomy about taking care of people who have less than we do.

Deuteronomy doesn't let us off the hook by passing people's needs over to a church or an agency. Instead, Deuteronomy teaches us that if we meet someone in need we're responsible to help. Deuteronomy also has practical tips for helping people help themselves.

We may think the whole idea of living together as a community is a modern concept. But it's not new. We just forgot that God taught that lesson long ago.

THE PREVIOUS COMMAND TO ENTER CANAAN

1 These *are* the words which Moses
spoke to all Israel on this side of the
Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain[a]
opposite Suph,[b] between Paran, Tophel,
Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab. 2*It is* eleven
days' *journey* from Horeb by way of Mount
Seir to Kadesh Barnea. 3Now it came to
pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh
month, on the first *day* of the month, *that*
Moses spoke to the children of Israel ac-
cording to all that the LORD had given him
as commandments to them, 4after he had
killed Sihon king of the Amorites, who
dwelt in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan,
who dwelt at Ashtaroth in[a] Edrei.

5On this side of the Jordan in the land
of Moab, Moses began to explain this law,
saying, 6"The LORD our God spoke to us
in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long
enough at this mountain. 7Turn and take
your journey, and go to the mountains of
the Amorites, to all the neighboring *places*
in the plain,[a] in the mountains and in the
lowland, in the South and on the seacoast,
to the land of the Canaanites and to Leba-
non, as far as the great river, the River Eu-
phrates. 8See, I have set the land before
you; go in and possess the land which the
LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob—to give to them and their
descendants after them.'

TRIBAL LEADERS APPOINTED

9"And I spoke to you at that time, saying: 'I
alone am not able to bear you. 10The LORD
your God has multiplied you, and here you
are today, as the stars of heaven in multi-
tude. 11May the LORD God of your fathers
make you a thousand times more numer-
ous than you are, and bless you as He has
promised you! 12How can I alone bear your
problems and your burdens and your com-
plaints? 13Choose wise, understanding,
and knowledgeable men from among your
tribes, and I will make them heads over
you.' 14And you answered me and said, 'The
thing which you have told *us* to do *is* good.'
15So I took the heads of your tribes, wise
and knowledgeable men, and made them
heads over you, leaders of thousands, lead-
ers of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of
tens, and officers for your tribes.

16"Then I commanded your judges at
that time, saying, 'Hear *the cases* between
your brethren, and judge righteously
between a man and his brother or the
stranger who is with him. 17You shall not
show partiality in judgment; you shall hear
the small as well as the great; you shall
not be afraid in any man's presence, for
the judgment *is* God's. The case that is too
hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.'
18And I commanded you at that time all the
things which you should do.

Deuteronomy 1:16

In most places in the ancient world, a foreigner ("stranger") had no legal rights. The land of the Israelites, however, was different. God's people were expected to treat foreigners just as they would treat each other. They were to show that God's law applied to everyone.

ISRAEL'S REFUSAL TO ENTER THE LAND

19"So we departed from Horeb, and went
through all that great and terrible wilder-
ness which you saw on the way to the
mountains of the Amorites, as the LORD
our God had commanded us. Then we
came to Kadesh Barnea. 20And I said to
you, 'You have come to the mountains of
the Amorites, which the LORD our God
is giving us. 21Look, the LORD your God
has set the land before you; go up *and*
possess *it,* as the LORD God of your fa-
thers has spoken to you; do not fear or be
discouraged.'

22"And every one of you came near to me
and said, 'Let us send men before us, and
let them search out the land for us, and
bring back word to us of the way by which
we should go up, and of the cities into
which we shall come.'

23"The plan pleased me well; so I took
twelve of your men, one man from *each*
tribe. 24And they departed and went up

1:1 [a]Hebrew *arabah* [b]One manuscript of the Septuagint, also Targum and Vulgate, read *Red Sea.* **1:4** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *and* (compare Joshua 12:4). **1:7** [a]Hebrew *arabah*

into the mountains, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out. 25They also took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought *it* down to us; and they brought back word to us, saying, '*It is* a good land which the LORD our God is giving us.'

26"Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; 27and you complained in your tents, and said, 'Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, "The people *are* greater and taller than we; the cities *are* great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there."'

29"Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. 30The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 31and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.' 32Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God, 33who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day.

THE PENALTY FOR ISRAEL'S REBELLION

34"And the LORD heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, 35'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, 36except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the LORD.' 37The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, 'Even you shall not go in there. 38Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

39'Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. 40But *as for* you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.'

41"Then you answered and said to me, 'We have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And when everyone of you had girded on his weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the mountain.

42"And the LORD said to me, 'Tell them, "Do not go up nor fight, for I *am* not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies."' 43So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of the LORD, and presumptuously went up into the mountain. 44And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you as bees do, and drove you back from Seir to Hormah. 45Then you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you.

46"So you remained in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you spent *there*.

THE DESERT YEARS

2 "Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness of the Way of the Red Sea, as the LORD spoke to me, and we skirted Mount Seir for many days.

2"And the LORD spoke to me, saying: 3'You have skirted this mountain long enough; turn northward. 4And command the people, saying, "You *are about to* pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. Therefore watch yourselves carefully. 5Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau *as* a possession. 6You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink.

7"For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God *has been* with you; you have lacked nothing."'

8"And when we passed beyond our brethren, the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir, away from the road of the plain, away

from Elath and Ezion Geber, we turned and passed by way of the Wilderness of Moab.
9Then the LORD said to me, 'Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you *any* of their land *as* a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot *as* a possession.'"

10(The Emim had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. 11They were also regarded as giants,[a] like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim. 12The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them.)

13"'Now rise and cross over the Valley of the Zered.' So we crossed over the Valley of the Zered. 14And the time we took to come from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the Valley of the Zered *was* thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war was consumed from the midst of the camp, just as the LORD had sworn to them. 15For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they were consumed.

16"So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, 17that the LORD spoke to me, saying: 18'This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. 19And *when* you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of the land of the people of Ammon *as* a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot *as* a possession.'"

20(That was also regarded as a land of giants;[a] giants formerly dwelt there. But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, 21a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. But the LORD destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, 22just as He had done for the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day. 23And the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza—the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and dwelt in their place.)

24"'Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess *it,* and engage him in battle. 25This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

KING SIHON DEFEATED

26"And I sent messengers from the Wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, 27'Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the road, and I will turn neither to the right nor to the left. 28You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on foot, 29just as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me, until I cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD our God is giving us.'

30"But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand, as *it is* this day.

31"And the LORD said to me, 'See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to possess *it,* that you may inherit his land.' 32Then Sihon and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz. 33And the LORD our God delivered him over to us; so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people. 34We took all his cities at that time, and we utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city; we left none remaining. 35We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we took. 36From Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, and *from* the city that *is* in the ravine, as far as Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us; the LORD our God delivered all to us. 37Only you did not go near the land of the people of Ammon—anywhere along the River Jabbok, or to the cities of the mountains, or wherever the LORD our God had forbidden us.

2:11 [a]Hebrew *rephaim* **2:20** [a]Hebrew *rephaim*

KING OG DEFEATED

3 "Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan; and Og king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. 2And the LORD said to me, 'Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.'

3"So the LORD our God also delivered into our hands Og king of Bashan, with all his people, and we attacked him until he had no survivors remaining. 4And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them: sixty cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5All these cities *were* fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many rural towns. 6And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. 7But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as booty for ourselves.

8"And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on this side of the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon 9(the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir), 10all the cities of the plain, all Gilead, and all Bashan, as far as Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

11"For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants.[a] Indeed his bedstead *was* an iron bedstead. (*Is* it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits *is* its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit.

THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN DIVIDED

12"And this land, *which* we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which *is* by the River Arnon, and half the mountains of Gilead and its cities, I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites. 13The rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh. (All the region of Argob, with all Bashan, was called the land of the giants.[a] 14Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and called Bashan after his own name, Havoth Jair,[a] to this day.)

Deuteronomy 3:12–17

The land that each tribe received was supposed to be held by that tribe for always. Each tribe was responsible for protecting its territory, maintaining control over its region, and passing the land down from generation to generation.

15"Also I gave Gilead to Machir. 16And to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave from Gilead as far as the River Arnon, the middle of the river as *the* border, as far as the River Jabbok, the border of the people of Ammon; 17the plain also, with the Jordan as *the* border, from Chinnereth as far as the east side of the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), below the slopes of Pisgah.

18"Then I commanded you at that time, saying: 'The LORD your God has given you this land to possess. All you men of valor shall cross over armed before your brethren, the children of Israel. 19But your wives, your little ones, and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall stay in your cities which I have given you, 20until the LORD has given rest to your brethren as to you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them beyond the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his possession which I have given you.'

21"And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. 22You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you.'

MOSES FORBIDDEN TO ENTER THE LAND

23"Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying: 24'O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god *is there* in heaven or on earth who can do

3:11 [a]Hebrew *rephaim* **3:13** [a]Hebrew *rephaim*
3:14 [a]Literally *Towns of Jair*

anything like Your works and Your mighty *deeds?* 25I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.'

26"But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter. 27Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold *it* with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan. 28But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.'

29"So we stayed in the valley opposite Beth Peor.

MOSES COMMANDS OBEDIENCE

4 "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. 2You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. 3Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. 4But you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive today, every one of you.

5"Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according *to them* in the land which you go to possess. 6Therefore be careful to observe *them;* for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.'

7"For what great nation *is there* that has God *so* near to it, as the LORD our God *is* to us, for whatever *reason* we may call upon Him? 8And what great nation *is there* that has *such* statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? 9Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, 10*especially concerning* the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.'

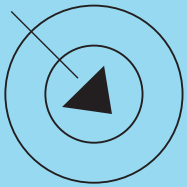
11"Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. 12And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; *you* only *heard* a voice. 13So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. 14And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess.

BEWARE OF IDOLATRY

15"Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, 16lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, 17the likeness of any animal that *is* on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, 18the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that *is* in the water beneath the earth. 19And *take heed,* lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and *when* you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a

Deuteronomy 4:16–18

The Egyptians, Greeks, and Babylonians all had false gods. Craftsmen created idols (statues or figures), often in the form of a bird or animal, to represent their gods. Strangely, people started worshiping the idols, rather than the gods they represented. The Lord knew that if the Israelites started making and worshiping idols, they would stop worshiping Him.



PROMISE

God promises to remember His covenant.

"For the LORD your God is a merciful God, He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them" (Deut. 4:31).

A covenant is a very strong, unbreakable promise. And God considers His promises to you to be completely without question—He will always do as He says.

You could think of it like this: You promised to meet your friend for breakfast on Saturday. A family emergency took her out of town until late Friday night. You remember that you've got a breakfast date, but will your friend remember? You decide to chance it and show up. Pulling into the restaurant parking lot, you see her. She remembered! Wow. It wasn't even necessary to remind her. You are so important to her that she couldn't forget, even though circumstances could have gotten in the way. Her commitment to you and your friendship makes you feel loved and special.

You're even more important to God. Trust Him when He promises to remember His promises. He won't lose His calendar or forget your phone number. He will never stand you up. It's a promise.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// 2 Samuel 23:5; 1 Kings 8:56; Nehemiah 1:5

heritage. [20]But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day. [21]Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and swore that I would not cross over the Jordan, and that I would not enter the good land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. [22]But I must die in this land, I must not cross over the Jordan; but you shall cross over and possess that good land. [23]Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. [24]For the LORD your God *is* a consuming fire, a jealous God.

[25]"When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger, [26]I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong *your* days in it, but will be utterly destroyed. [27]And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. [28]And there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. [29]But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. [30]When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice [31](for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy

IDOLATRY
Should we be more devoted to anything than we are to God?
Deuteronomy 4:23

IDOLATRY
Does God want to share our devotion?
Deuteronomy 4:24

you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

32"For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and *ask* from one end of heaven to the other, whether *any* great *thing* like this has happened, or *anything* like it has been heard. 33Did *any* people *ever* hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? 34Or did God *ever* try to go *and* take for Himself a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself *is* God; *there is* none other besides Him. 36Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. 37And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, 38driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land *as* an inheritance, as *it is* this day. 39Therefore know this day, and consider *it* in your heart, that the LORD Himself *is* God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; *there is* no other. 40You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

CITIES OF REFUGE EAST OF THE JORDAN

41Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, 42that the manslayer might flee there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without having hated him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: 43Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

INTRODUCTION TO GOD'S LAW

44Now this *is* the law which Moses set before the children of Israel. 45These *are* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which Moses spoke to the children of Israel after they came out of Egypt, 46on this side of the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated after they came out of Egypt. 47And they took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, who *were* on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, 48from Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, even to Mount Sion[a] (that is, Hermon), 49and all the plain on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, below the slopes of Pisgah.

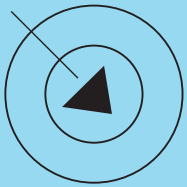
Deuteronomy 5:2

The covenant, or agreement, between God and His people was very similar to a treaty between two political leaders. In ancient times, a leader seeking a treaty would identify himself, describe some of the things he had done, and then present a list of regulations to be followed. After a treaty had been established, the two leaders would establish a written agreement and decide where copies of it would be kept.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS REVIEWED

5 And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. 2The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who *are* here today, all of us who *are* alive. 4The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. 5I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the

4:48 [a]Syriac reads *Sirion* (compare 3:9).



PROMISE

God promises to be jealous for you.

"You shall not bow down to [carved images] nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me" (Deut. 5:9).

God is a jealous God—that's the bottom line. He wants to be number one in your life above everything: your boyfriend/girlfriend, your job, your family, TV, music, friends—the list goes on.

There's nothing wrong with having things, but *don't allow things to have you!* You may not bow down and worship a physical idol you've constructed in your bedroom, but once you've placed someone or something above God, that person, place, or thing becomes something you worship—an idol. Be careful. That idol will eventually let you down. There's no other person or no other thing that can fill the place of God in your life.

Where is God on your priority list? Check your heart and make Him first in your life today. He wants to be close to you. In fact, He created you to have fellowship with Him. And His Word says that if you seek Him first, He'll bless you. Be blessed today!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Deuteronomy 4:24; Joshua 24:19, 20; Matthew 6:33; Mark 12:30

fire, and you did not go up the mountain. *He* said:

6 "I *am* the LORD your God who brought
you out of the land of Egypt, out of
the house of bondage.
7 "You shall have no other gods before Me.
8 "You shall not make for yourself a
carved image—any likeness *of*
anything that *is* in heaven above,
or that *is* in the earth beneath,
or that *is* in the water under the
earth; 9 you shall not bow down
to them nor serve them. For I,
the LORD your God, *am* a jealous
God, visiting the iniquity of the
fathers upon the children to the
third and fourth *generations* of
those who hate Me, 10 but show-
ing mercy to thousands, to those
who love Me and keep My com-
mandments.
11 "You shall not take the name of the LORD
your God in vain, for the LORD will
not hold *him* guiltless who takes
His name in vain.
12 "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it
holy, as the LORD your God com-
manded you. 13 Six days you shall
labor and do all your work, 14 but
the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of
the LORD your God. *In it* you shall
do no work: you, nor your son, nor
your daughter, nor your male ser-
vant, nor your female servant, nor
your ox, nor your donkey, nor any
of your cattle, nor your stranger
who *is* within your gates, that your
male servant and your female ser-
vant may rest as well as you. 15 And
remember that you were a slave
in the land of Egypt, and the LORD
your God brought you out from
there by a mighty hand and by an
outstretched arm; therefore the
LORD your God commanded you
to keep the Sabbath day.
16 "Honor your father and your mother,
as the LORD your God has com-
manded you, that your days may
be long, and that it may be well
with you in the land which the
LORD your God is giving you.
17 "You shall not murder.
18 "You shall not commit adultery.
19 "You shall not steal.
20 "You shall not bear false witness against
your neighbor.

MURDER
What does the Bible say about murder?
Deuteronomy 5:17

21"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife;
and you shall not desire your
neighbor's house, his field, his
male servant, his female servant,
his ox, his donkey, or anything
that *is* your neighbor's.'

22"These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

THE PEOPLE AFRAID OF GOD'S PRESENCE

23"So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. 24And you said: 'Surely the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he *still* lives. 25Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore, then we shall die. 26For who *is there* of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we *have,* and lived? 27You go near and hear all that the LORD our God may say, and tell us all that the LORD our God says to you, and we will hear and do *it.*'

28"Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right *in* all that they have spoken. 29Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! 30Go and say to them, "Return to your tents." 31But as for you, stand here by Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe *them* in the land which I am giving them to possess.'

FUTURE
How can our future be blessed?
Deuteronomy 5:29

32"Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and *that it may be* well with you, and *that* you may prolong *your* days in the land which you shall possess.

EDUCATION
Who is responsible for teaching children?
Deuteronomy 6:1–9

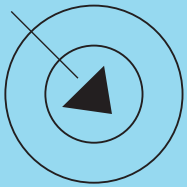
THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

6 "Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess, 2that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it,* that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—'a land flowing with milk and honey.'[a]

GOD
Is God one?
Deuteronomy 6:4

4"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one![a] 5You shall love the LORD your

6:3 [a]Exodus 3:8 **6:4** [a]Or *The LORD is our God, the LORD alone* (that is, the only one)



PROMISE

God promises to punish those who worship false gods.

"You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you (for the LORD your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth" (Deut. 6:14, 15).

There are a lot of other religions out there and a lot of people who worship other gods, but you worship the only true God! You serve the Great I Am. You have something that isn't a fairy tale, that isn't phony, that isn't fake. You have the truth that will cause blinders to fall from the eyes of those who don't know God.

Why are so many people wrapped up in false religions and worshiping false gods? One reason may be that they want to live for a cause. They are searching for power. Because you are living for Jesus, you have the same power living in you that raised Him from the dead (Rom. 8:11). Now that's power! That's someone and something to live for! Don't settle for boring religion with a bunch of rules and regulations. You can have a radical relationship with Christ. You want to do the right thing because of your relationship with Him. It's a relationship that brings freedom, a relationship that brings life, a relationship that brings power, and a relationship that brings every other good thing. You can't find this truth in anything or anyone else; it's only in Jesus Christ.

Through Him, you'll have everything you need, and you'll escape the punishment of those who worship false gods.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Ezekiel 14:4–6; 23:49; 2 Corinthians 6:16

God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

6"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

FAMILY

What should the members of a family do for each other?

Deuteronomy 6:1–9

CAUTION AGAINST DISOBEDIENCE

10"So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, 11houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full— 12*then* beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 13You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. 14You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who *are* all around you 15(for the LORD your God *is* a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

16"You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted *Him* in Massah. 17You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. 18And you shall do *what is* right and

good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers, 19to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.

20"When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *is the meaning of* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?' 21then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; 22and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. 23Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers. 24And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as *it is* this day. 25Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.'

A CHOSEN PEOPLE

7 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, 2and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. 3Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. 4For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. 5But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images,[a] and burn their carved images with fire.

6"For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. 7The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

FAITHFULNESS
To whom is God faithful?
Deuteronomy 7:9

GOD
Is God trustworthy?
Deuteronomy 7:9

PAIN
Does God care when His people are hurting?
Deuteronomy 7:9

9"Therefore know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; 10and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. 11Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them.

BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

12"Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. 13And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your

7:5 [a]Hebrew *Asherim,* Canaanite deities

cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you. 14You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock. 15And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay *them* on all those who hate you. 16Also you shall destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you; your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that *will be* a snare to you.

17"If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?'— 18you shall not be afraid of them, *but* you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: 19the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. 20Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed. 21You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, *is* among you. 22And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become *too* numerous for you. 23But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed. 24And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them. 25You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it *is* an abomination to the LORD your God. 26Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it *is* an accursed thing.

REMEMBER THE LORD YOUR GOD

8 "Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. 2And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you *and* test you, to know what *was* in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 3So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. 4Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. 5You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, *so* the LORD your God chastens you.

DISCIPLINE
Does God care enough to correct us?
Deuteronomy 8:5

6"Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. 7For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; 8a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; 9a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones *are* iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. 10When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

11"Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, 12lest—*when* you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell *in them;* 13and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; 14when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15who led you through that great and terrible wilderness,

MIR MAKING IT REAL // DEUTERONOMY 8:18

Blessed to Be a Blessing We serve an awesome God! He is so practical. There's nothing that He will not or cannot do for you. It's a fact. God is concerned with every area of your life, even your finances. He has given you abilities and talents that will enable you to earn money and bring blessing into your life. If anybody should be blessed, it should be God's children. Remember, God wants to bring good things into your life so you can be a blessing to others!

While money is necessary in this life, we can't let it become a reason for living. And we can't ever let ourselves forget that it is God who provides for us; He will bring opportunities our way to use the talents and abilities He gave us. Although most of us receive paychecks from an employer, God is the One who provides for us; He just normally uses human supply lines to pour blessing into our lives.

You may be asking yourself, *Then why doesn't God provide for the people in third-world countries who struggle just to find food and water? Doesn't God care about them?* Those are very good questions. In answer, consider what would happen if all wealthy people would give even a small part of all their fortunes to help those in need. That's what God wants His people to do. If everyone lived as God wants and always tried to bless others, it wouldn't be long before hunger and want came to an end. But because of sin, people usually think only of themselves and allow selfishness and greed to rule their lives. (See also: Ps. 35:27; Matt. 6:25–33; Phil. 4:19.)

Words to Live By

Establish His covenant: God made a solemn promise—an absolute vow—to bless His people (Deut. 7:12–14). That covenant has not come to an end. God continues to bless His people in the same way. The word translated in Deuteronomy 8:18 as "establish" is from the original word *quwm* (koom), which means "to rise up and accomplish." In other words, God's covenant is a guaranteed performance. There is no doubt that God will do as He has promised; He will bless His people!

in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; 16who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end— 17then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.'

18"And you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day. 19Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. 20As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God.

ISRAEL'S REBELLIONS REVIEWED

9 "Hear, O Israel: You *are* to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, 2a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and *of whom* you heard *it said,* 'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?' 3Therefore understand today that the LORD your God *is* He who goes over before you *as* a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you.

4"Do not think in your heart, after the

LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD is driving them out from before you. 5*It is* not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart *that* you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you *are* a stiff-necked people.

7"Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD. 8Also in Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry *enough* with you to have destroyed you. 9When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water. 10Then the LORD delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them *were* all the words which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. 11And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, *that* the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.

12"Then the LORD said to me, 'Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly; they have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molded image.'

13"Furthermore the LORD spoke to me, saying, 'I have seen this people, and indeed they are a stiff-necked people. 14Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.'

15"So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire; and the two tablets of the covenant *were* in my two hands. 16And I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the LORD your God—had made for yourselves a molded calf! You had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you. 17Then I took the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and broke them before your eyes. 18And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 19For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was angry with you, to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me at that time also. 20And the LORD was very angry with Aaron *and* would have destroyed him; so I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. 21Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it *and* ground *it* very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mountain.

22"Also at Taberah and Massah and Kibroth Hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath. 23Likewise, when the LORD sent you from Kadesh Barnea, saying, 'Go up and possess the land which I have given you,' then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and you did not believe Him nor obey His voice. 24You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

25"Thus I prostrated myself before the LORD; forty days and forty nights I kept prostrating myself, because the LORD had said He would destroy you. 26Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said: 'O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people and Your inheritance whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look on the stubbornness of this people, or on their wickedness or their sin, 28lest the land from which You brought us should say, "Because the LORD was not able to bring them to the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness." 29Yet they *are* Your

MAKING IT REAL // DEUTERONOMY 10:12, 13

Expectations Have you ever felt like nothing you do is right? Do you try your best only to have others expect more? Life can be so frustrating. Sometimes it can seem you can never live up to the expectations and requirements; and sometimes you may think you're just not capable of pleasing others, especially the ones in charge.

But God makes it very clear what He expects. Not only does He tell us over and over again in His Word, but He gave us His Spirit to remind us when we forget. He also realizes that, left on our own, we can never do all He requires. So He promises to always be with us, helping us to make right choices and live lives that please Him.

If you want to live your life the way God desires, read and practice Deuteronomy 10:12 and 13. If you live as God expects, you'll see major results in your life. When you live your life in a way that pleases God, the way you treat others will change and, believe me, they will notice. When you treat others well, they are much easier to please. (See also: Mic. 6:8; John 13:34, 35; 16:13.)

Words to Live By

Fear: Deuteronomy 10:12 says we should "fear" God. But that doesn't mean we should be afraid of Him as we would be of a dangerous enemy. The word translated as "fear" actually means "to stand in awe of" or "to recognize the power or position of another and offer them the proper respect." Although God is all powerful and there could be reason to actually be afraid of His incredible power, God is not just powerful, He is compassionate and loving. Because of Him, we have no reason to be fearful of anything. He loves, protects, and defends His own.

people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out by Your mighty power and by Your outstretched arm.'

THE SECOND PAIR OF TABLETS

10 "At that time the LORD said to me, 'Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain and make yourself an ark of wood. 2And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke; and you shall put them in the ark.'

3"So I made an ark of acacia wood, hewed two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. 4And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which the LORD had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. 5Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me."

6(Now the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah, where Aaron died, and where he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead. 7From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of rivers of water. 8At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day. 9Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, just as the LORD your God promised him.)

10"As at the first time, I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the LORD also heard me at that time, *and* the LORD chose not to destroy you. 11Then the LORD said to me, 'Arise, begin *your* journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.'

THE ESSENCE OF THE LAW

12"And now, Israel, what does the LORD
your God require of you, but to fear the
LORD your God, to walk in all His ways
and to love Him, to serve the LORD your
God with all your heart and with all your
soul, 13*and* to keep the commandments of
the LORD and His statutes which I com-
mand you today for your good? 14Indeed
heaven and the highest heavens belong to
the LORD your God, *also* the earth with all
that *is* in it. 15The LORD delighted only in
your fathers, to love them; and He chose
their descendants after them, you above
all peoples, as *it is* this day. 16Therefore
circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and
be stiff-necked no longer. 17For the LORD
your God *is* God of gods and Lord of lords,
the great God, mighty and awesome, who
shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. 18He
administers justice for the fatherless and
the widow, and loves the stranger, giving
him food and clothing. 19Therefore love the
stranger, for you were strangers in the land
of Egypt. 20You shall fear the LORD your
God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you
shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name.
21He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God,
who has done for you these great and awe-
some things which your eyes have seen.
22Your fathers went down to Egypt with
seventy persons, and now the LORD your
God has made you as the stars of heaven
in multitude.

> ***Deuteronomy 10:18***
> Women in ancient times who did not have a father or husband faced a very difficult situation. They had no one to protect them, no one to provide for them, and very few rights. Fortunately for them, the Lord cares about the well-being of widows and orphans. What's more, He ordered His people to do the same.

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE REWARDED

11 "Therefore you shall love the
LORD your God, and keep His
charge, His statutes, His judg-
ments, and His commandments always.
2Know today that *I do* not *speak* with your
children, who have not known and who
have not seen the chastening of the LORD
your God, His greatness and His mighty
hand and His outstretched arm— 3His
signs and His acts which He did in the
midst of Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt,
and to all his land; 4what He did to the
army of Egypt, to their horses and their
chariots: how He made the waters of the
Red Sea overflow them as they pursued
you, and *how* the LORD has destroyed them
to this day; 5what He did for you in the
wilderness until you came to this place;
6and what He did to Dathan and Abiram
the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how
the earth opened its mouth and swallowed
them up, their households, their tents, and
all the substance that *was* in their posses-
sion, in the midst of all Israel— 7but your
eyes have seen every great act of the LORD
which He did.

8"Therefore you shall keep every com-
mandment which I command you today,
that you may be strong, and go in and
possess the land which you cross over to
possess, 9and that you may prolong *your*
days in the land which the LORD swore to
give your fathers, to them and their de-
scendants, 'a land flowing with milk and
honey.'[a] 10For the land which you go to
possess *is* not like the land of Egypt from
which you have come, where you sowed
your seed and watered *it* by foot, as a veg-
etable garden; 11but the land which you
cross over to possess *is* a land of hills and
valleys, which drinks water from the rain of
heaven, 12a land for which the LORD your
God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God
are always on it, from the beginning of the
year to the very end of the year.

13"And it shall be that if you earnestly
obey My commandments which I com-
mand you today, to love the LORD your God
and serve Him with all your heart and with
all your soul, 14then I[a] will give *you* the rain
for your land in its season, the early rain
and the latter rain, that you may gather in
your grain, your new wine, and your oil.
15And I will send grass in your fields for
your livestock, that you may eat and be
filled.' 16Take heed to yourselves, lest your

11:9 [a]Exodus 3:8 **11:14** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *He*.

heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, 17lest the LORD's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

18"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 19You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 20And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 21that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.

22"For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him—23then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves. 24Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea,[a] shall be your territory. 25No man shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you.

26"Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: 27the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; 28and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. 29Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. 30*Are* they not on the other side of the Jordan, toward the setting sun, in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh? 31For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it. 32And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today.

A PRESCRIBED PLACE OF WORSHIP

12 "These *are* the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth. 2You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. 3And you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. 4You shall not worship the LORD your God *with* such *things.*

5"But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. 6There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. 7And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you.

8"You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever *is* right in his own eyes— 9for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the LORD your God is giving you. 10But *when* you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety, 11then there will be the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you

11:24 [a]That is, the Mediterranean

vow to the LORD. 12And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who *is* within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you. 13Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; 14but in the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.

15"However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike. 16Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water. 17You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand. 18But you must eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God chooses, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who *is* within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all to which you put your hands. 19Take heed to yourself that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.

20"When the LORD your God enlarges your border as He has promised you, and you say, 'Let me eat meat,' because you long to eat meat, you may eat as much meat as your heart desires. 21If the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, then you may slaughter from your herd and from your flock which the LORD has given you, just as I have commanded you, and you may eat within your gates as much as your heart desires. 22Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them. 23Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood *is* the life; you may not eat the life with the meat. 24You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth like water. 25You shall not eat it, that it may go well with you and your children after you, when you do *what is* right in the sight of the LORD. 26Only the holy things which you have, and your vowed offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses. 27And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, and you shall eat the meat. 28Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do *what is* good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

BEWARE OF FALSE GODS

29"When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, 30take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' 31You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

Deuteronomy 12:31

The Canaanites, like many other pagan cultures in the ancient world, offered human sacrifices to their god. Often the required sacrifice was a family's firstborn child. The Canaanites believed that sacrificing a human life earned them forgiveness for their sins and the favor of their god.

32"Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.

PUNISHMENT OF APOSTATES

13 "If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, 2and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—'and let us serve them,' 3you shall not listen to the words of that prophet

MAKING IT REAL // DEUTERONOMY 13:6–9

Don't Believe the Lies Often, people who experiment with other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, New Age, and so on) lack the spiritual maturity needed to recognize false and dangerous teaching. Those who don't know God's Word well and don't have a strong faith can easily become confused, and the deception of other religions can mess with their minds. This can be especially true when those other religions claim to believe in Jesus or say His teachings are good.

Spiritual maturity comes from consistently walking with the Lord, communicating with Him, growing in the knowledge of Him and of His Word, and allowing Jesus to change you from the inside out—making you into the person He wants you to be. Some people have fallen into false religions because they weren't mature enough to know they were being lied to and misled.

Religions that sound good on the surface, but don't lead followers to Jesus, are used by Satan (the enemy of God) to keep people from finding the salvation only Jesus can give. Satan is the master of lies. He tries to convince people that other religions are right and good. He'll say and do anything to keep people from the Lord. Do not experiment with other religions. Don't let Satan deceive you. (See also: Ex. 20:3; 1 Kin. 9:6–9; Jer. 35:15; John 14:6.)

Words to Live By

Serve: The Hebrew word translated in Deuteronomy 13:6 as "serve" is *abad* (awbad'). It means "to work as a servant." It is a word often used to designate an act of worship or obedience toward God. God is the only One worthy of your worship or obedience. As Jesus said in Matthew 4:10: "You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve."

or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. 5But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn *you* away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.

6"If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers, 7of the gods of the people which *are* all around you, near to you or far off from you, from *one* end of the earth to the *other* end of the earth, 8you shall not consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him; 9but you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. 10And you shall stone him with stones until he dies, because he sought to entice you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 11So all Israel shall hear and fear, and not again do such wickedness as this among you.

12"If you hear someone in one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying, 13'Corrupt men have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying, "Let us go and serve other gods"'—which you have not known—14then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently. And *if it is*

indeed true *and* certain *that* such an abomination was committed among you, 15you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it, all that is in it and its livestock—with the edge of the sword. 16And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the LORD your God. It shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again. 17So none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His anger and show you mercy, have compassion on you and multiply you, just as He swore to your fathers, 18because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you today, to do *what is* right in the eyes of the LORD your God.

IMPROPER MOURNING

14 "You *are* the children of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave the front of your head for the dead. 2For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who *are* on the face of the earth.

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN MEAT

3"You shall not eat any detestable thing. 4These *are* the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, 5the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the mountain goat,[a] the antelope, and the mountain sheep. 6And you may eat every animal with cloven hooves, having the hoof split into two parts, *and that* chews the cud, among the animals. 7Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves, you shall not eat, *such as* these: the camel, the hare, and the rock hyrax; for they chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves; they *are* unclean for you. 8Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet *does* not *chew* the cud; you shall not eat their flesh or touch their dead carcasses.

9"These you may eat of all that *are* in the waters: you may eat all that have fins and scales. 10And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it *is* unclean for you.

11"All clean birds you may eat. 12But these you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, 13the red kite, the falcon, and the kite after their kinds; 14every raven after its kind; 15the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after their kinds; 16the little owl, the screech owl, the white owl, 17the jackdaw, the carrion vulture, the fisher owl, 18the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe and the bat.

19"Also every creeping thing that flies is unclean for you; they shall not be eaten.

20"You may eat all clean birds.

21"You shall not eat anything that dies *of itself;* you may give it to the alien who *is* within your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God.

"You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

TITHING PRINCIPLES

22"You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. 23And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. 24But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry *the tithe, or* if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, 25then you shall exchange *it* for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. 26And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household. 27You shall not forsake the Levite who *is* within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you.

28"At the end of *every* third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store *it* up within your gates. 29And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow

14:5 [a]Or *addax*

MAKING IT REAL // DEUTERONOMY 14:2

Chosen You know what it feels like to be chosen. Remember in grade school when your gym class picked teams for sports? Remember when you were chosen pretty close to the beginning? Or maybe you were the last one chosen and you remember that sting. Regardless of what happened to you then, God chose you. And He chose you first. He picked you for just one reason—He loves you. He's crazy about you. He wants you on His team because He doesn't want to be apart from you.

That doesn't mean God hasn't chosen anyone else or that He loves them any less than you. What it means is that God's love is so powerful and so perfect, He can love you exactly the same as if you were the only person in the world. He loves you so much, He considers you His own treasure. And because of Jesus, He sees you as holy—absolutely perfect in His sight. What an awesome thing that the God who created everything and is totally perfect in every way actually considers you a perfect treasure. (See also: Ex. 22:31; Is. 49:7; 1 Pet. 2:9.)

Words to Live By

Holy: The word translated as "holy" in Deuteronomy 14:2 is the Hebrew word *qa-dosh* (kaw-doshe'). It means "sacred and pure." It describes something set apart for holy purposes. To be holy is to be completely separated from everything that is against God's will. We can only know God's will by reading the Bible and listening closely as His Spirit guides us and teaches us.

who *are* within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

DEBTS CANCELED EVERY SEVEN YEARS

15 "At the end of *every* seven years you shall grant a release *of debts.* 2And this *is* the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent *anything* to his neighbor shall release *it;* he shall not require *it* of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the LORD's release. 3Of a foreigner you may require *it;* but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother, 4except when there may be no poor among you; for the LORD will greatly bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess *as* an inheritance— 5only if you carefully obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today. 6For the LORD your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you.

GENEROSITY TO THE POOR

7"If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, 8but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. 9Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the LORD against you, and it become sin among you. 10You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. 11For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'

THE LAW CONCERNING BONDSERVANTS

12"If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. 13And when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; 14you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. *From what* the LORD your God has blessed you with, you shall give to him. 15You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today. 16And if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your house, since he prospers with you, 17then you shall take an awl and thrust *it* through his ear to the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also to your female servant you shall do likewise. 18It shall not seem hard to you when you send him away free from you; for he has been worth a double hired servant in serving you six years. Then the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do.

> ***Deuteronomy 15:12***
> Israelites were allowed to keep other Israelites as slaves, but only for six years. God's law required that all slaves be set free in the seventh year. The law was intended to prevent a class system from developing among the Israelites.

THE LAW CONCERNING FIRSTBORN ANIMALS

19"All the firstborn males that come from your herd and your flock you shall sanctify to the LORD your God; you shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. 20You and your household shall eat *it* before the LORD your God year by year in the place which the LORD chooses. 21But if there is a defect in it, *if it is* lame or blind *or has* any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. 22You may eat it within your gates; the unclean and the clean *person* alike *may eat it,* as *if it were* a gazelle or a deer. 23Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it on the ground like water.

THE PASSOVER REVIEWED

16 "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. 2Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD chooses to put His name. 3You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, *that is,* the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. 4And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall *any* of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until morning.

5"You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you; 6but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight, at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt. 7And you shall roast and eat *it* in the place which the LORD your God chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. 8Six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there *shall be* a sacred assembly to the LORD your God. You shall do no work *on it.*

THE FEAST OF WEEKS REVIEWED

9"You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from *the time* you begin *to put* the sickle to the grain. 10Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you. 11You shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who *is* within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* among you, at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. 12And you shall remember

that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES REVIEWED

13"You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. 14And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who *are* within your gates. 15Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.

16"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. 17Every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

JUSTICE MUST BE ADMINISTERED

18"You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment. 19You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. 20You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

21"You shall not plant for yourself any tree, as a wooden image, near the altar which you build for yourself to the LORD your God. 22You shall not set up a *sacred* pillar, which the LORD your God hates.

17 "You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God a bull or sheep which has any blemish *or* defect, for that *is* an abomination to the LORD your God.

2"If there is found among you, within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you, a man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight of the LORD your God, in transgressing His covenant, 3who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, 4and it is told you, and you hear *of it,* then you shall inquire diligently. And if *it is* indeed true *and* certain that such an abomination has been committed in Israel, 5then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing, and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones. 6Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. 7The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

> ***Deuteronomy 17:5–7***
> Stoning was the ancient equivalent of the electric chair or lethal injection. It was the death penalty handed down to convicted murderers. But there was no death row in ancient Israel. When a person was convicted, he was immediately taken outside the camp and stoned to death.

8"If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses. 9And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge *there* in those days, and inquire *of them;* they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment. 10You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which the LORD chooses. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you. 11According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you, according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you. 12Now

the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. 13And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING KINGS

14"When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that *are* around me,' 15you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; *one* from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who *is* not your brother. 16But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' 17Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

18"Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from *the one* before the priests, the Levites. 19And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, 20that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment *to* the right hand or *to* the left, and that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

THE PORTION OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES

18 "The priests, the Levites—all the tribe of Levi—shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and His portion. 2Therefore they shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the LORD is their inheritance, as He said to them.

3"And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether *it is* bull or sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach. 4The firstfruits of your grain and your new wine and your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him. 5For the LORD your God has chosen him out of all your tribes to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons forever.

6"So if a Levite comes from any of your gates, from where he dwells among all Israel, and comes with all the desire of his mind to the place which the LORD chooses, 7then he may serve in the name of the LORD his God as all his brethren the Levites *do,* who stand there before the LORD. 8They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what comes from the sale of his inheritance.

> ***Deuteronomy 18:10, 11***
> The Israelites had some bad neighbors, most of whom practiced witchcraft and magic. Witchcraft involved trying to see the future with the help of a pagan god. Magic involved trying to expand one's knowledge through mind-altering drugs. All forms of witchcraft, magic, and fortune-telling were and are strictly forbidden by God.

AVOID WICKED CUSTOMS

9"When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. 10There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or one* who practices witchcraft, *or* a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. 13You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. 14For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.

A NEW PROPHET LIKE MOSES

15"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from

your brethren. Him you shall hear, [16]according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'

[17]"And the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. [18]I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. [19]And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him. [20]But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' [21]And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'— [22]when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

CULT

How does God feel about people who wrongly claim to be speaking for Him?

Deuteronomy 18:20–22

THREE CITIES OF REFUGE

19 "When the LORD your God has cut off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, [2]you shall separate three cities for yourself in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess. [3]You shall prepare roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, that any manslayer may flee there.

[4]"And this *is* the case of the manslayer who flees there, that he may live: Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally, not having hated him in time past— [5]as when *a man* goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—he shall flee to one of these cities and live; [6]lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and kill him, though he *was* not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past. [7]Therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall separate three cities for yourself.'

[8]"Now if the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as He swore to your fathers, and gives you the land which He promised to give to your fathers, [9]and if you keep all these commandments and do them, which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to walk always in His ways, then you shall add three more cities for yourself besides these three, [10]lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance, and *thus* guilt of bloodshed be upon you.

[11]"But if anyone hates his neighbor, lies in wait for him, rises against him and strikes him mortally, so that he dies, and he flees to one of these cities, [12]then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and deliver him over to the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. [13]Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall put away *the guilt of* innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with you.

PROPERTY BOUNDARIES

[14]"You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

THE LAW CONCERNING WITNESSES

[15]"One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. [16]If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, [17]then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. [18]And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, *if* the witness *is* a false witness, who

has testified falsely against his brother,
19then you shall do to him as he thought to
have done to his brother; so you shall put
away the evil from among you. 20And those
who remain shall hear and fear, and here-
after they shall not again commit such evil
among you. 21Your eye shall not pity: life
shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth,
hand for hand, foot for foot.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING WARFARE

20 "When you go out to battle
against your enemies, and see
horses and chariots *and* people
more numerous than you, do not be afraid
of them; for the LORD your God *is* with you,
who brought you up from the land of Egypt.
2So it shall be, when you are on the verge of
battle, that the priest shall approach and
speak to the people. 3And he shall say to
them, 'Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the
verge of battle with your enemies. Do not
let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and
do not tremble or be terrified because of
them; 4for the LORD your God *is* He who
goes with you, to fight for you against your
enemies, to save you.'

5"Then the officers shall speak to the
people, saying: 'What man *is there* who has
built a new house and has not dedicated it?
Let him go and return to his house, lest he
die in the battle and another man dedicate
it. 6Also what man *is there* who has planted
a vineyard and has not eaten of it? Let him
go and return to his house, lest he die in the
battle and another man eat of it. 7And what
man *is there* who is betrothed to a woman
and has not married her? Let him go and
return to his house, lest he die in the battle
and another man marry her.'

8"The officers shall speak further to the
people, and say, 'What man *is there who is*
fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and
return to his house, lest the heart of his
brethren faint[a] like his heart.' 9And so it
shall be, when the officers have finished
speaking to the people, that they shall
make captains of the armies to lead the
people.

10"When you go near a city to fight
against it, then proclaim an offer of peace
to it. 11And it shall be that if they accept
your offer of peace, and open to you, then
all the people *who are* found in it shall be
placed under tribute to you, and serve you.
12Now if *the city* will not make peace with
you, but makes war against you, then you
shall besiege it. 13And when the LORD your
God delivers it into your hands, you shall
strike every male in it with the edge of the
sword. 14But the women, the little ones,
the livestock, and all that is in the city, all
its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself; and
you shall eat the enemies' plunder which
the LORD your God gives you. 15Thus you
shall do to all the cities *which are* very far
from you, which *are* not of the cities of
these nations.

16"But of the cities of these peoples which
the LORD your God gives you *as* an inheri-
tance, you shall let nothing that breathes
remain alive, 17but you shall utterly destroy
them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the
Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite
and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God
has commanded you, 18lest they teach you
to do according to all their abominations
which they have done for their gods, and
you sin against the LORD your God.

19"When you besiege a city for a long
time, while making war against it to take it,
you shall not destroy its trees by wielding
an ax against them; if you can eat of them,
do not cut them down to use in the siege,
for the tree of the field *is* man's *food.* 20Only
the trees which you know *are* not trees
for food you may destroy and cut down,
to build siegeworks against the city that
makes war with you, until it is subdued.

THE LAW CONCERNING UNSOLVED MURDER

21 "If *anyone* is found slain, lying
in the field in the land which
the LORD your God is giving you
to possess, *and* it is not known who killed
him, 2then your elders and your judges
shall go out and measure *the distance* from
the slain man to the surrounding cities.
3And it shall be *that* the elders of the city
nearest to the slain man will take a heifer
which has not been worked *and* which
has not pulled with a yoke. 4The elders of
that city shall bring the heifer down to a
valley with flowing water, which is neither

20:8 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *lest he make his brother's heart faint.*

plowed nor sown, and they shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley. 5Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near, for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister to Him and to bless in the name of the LORD; by their word every controversy and every assault shall be *settled.* 6And all the elders of that city nearest to the slain *man* shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley. 7Then they shall answer and say, 'Our hands have not shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen *it.* 8Provide atonement, O LORD, for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, and do not lay innocent blood to the charge of Your people Israel.' And atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the blood. 9So you shall put away the *guilt of* innocent blood from among you when you do *what is* right in the sight of the LORD.

FEMALE CAPTIVES

10"When you go out to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God delivers them into your hand, and you take them captive, 11and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your wife, 12then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails. 13She shall put off the clothes of her captivity, remain in your house, and mourn her father and her mother a full month; after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. 14And it shall be, if you have no delight in her, then you shall set her free, but you certainly shall not sell her for money; you shall not treat her brutally, because you have humbled her.

FIRSTBORN INHERITANCE RIGHTS

15"If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and they have borne him children, *both* the loved and the unloved, and *if* the firstborn son is of her who is unloved, 16then it shall be, on the day he bequeaths his possessions to his sons, *that* he must not bestow firstborn status on the son of the loved wife in preference to the son of the unloved, the *true* firstborn. 17But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife *as* the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he *is* the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn *is* his.

THE REBELLIOUS SON

18"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and *who,* when they have chastened him, will not heed them, 19then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. 20And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' 21Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.

MISCELLANEOUS LAWS

22"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance; for he who is hanged *is* accursed of God.

> ***Deuteronomy 21:22, 23***
> The hanging of a dead body on a tree was a warning to other would-be criminals. Some cultures were known to leave dead bodies hanging for several days. The Israelites were forbidden by God to leave a body hanging overnight.

22 "You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray, and hide yourself from them; you shall certainly bring them back to your brother. 2And if your brother *is* not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring it to your own house, and it shall remain with you until your brother seeks it; then you shall restore it to him. 3You shall do the same with his donkey, and so shall you do with his garment; with any lost thing of your brother's, which he has lost and you have found, you shall do likewise; you must not hide yourself.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // DEUTERONOMY 22:5

God Knows Best God made two types of people—men and women. Not exactly a revelation, right? But it seems a lot of people have tried to totally disregard that there is a difference between the two. God made us with different body shapes, different emotional makeups, and different strengths and weaknesses. One is not better than the other; they are simply different. God considers both sexes good and right. But He does not consider them interchangeable.

God is disgusted when someone tries to go against His design and pretend to be what they are not. God has a plan and a purpose for both men and women, and it is sinful when people try to act like the opposite of what God made them to be. Cross-dressing is like shouting, "I know more than God does! I should have been born this way! God blew it when He made me!"

Most often when people pretend to be the opposite sex, they are confused about what is right. They may feel rejected, angry, or hurt by the things that have happened to them in life. They don't realize they are offending God or that they need His love. Read Deuteronomy 22:5 carefully. God does not hate a cross-dresser. God hates cross-dressing. He loves every person on this earth. It is sin that He cannot stand. Be glad that God made you the way you are. He has a plan for you as a strong, godly man or woman. He makes no mistakes. (See also: Gen. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:9.)

Words to Live By

Abomination: The word translated in Deuteronomy 22:5 as "abomination" is *towebah* (to-ay-baw'). It means "something detestable, disgusting, or repulsive." Whenever this word is used in reference to God, it describes things that are totally unholy, such as murder or idolatry. But, just as God does not hate people but does hate their sin, we must also learn to separate the sin from the sinner. We must love them, even when their actions are sinful.

4"You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift *them* up again.

5"A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so *are* an abomination to the LORD your God.

6"If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; 7you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, that it may be well with you and *that* you may prolong *your* days.

8"When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it.

9"You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled.

10"You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

11"You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, *such as* wool and linen mixed together.

12"You shall make tassels on the four corners of the clothing with which you cover *yourself.*

LAWS OF SEXUAL MORALITY

13"If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and detests her, 14and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, 'I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she *was* not a virgin,' 15then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring

out *the evidence of* the young woman's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. 16And the young woman's father shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he detests her. 17Now he has charged her with shameful conduct, saying, "I found your daughter *was* not a virgin," and yet these *are the evidences of* my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him; 19and they shall fine him one hundred *shekels* of silver and give *them* to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days.

20"But if the thing is true, *and evidences of* virginity are not found for the young woman, 21then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

22"If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall die—the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall put away the evil from Israel.

23"If a young woman *who is* a virgin is betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her, 24then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he humbled his neighbor's wife; so you shall put away the evil from among you.

25"But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. 26But you shall do nothing to the young woman; *there is* in the young woman no sin *deserving* of death, for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so *is* this matter. 27For he found her in the countryside, *and* the betrothed young woman cried out, but *there was* no one to save her.

28"If a man finds a young woman *who is* a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, 29then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.

30"A man shall not take his father's wife, nor uncover his father's bed.

THOSE EXCLUDED FROM THE CONGREGATION

23 "He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the LORD.

2"One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

3"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, 4because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia,[a] to curse you. 5Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. 6You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever.

7"You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he *is* your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land. 8The children of the third generation born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

CLEANLINESS OF THE CAMPSITE

9"When the army goes out against your enemies, then keep yourself from every wicked thing. 10If there is any man among you who becomes unclean by some occurrence in the night, then he shall go outside the camp; he shall not come inside the camp. 11But it shall be, when evening comes, that he shall wash with water; and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp.

12"Also you shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out; 13and you shall have an implement among your

23:4 [a]Hebrew *Aram Naharaim*

equipment, and when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse. 14For the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you.

MISCELLANEOUS LAWS

15"You shall not give back to his master the slave who has escaped from his master to you. 16He may dwell with you in your midst, in the place which he chooses within one of your gates, where it seems best to him; you shall not oppress him.

Deuteronomy 23:15

Running away was one of the worst crimes a slave could commit. Most cultures allowed masters to kill their runaway slaves. You can see God's respect for human life in His command to the Israelites to protect runaway slaves.

17"There shall be no *ritual* harlot[a] of the daughters of Israel, or a perverted[b] one of the sons of Israel. 18You shall not bring the wages of a harlot or the price of a dog to the house of the LORD your God for any vowed offering, for both of these *are* an abomination to the LORD your God.

19"You shall not charge interest to your brother—interest on money *or* food *or* anything that is lent out at interest. 20To a foreigner you may charge interest, but to your brother you shall not charge interest, that the LORD your God may bless you in all to which you set your hand in the land which you are entering to possess.

21"When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you. 22But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you. 23That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.

24"When you come into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure, but you shall not put *any* in your container. 25When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain.

LAW CONCERNING DIVORCE

24 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, 2when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's *wife,* 3*if* the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, 4*then* her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that *is* an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance.

MISCELLANEOUS LAWS

5"When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken.

6"No man shall take the lower or the upper millstone in pledge, for he takes *one's* living in pledge.

7"If a man is found kidnapping any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and mistreats him or sells him, then that kidnapper shall die; and you shall put away the evil from among you.

8"Take heed in an outbreak of leprosy, that you carefully observe and do according to all that the priests, the Levites, shall teach you; just as I commanded them, *so* you shall be careful to do. 9Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way when you came out of Egypt!

10"When you lend your brother anything, you shall not go into his house to get

23:17 [a]Hebrew *qedeshah,* feminine of *qadesh* (see note *b*) [b]Hebrew *qadesh,* that is, one practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals

his pledge. 11You shall stand outside, and
the man to whom you lend shall bring the
pledge out to you. 12And if the man *is* poor,
you shall not keep his pledge overnight.
13You shall in any case return the pledge to
him again when the sun goes down, that
he may sleep in his own garment and bless
you; and it shall be righteousness to you
before the LORD your God.

14"You shall not oppress a hired servant
who is poor and needy, *whether* one of your
brethren or one of the aliens who *is* in your
land within your gates. 15Each day you
shall give *him* his wages, and not let the sun
go down on it, for he *is* poor and has set his
heart on it; lest he cry out against you to
the LORD, and it be sin to you.

16"Fathers shall not be put to death for
their children, nor shall children be put to
death for *their* fathers; a person shall be put
to death for his own sin.

17"You shall not pervert justice due the
stranger or the fatherless, nor take a wid-
ow's garment as a pledge. 18But you shall
remember that you were a slave in Egypt,
and the LORD your God redeemed you
from there; therefore I command you to do
this thing.

19"When you reap your harvest in your
field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you
shall not go back to get it; it shall be for
the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,
that the LORD your God may bless you in all
the work of your hands. 20When you beat
your olive trees, you shall not go over the
boughs again; it shall be for the stranger,
the fatherless, and the widow. 21When you
gather the grapes of your vineyard, you
shall not glean *it* afterward; it shall be for
the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.
22And you shall remember that you were a
slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I com-
mand you to do this thing.

25 "If there is a dispute between
men, and they come to court,
that *the judges* may judge
them, and they justify the righteous and
condemn the wicked, 2then it shall be, if
the wicked man deserves to be beaten,
that the judge will cause him to lie down
and be beaten in his presence, accord-
ing to his guilt, with a certain number of
blows. 3Forty blows he may give him *and*
no more, lest he should exceed this and
beat him with many blows above these,
and your brother be humiliated in your
sight.

Deuteronomy 25:3

Forty lashes with a whip was the maximum number God allowed as punishment for a crime. The Israelites were so careful not to exceed that number that they stopped at thirty-nine lashes, just in case they made a mistake in counting.

4"You shall not muzzle an ox while it
treads out *the grain.*

Deuteronomy 25:4

Wheat and other grains had to be crushed so that the grain could be separated from the leaves and stems of the plant. One of the best crushing methods was to spread the grain on the ground and have an ox pull a heavy piece of wood over it. As a reward for its hard work, the ox's mouth was left unmuzzled so that the animal could eat some of the grain while it worked.

MARRIAGE DUTY OF THE SURVIVING BROTHER

5"If brothers dwell together, and one of
them dies and has no son, the widow of
the dead man shall not be *married* to a
stranger outside *the family;* her husband's
brother shall go in to her, take her as his
wife, and perform the duty of a husband's
brother to her. 6And it shall be *that* the first-
born son which she bears will succeed to
the name of his dead brother, that his name
may not be blotted out of Israel. 7But if the
man does not want to take his brother's
wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the
gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's
brother refuses to raise up a name to his
brother in Israel; he will not perform the
duty of my husband's brother.' 8Then the
elders of his city shall call him and speak to
him. But *if* he stands firm and says, 'I do not
want to take her,' 9then his brother's wife
shall come to him in the presence of the el-
ders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit

in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.' 10And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal removed.'

MISCELLANEOUS LAWS

11"If *two* men fight together, and the wife of one draws near to rescue her husband from the hand of the one attacking him, and puts out her hand and seizes him by the genitals, 12then you shall cut off her hand; your eye shall not pity *her.*

13"You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. 14You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. 15You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. 16For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, *are* an abomination to the LORD your God.

DESTROY THE AMALEKITES

17"Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, 18how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you *were* tired and weary; and he did not fear God. 19Therefore it shall be, when the LORD your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess *as* an inheritance, *that* you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.

OFFERINGS OF FIRSTFRUITS AND TITHES

26 "And it shall be, when you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, 2that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and put *it* in a basket and go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. 3And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days, and say to him, 'I declare today to the LORD your[a] God that I have come to the country which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.'

4"Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God. 5And you shall answer and say before the LORD your God: 'My father *was* a Syrian,[a] about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. 6But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. 7Then we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. 8So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. 9He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, "a land flowing with milk and honey";[a] 10and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me.'

"Then you shall set it before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God. 11So you shall rejoice in every good *thing* which the LORD your God has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who *is* among you.

12"When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year—the year of tithing—and have given *it* to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, 13then you shall say before the LORD your God: 'I have removed the holy *tithe* from *my* house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten *them.* 14I have not eaten any of it when in mourning, nor have I removed *any* of it for an unclean *use,* nor given *any* of it for the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me. 15Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land which You have given us, just

26:3 [a]Septuagint reads *my.* **26:5** [a]Or *Aramean*
26:9 [a]Exodus 3:8

as You swore to our fathers, "a land flowing with milk and honey."'[a]

A SPECIAL PEOPLE OF GOD

16"This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments; therefore you shall be careful to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. 17Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice. 18Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that *you* should keep all His commandments, 19and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken."

OBEDIENCE
What are God's children called to do?
Deuteronomy 26:18

THE LAW INSCRIBED ON STONES

27 Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: "Keep all the commandments which I command you today. 2And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime. 3You shall write on them all the words of this law, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you, 'a land flowing with milk and honey,'[a] just as the LORD God of your fathers promised you. 4Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, *that* on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime. 5And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron *tool* on them. 6You shall build with whole stones the altar of the LORD your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. 7You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before the LORD your God. 8And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law."

9Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, "Take heed and listen, O Israel: This day you have become the people of the LORD your God. 10Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today."

BELIEF
What should accompany belief in God?
Deuteronomy 27:9, 10

CURSES PRONOUNCED FROM MOUNT EBAL

11And Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying, 12"These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; 13and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

14"And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel: 15'Cursed *is* the one who makes a carved or molded image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets *it* up in secret.'

"And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen!'

16'Cursed *is* the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

17'Cursed *is* the one who moves his neighbor's landmark.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

18'Cursed *is* the one who makes the blind to wander off the road.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

19'Cursed *is* the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

20'Cursed *is* the one who lies with his

26:15 [a]Exodus 3:8 **27:3** [a]Exodus 3:8

father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's bed.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

21'Cursed *is* the one who lies with any kind of animal.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

22'Cursed *is* the one who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

23'Cursed *is* the one who lies with his mother-in-law.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

24'Cursed *is* the one who attacks his neighbor secretly.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

25'Cursed *is* the one who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

26'Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law by observing them.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

BLESSINGS ON OBEDIENCE

28 "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. 2And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:

3"Blessed *shall* you *be* in the city, and blessed *shall* you *be* in the country.

4"Blessed *shall be* the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

5"Blessed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.

6"Blessed *shall* you *be* when you come in, and blessed *shall* you *be* when you go out.

7"The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.

8"The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

9"The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. 10Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. 11And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. 12The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. 13And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe *them.* 14So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, *to* the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

CURSES ON DISOBEDIENCE

15"But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

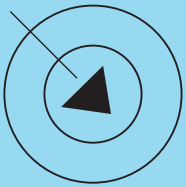
16"Cursed *shall* you *be* in the city, and cursed *shall* you *be* in the country.

17"Cursed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.

18"Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

19"Cursed *shall* you *be* when you come in, and cursed *shall* you *be* when you go out.

20"The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me. 21The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. 22The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew;



PROMISE

God promises to make you successful in your work.

"Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out" (Deut. 28:6).

One of the blessings of obedience is that God will make you successful in your work (Deut. 28:3–6). But be careful not to confuse God's kind of success with the world's version of success. The world deceives us into believing that we're successful if we wear the right clothes, drive an expensive car, make the varsity team, get the right prom date, and get into a top college—when we achieve the things the world considers important. God says we are successful when we are pleasing to Him (2 Cor. 5:9). You've been successful to God today if you've brought glory to Him. It's that simple. You don't have to worry or wonder about how to succeed in life. God will work in your life and make you successful in His eyes, and that is true success.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Deuteronomy 2:7; 15:10; 1 Chronicles 28:20; Nehemiah 2:20; Psalm 1:3

they shall pursue you until you perish.
23And your heavens which *are* over your
head shall be bronze, and the earth which
is under you *shall be* iron. 24The LORD will
change the rain of your land to powder and
dust; from the heaven it shall come down
on you until you are destroyed.

25"The LORD will cause you to be de-
feated before your enemies; you shall go
out one way against them and flee seven
ways before them; and you shall become
troublesome to all the kingdoms of the
earth. 26Your carcasses shall be food for
all the birds of the air and the beasts of
the earth, and no one shall frighten *them*
away. 27The LORD will strike you with the
boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab,
and with the itch, from which you cannot
be healed. 28The LORD will strike you with
madness and blindness and confusion of
heart. 29And you shall grope at noonday, as
a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall
not prosper in your ways; you shall be only
oppressed and plundered continually, and
no one shall save *you.*

30"You shall betroth a wife, but another
man shall lie with her; you shall build a
house, but you shall not dwell in it; you
shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather
its grapes. 31Your ox *shall be* slaughtered
before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it;
your donkey *shall be* violently taken away
from before you, and shall not be restored
to you; your sheep *shall be* given to your en-
emies, and you shall have no one to rescue
them. 32Your sons and your daughters *shall
be* given to another people, and your eyes
shall look and fail *with longing* for them all
day long; and *there shall be* no strength in
your hand. 33A nation whom you have not
known shall eat the fruit of your land and
the produce of your labor, and you shall be
only oppressed and crushed continually.
34So you shall be driven mad because of
the sight which your eyes see. 35The LORD
will strike you in the knees and on the legs
with severe boils which cannot be healed,
and from the sole of your foot to the top of
your head.

36"The LORD will bring you and the king
whom you set over you to a nation which
neither you nor your fathers have known,
and there you shall serve other gods—
wood and stone. 37And you shall become
an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword
among all nations where the LORD will
drive you.

38"You shall carry much seed out to the
field but gather little in, for the locust shall
consume it. 39You shall plant vineyards
and tend *them,* but you shall neither drink
of the wine nor gather the *grapes;* for the

worms shall eat them. 40You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint *yourself* with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. 41You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity. 42Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land.

43"The alien who *is* among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. 44He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.

45"Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. 46And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever.

47"Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, 48therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. 49The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, 50a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. 51And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, *or* the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you.

52"They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you. 53You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you. 54The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind, 55so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates. 56The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse[a] to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter, 57her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

58"If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, 59then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. 60Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. 61Also every sickness and every plague, which *is* not written in this Book of the Law, will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed. 62You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God. 63And it shall be, *that* just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess.

64"Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone. 65And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. 66Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. 67In the morning

28:56 [a]Literally *her eye shall be evil toward*

you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see.

68"And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, 'You shall never see it again.' And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy *you*."

THE COVENANT RENEWED IN MOAB

29 These *are* the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

2Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land— 3the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders. 4Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this *very* day. 5And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet. 6You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or *similar* drink, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God. 7And when you came to this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out against us to battle, and we conquered them. 8We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh. 9Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.

10"All of you stand today before the LORD your God: your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel, 11your little ones and your wives— also the stranger who *is* in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water— 12that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today, 13that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and *that* He may be God to you, just as He has spoken to you, and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

14"I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone, 15but with *him* who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with *him* who *is* not here with us today 16(for you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by, 17and you saw their abominations and their idols which *were* among them—wood and stone and silver and gold); 18so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood; 19and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates[a] of my heart'—as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.

20"The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven. 21And the LORD would separate him from all the tribes of Israel for adversity, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law, 22so that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the LORD has laid on it:

23"The whole land *is* brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in His anger and His wrath.' 24"All nations would say, 'Why has the LORD done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?' 25Then *people* would say: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them

29:19 [a]Or *stubbornness*

out of the land of Egypt; 26for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them. 27Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against this land, to bring on it every curse that is written in this book. 28And the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* this day.'

29"The secret *things belong* to the LORD our God, but those *things which are* revealed *belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

THE BLESSING OF RETURNING TO GOD

30 "Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, 2and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. 4If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. 5Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

7"Also the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. 8And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today. 9The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, 10if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, *and* if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

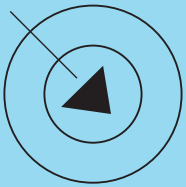
THE CHOICE OF LIFE OR DEATH

11"For this commandment which I command you today *is* not *too* mysterious for you, nor *is* it far off. 12It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 13Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 14But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

15"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. 17But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, 18I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. 19I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; 20that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

JOSHUA THE NEW LEADER OF ISRAEL

31 Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. 2And he said to them: "I *am* one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in. Also the LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross over



PROMISE

God promises never to leave or forsake you.

"And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed" (Deut. 31:8).

When you're about to go into unfamiliar territory—a new school, your first date, standing up for yourself for the first time—you probably feel a little shaky. Everyone understands that new situations can be a little scary. But if God told the Israelites not to be afraid of their enemies, you can bet He doesn't want you to be afraid of anything either. He certainly doesn't want you to be afraid of something just because you're not used to it.

In these days of online, long-distance "friending" and conversations that take place through texted symbols and abbreviations taking the place of real, face-to-face relationships, it's easy to think that no one will ever be truly committed to you. But God will. He is with you all the time. In the good times and the bad, in the familiar moments and the new experiences, God is totally with you. No matter what you do or where you go, He is there. He doesn't take a break, and He will never block your comments or "unfriend" you. When God says He will not leave you nor forsake you, He is telling you He is with you all the time. You are never alone.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Joshua 1:5; Psalm 139:7–10; Matthew 28:19, 20; Hebrews 13:5

this Jordan.' 3The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the LORD has said. 4And the LORD will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and their land, when He destroyed them. 5The LORD will give them over to you, that you may do to them according to every commandment which I have commanded you. 6Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

7Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. 8And the LORD, He *is* the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."

Deuteronomy 31:7

Joshua was born as a slave in Egypt. He saw God's protection of His people through all the plagues God brought on the Egyptians. He had seen the land of Canaan—the Promised Land, so he knew what the Lord had waiting for the Israelites. Because of his faithfulness in service to Moses and to God, Joshua was chosen by God as the leader of Israel.

THE LAW TO BE READ EVERY SEVEN YEARS

9So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. 10And Moses commanded them, saying: "At the end of *every* seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, 11when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. 12Gather the people



LIFE APP

School / Deuteronomy 31:8

School is a fact of life. From elementary school to high school, we are students; no ifs, ands, or buts. It can be a wonderful experience for some. For others, it can be like torture. Most of us fall somewhere in between—some days are good ones, others make us want to hide in our rooms until the world goes away.

The problem with school is that we are surrounded by people who are still learning and growing into the people they will become. In the early grades, no one really cares—life is all about just being a kid. But in high school, things get a little more serious. We find ourselves growing up and more is expected from us. We start wondering what the future holds and what kind of person we will be as an adult. The pressure to find our own path can get a bit scary.

No matter how well-adjusted others may seem, everyone is struggling to find their identity and purpose. The homecoming queen and the computer nerd are both trying to discover themselves. Unfortunately, the search for identity can cause some people to begin to doubt their own worth. When that happens, they may put others down in order to feel better about themselves. The more insecure the person, the more likely they are to hurt others.

If you find yourself the victim of an insecure person's attack, it can be hard to remember they are really in pain themselves. It can seem as if they are enemies determined to destroy you. Instead of falling into the trap of anger or hiding away from them, try to realize they are just a person with pain of their own. Above all, remember that God goes with you through all your days. When the world turns against you, you can turn to Him. He will always be there to hold you when you hurt and help you make it through today. You will find your true identity and purpose only through Him.

together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who *is* within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, 13and *that* their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."

PREDICTION OF ISRAEL'S REBELLION

14Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him."

So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting. 15Now the LORD appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle.

16And the LORD said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go *to be* among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. 17Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God *is* not among us?' 18And I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.

19"Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel. 20When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant. 21Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants, for I know the inclination of their behavior today, even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore *to give them.*"

22Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel. 23Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you."

24So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, 25that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying: 26"Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; 27for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. *If* today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death? 28Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. 29For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands."

THE SONG OF MOSES

30Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended:

32 "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak;
And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.
2Let my teaching drop as the rain,
My speech distill as the dew,
As raindrops on the tender herb,
And as showers on the grass.
3For I proclaim the name of the LORD:
Ascribe greatness to our God.
4*He is* the Rock, His work *is* perfect;
For all His ways *are* justice,
A God of truth and without injustice;
Righteous and upright *is* He.

5 "They have corrupted themselves;
They are not His children,
Because of their blemish:
A perverse and crooked generation.
6 Do you thus deal with the LORD,
O foolish and unwise people?
Is He not your Father, *who* bought you?
Has He not made you and established you?

7 "Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many generations.
Ask your father, and he will show you;
Your elders, and they will tell you:
8 When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations,
When He separated the sons of Adam,
He set the boundaries of the peoples
According to the number of the children of Israel.
9 For the LORD's portion *is* His people;
Jacob *is* the place of His inheritance.

10 "He found him in a desert land
And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness;
He encircled him, He instructed him,
He kept him as the apple of His eye.
11 As an eagle stirs up its nest,
Hovers over its young,
Spreading out its wings, taking them up,
Carrying them on its wings,

Deuteronomy 32:11
If a young eagle falls out of its nest, the adult swoops down and catches the falling bird on its back, keeping the little one from falling to its death.

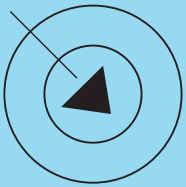
12 *So* the LORD alone led him,
And *there was* no foreign god with him.

13 "He made him ride in the heights of the earth,
That he might eat the produce of the fields;
He made him draw honey from the rock,
And oil from the flinty rock;
14 Curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock,
With fat of lambs;
And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats,
With the choicest wheat;
And you drank wine, the blood of the grapes.

15 "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked;
You grew fat, you grew thick,
You are obese!
Then he forsook God *who* made him,
And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.
16 They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign *gods;*
With abominations they provoked Him to anger.
17 They sacrificed to demons, not to God,
To gods they did not know,
To new *gods,* new arrivals
That your fathers did not fear.
18 Of the Rock *who* begot you, you are unmindful,
And have forgotten the God who fathered you.

19 "And when the LORD saw *it,* He spurned *them,*
Because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters.
20 And He said: 'I will hide My face from them,
I will see what their end *will be,*
For they *are* a perverse generation,
Children in whom *is* no faith.
21 They have provoked Me to jealousy by *what* is not God;
They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols.
But I will provoke them to jealousy by *those who are* not a nation;
I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.
22 For a fire is kindled in My anger,
And shall burn to the lowest hell;
It shall consume the earth with her increase,
And set on fire the foundations of the mountains.

23 'I will heap disasters on them;
I will spend My arrows on them.
24 *They shall be* wasted with hunger,
Devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction;



PROMISE

God promises He will judge and render vengeance over His enemies.

"For I raise My hand to heaven, and say, 'As I live forever, if I whet My glittering sword, and My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies , and repay those who hate Me'" (Deut. 32:40, 41).

Sometimes it seems like people can get away with anything. They cheat and steal and lie and curse God; sometimes they even get other people to go along with them. Often, a godless lifestyle can go on for years, and those who've made that choice just seem to get richer and more powerful by the minute. It can make you wonder what good it does to obey God. You may think: *I'm over here trying to live the Christian life, and I'm struggling day by day, and the ones who don't serve God seem to be doing great!* But the ones who choose to live a godless life will one day pay the price for not serving God. Whether or not you're there to see that happen, it will happen.

It's important to remember that God calls us to make choices for Him, regardless of the circumstances of others. God calls us to be responsible for living His way. He will take care of the rest. In His great love, God can still save those who have been His enemies. So He may tolerate stuff from His enemies for a while, but not forever. Read the Book of Revelation. You'll see that He will have ultimate divine revenge on His enemies. Although it may seem that godless people sometimes live easier lives, choosing God is the only way that makes sense. It's the only way to find real life that will never end.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Isaiah 1:24; Ezekiel 25:17; Nahum 1:2

I will also send against them the teeth
of beasts,
With the poison of serpents of the dust.
25 The sword shall destroy outside;
There shall be terror within
For the young man and virgin,
The nursing child with the man of gray
hairs.
26 I would have said, "I will dash them in
pieces,
I will make the memory of them to
cease from among men,"
27 Had I not feared the wrath of the
enemy,
Lest their adversaries should
misunderstand,
Lest they should say, "Our hand *is*
high;
And it is not the LORD who has done
all this."'

28 "For they *are* a nation void of counsel,
Nor *is there any* understanding in
them.
29 Oh, that they were wise, *that* they
understood this,
That they would consider their latter
end!
30 How could one chase a thousand,
And two put ten thousand to flight,
Unless their Rock had sold them,
And the LORD had surrendered
them?
31 For their rock *is* not like our Rock,
Even our enemies themselves *being*
judges.
32 For their vine *is* of the vine of Sodom
And of the fields of Gomorrah;
Their grapes *are* grapes of gall,
Their clusters *are* bitter.
33 Their wine *is* the poison of serpents,
And the cruel venom of cobras.

34 'Is this not laid up in store with Me,
Sealed up among My treasures?
35 Vengeance is Mine, and
recompense;
Their foot shall slip in *due* time;

For the day of their calamity *is* at hand,
And the things to come hasten upon them.'

36"For the LORD will judge His people
And have compassion on His servants,
When He sees that *their* power is gone,
And *there is* no one *remaining,* bond or free.
37He will say: 'Where *are* their gods,
The rock in which they sought refuge?
38Who ate the fat of their sacrifices,
And drank the wine of their drink offering?
Let them rise and help you,
And be your refuge.

39'Now see that I, *even* I, *am* He,
And *there is* no God besides Me;
I kill and I make alive;
I wound and I heal;
Nor *is there any* who can deliver from My hand.
40For I raise My hand to heaven,
And say, "*As* I live forever,
41If I whet My glittering sword,
And My hand takes hold on judgment,
I will render vengeance to My enemies,
And repay those who hate Me.
42I will make My arrows drunk with blood,
And My sword shall devour flesh,
With the blood of the slain and the captives,
From the heads of the leaders of the enemy."'

43"Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people;[a]
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,
And render vengeance to His adversaries;
He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people."

44So Moses came with Joshua[a] the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. 45Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, 46and he said to them: "Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. 47For it *is* not a futile thing for you, because it *is* your life, and by this word you shall prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess."

MOSES TO DIE ON MOUNT NEBO

48Then the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying: 49"Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; 50and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; 51because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel. 52Yet you shall see the land before *you,* though you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving to the children of Israel."

MOSES' FINAL BLESSING ON ISRAEL

33 Now this *is* the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. 2And he said:

"The LORD came from Sinai,
And dawned on them from Seir;
He shone forth from Mount Paran,
And He came with ten thousands of saints;
From His right hand
Came a fiery law for them.
3Yes, He loves the people;
All His saints *are* in Your hand;
They sit down at Your feet;
Everyone receives Your words.
4Moses commanded a law for us,
A heritage of the congregation of Jacob.
5And He was King in Jeshurun,
When the leaders of the people were gathered,
All the tribes of Israel together.

32:43 [a]A Dead Sea Scroll fragment adds *And let all the gods (angels) worship Him* (compare Septuagint and Hebrews 1:6). **32:44** [a]Hebrew *Hoshea* (compare Numbers 13:8, 16)

6 "Let Reuben live, and not die,
Nor let his men be few."

7 And this he said of Judah:

"Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah,
And bring him to his people;
Let his hands be sufficient for him,
And may You be a help against his
enemies."

8 And of Levi he said:

"*Let* Your Thummim and Your Urim *be*
with Your holy one,
Whom You tested at Massah,
And with whom You contended at the
waters of Meribah,

Deuteronomy 33:8

Massah and Meribah were the places where God gave the Israelites water to stop their grumbling and complaining. They were remembered as places where the people of Israel had gone too far in questioning and challenging God.

9 Who says of his father and mother,
'I have not seen them';
Nor did he acknowledge his brothers,
Or know his own children;
For they have observed Your word
And kept Your covenant.
10 They shall teach Jacob Your
judgments,
And Israel Your law.
They shall put incense before You,
And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your
altar.
11 Bless his substance, LORD,
And accept the work of his hands;
Strike the loins of those who rise
against him,
And of those who hate him, that they
rise not again."

12 Of Benjamin he said:

"The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in
safety by Him,
Who shelters him all the day long;
And he shall dwell between His
shoulders."

13 And of Joseph he said:

"Blessed of the LORD *is* his land,
With the precious things of heaven,
with the dew,
And the deep lying beneath,
14 With the precious fruits of the sun,
With the precious produce of the
months,
15 With the best things of the ancient
mountains,
With the precious things of the
everlasting hills,
16 With the precious things of the earth
and its fullness,
And the favor of Him who dwelt in the
bush.
Let *the blessing* come 'on the head of
Joseph,
And on the crown of the head of
him *who was* separate from his
brothers.'[a]
17 His glory *is like* a firstborn bull,
And his horns *like* the horns of the
wild ox;
Together with them
He shall push the peoples
To the ends of the earth;
They *are* the ten thousands of
Ephraim,
And they *are* the thousands of
Manasseh."

18 And of Zebulun he said:

"Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out,
And Issachar in your tents!
19 They shall call the peoples *to* the
mountain;
There they shall offer sacrifices of
righteousness;
For they shall partake *of* the
abundance of the seas
And *of* treasures hidden in the sand."

20 And of Gad he said:

"Blessed *is* he who enlarges Gad;
He dwells as a lion,
And tears the arm and the crown of
his head.
21 He provided the first *part* for himself,
Because a lawgiver's portion was
reserved there.

33:16 [a]Genesis 49:26

He came *with* the heads of the people;
He administered the justice of the LORD,
And His judgments with Israel."

22And of Dan he said:

"Dan *is* a lion's whelp;
He shall leap from Bashan."

23And of Naphtali he said:

"O Naphtali, satisfied with favor,
And full of the blessing of the LORD,
Possess the west and the south."

24And of Asher he said:

"Asher *is* most blessed of sons;
Let him be favored by his brothers,
And let him dip his foot in oil.
25Your sandals *shall be* iron and bronze;
As your days, *so shall* your strength *be.*

26"*There is* no one like the God of
Jeshurun,
Who rides the heavens to help you,
And in His excellency on the clouds.
27The eternal God *is your* refuge,
And underneath *are* the everlasting
arms;
He will thrust out the enemy from
before you,
And will say, 'Destroy!'
28Then Israel shall dwell in safety,
The fountain of Jacob alone,
In a land of grain and new wine;
His heavens shall also drop dew.
29Happy *are* you, O Israel!
Who *is* like you, a people saved by the
LORD,
The shield of your help
And the sword of your majesty!
Your enemies shall submit to you,
And you shall tread down their high
places."

MOSES DIES ON MOUNT NEBO

34 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, 2all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea,[a] 3the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. 4Then the LORD said to him, "This *is* the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have caused you to see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there."

5So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. 7Moses *was* one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. 8And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses ended.

9Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

10But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, 11in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, 12and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

34:2 [a]That is, the Mediterranean

Joshua

DATE OF WRITING: 1405–1390 B.C.
AUTHOR: MOST LIKELY JOSHUA
THEME: POSSESSING THE INHERITANCE
PURPOSE: OBEDIENCE TO GOD IS THE KEY TO A SUCCESS-FILLED LIFE.

OUTLINE

1:1–9 ..... Joshua Becomes the Leader of Israel
1:10—6:27 ..... Israel Crosses the Jordan River and Conquers Jericho
7:1–26 ..... Achan Disobeys the Lord
8:1–35 ..... The Battle at Ai
9:1–27 ..... The People of Gibeon Trick the Leaders of Israel
10:1–15 ..... Joshua Commands the Sun to Stand Still
10:16—12:24 ..... Israel Takes Over Much of the Land of Canaan
13:1–7 ..... Land That Israel Did Not Take Over
13:8–33 ..... Tribal Lands That Moses Had Assigned East of the Jordan
14:1—19:51 ..... Tribal Lands West of the Jordan
20:1–9 ..... Cities for Protecting People Accused of Murder
21:1–45 ..... Cities for the Levites
22:1–34 ..... The Eastern Tribes Return Home
23:1—24:33 ..... Joshua's Farewell Speeches and Death

KEY VERSE:

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

THEN ///

If you want to read a war epic, Joshua is a book you'll enjoy. It's a "blood-and-guts" kind of story, too violent for a G-rating but too inspiring to pass up. Basically, while the Hebrews were slaves in Egypt, other people settled on their land. That meant their homeland was home to more than one nation. That's never good news. So the Hebrews had to fight to get their land back. The Book of Joshua is the record of those battles.

Joshua was actually the name of the man who led the Hebrews into battles. He was a soldier, a diplomat, a negotiator, and a strategist. He was a good man who believed God even when the odds were stacked up so high against his people that almost everyone else chickened out. He was a real hero.

Over and over God showed the Hebrews that it takes as much courage to believe in the power of God as it does to fight under your own power. But when you believe, the results are better every time.

NOW ///

The Book of Joshua still matters to us today. We still face the same kind of battles that the Hebrews faced. We are challenged by temptations that are too big for us to conquer alone. We come against difficult times that feel like they are going to overwhelm us.

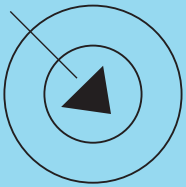
The lesson for us in our battles is the same as the lesson for the Hebrews. *Trust God to do your fighting for you. Keep your life clean and take it one step at a time.*

REALITY CHECK ///

One of the most famous battles that Joshua faced was the battle of Jericho. This was the battle in which the people marched around the city of Jericho for seven days. Just marched. That's all they did. On the seventh day, they marched seven times and then shouted. At this point, to everyone's amazement, the walls of the city fell right down. In went the Hebrews and down went the city.

God did these kinds of miracles for the Hebrews time after time. He did this because God wanted it to be oh so obvious that it was His strength that won the battles, not the people's strength. Sometimes they got it and sometimes they didn't.

We would do well to remember that it's God's strength that still wins our battles for us today. Like Joshua, we can "fear not" because we know God is with us.



PROMISE

God promises to help you wherever you go.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD *your God is with you wherever you go"* (Josh. 1:9).

Remember the last time you needed help? Not just help with your homework, but *help*. You were at the end of your rope, no more options; you'd done everything, and nothing worked. You were confused, afraid, and lonely all at the same time.

What do you do when the answers just don't seem to come? Joshua 1:9. God gives two positive commands here—be strong and be of good courage. Don't be afraid. Don't be discouraged. And then, the promise, "The Lord your God *is* with you wherever you go." That promise offers you the strength to obey the two commands. You can rest in the fact that God promises to help. You are not alone. You may not get help at the exact second you think you need it, but He will help you. He knows exactly how much you can take. He'll be right on time.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 54:4; John 14:16; Hebrews 13:6

GOD'S COMMISSION TO JOSHUA

1 After the death of Moses the servant
of the LORD, it came to pass that the
LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun,
Moses' assistant, saying: 2"Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. 3Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. 4From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. 5No man shall *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. 6Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go."

SUCCESS
How do we find success?
Joshua 1:8

COURAGE
Why should we have courage?
Joshua 1:9

THE ORDER TO CROSS THE JORDAN

10Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11"Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'"

12And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, 13"Remember the word which



PROFILE
JOSHUA

Some shoes seem impossible to fill! Think about the person who amazes you the most and then imagine what it would be like to hear you have to assume their role and responsibilities tomorrow. That's just what happened to Joshua.

Joshua lived his youth in the shadow of Moses. He became Moses' military commander as well as his personal assistant. Joshua was trained and mentored more than forty years before stepping into Moses' sandals. His development demonstrates that it's possible to grow into big shoes, and sometimes shoes have to be remade to fit new feet.

Joshua appears in the book of Exodus without introduction. But we know he was already a recognized soldier and leader. Only later (Ex. 33:11) do we discover two significant facts about Joshua: (1) he was young; and (2) he spent most of his time at the tabernacle where Moses met with God. What shaped Joshua most were the times spent with his mentor, Moses, and the times he spent alone with God.

When God affirmed Joshua's role as Israel's new leader, the Lord used a revealing phrase to indicate His approval: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you" (Josh. 1:5). Joshua was also promised that "the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9). Joshua spent enough time with God to know that God would be with him in every moment throughout his life.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Not a moment you spend with God is wasted.

No relationship in your life will turn out to be more significant than your relationship with God. Every other relationship you have will be affected by the development of your relationship with God. Here's the big secret: What God does in you will improve every other relationship you have. There's no real choice between God and everyone else—no relationship in life can be as rewarding or as fulfilling as a relationship with God. And when you truly choose God first, everyone in your life will benefit.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

You can pick up hints of Joshua's life in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. He is also the central figure in the book that bears his name.

Joshua was a faithful follower and a courageous leader. His commitment to learning from God and Moses, and his strong leadership, based on God's promises, made a real difference. If you make the choice to put God first, you can make a real difference, too!

Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' 14Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, 15until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He *gave* you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

16So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with

you, as He was with Moses. 18Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage."

RAHAB HIDES THE SPIES

2 Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove[a] to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho."

So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. 2And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country."

3So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country."

4Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they *were* from. 5And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them." 6(But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) 7Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

Joshua 2:3–7

Ancient houses were built with flat roofs that were used like modern decks or porches. Crops and clothes were often laid out on the roof to dry. When visitors stopped by, extra beds might have been provided on the roof to accommodate them.

8Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, 9and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 10For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11And as soon as we heard *these things,* our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He *is* God in heaven above and on earth beneath. 12Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, 13and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

14So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

15Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house *was* on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. 16And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way."

17So the men said to her: "We *will be* blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, 18unless, *when* we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. 19So it shall be *that* whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood *shall be* on his own head, and we *will be* guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head if a hand is laid on him. 20And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear."

21Then she said, "According to your words, so *be* it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

22They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought *them* all along the way, but did not find *them.* 23So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of

2:1 [a]Hebrew *Shittim*

Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. 24And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."

ISRAEL CROSSES THE JORDAN

3 Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove[a] and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over. 2So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp; 3and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. 4Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed *this* way before."

Joshua 3:3, 4

Carrying the ark of the covenant was no small task. It was about the size of a small desk. The ark had rings on its sides so that the priests could put poles through them and carry the sacred container without actually touching it. The Israelites carried it into battle because they believed it gave them the power of God.

5And Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." 6Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people."

So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

7And the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with you. 8You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.'"

9So Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God." 10And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: 11Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. 12Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. 13And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, *that* the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap."

ADVICE

Where should we turn for advice?

Joshua 3:9

14So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, 15and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), 16that the waters which came down from upstream stood *still, and* rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that *is* beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, *and* were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. 17Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

THE MEMORIAL STONES

4 And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying: 2"Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every

3:1 [a]Hebrew *Shittim*

tribe, 3and command them, saying, 'Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.'"

4Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe; 5and Joshua said to them: "Cross over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, 6that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones *mean* to you?' 7Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever."

8And the children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the LORD had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. 9Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood; and they are there to this day.

10So the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua; and the people hurried and crossed over. 11Then it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over, that the ark of the LORD and the priests crossed over in the presence of the people. 12And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken to them. 13About forty thousand prepared for war crossed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho. 14On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.

15Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, 16"Command the priests who bear the ark of the Testimony to come up from the Jordan." 17Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, "Come up from the Jordan." 18And it came to pass, when the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come from the midst of the Jordan, *and* the soles of the priests' feet touched the dry land, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks as before.

19Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth *day* of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. 20And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. 21Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What *are* these stones?' 22then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land'; 23for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, 24that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it *is* mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

GOD
How powerful is God?
Joshua 4:23, 24

THE SECOND GENERATION CIRCUMCISED

5 So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who *were* on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who *were* by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we[a] had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel.

5:1 [a]Following Kethib; Qere, some Hebrew manuscripts and editions, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *they.*

2At that time the LORD said to Joshua,
"Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time." 3So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.[a] 4And this *is* the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt *who were* males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. 5For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. 6For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people *who were* men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD—to whom the LORD swore that He would not show them the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, "a land flowing with milk and honey."[a] 7Then Joshua circumcised their sons *whom* He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

8So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. 9Then the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal[a] to this day.

10Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. 11And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. 12Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY OF THE LORD

13And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "*Are* You for us or for our adversaries?"

14So He said, "No, but *as* Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."

And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

15Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy." And Joshua did so.

> ***Joshua 5:15***
> Taking off one's shoes was a sign of respect, a lot like removing one's hat in church. Moses had been told to remove his shoes when God spoke to him from the burning bush.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERICHO

6 Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. 2And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, *and* the mighty men of valor. 3You shall march around the city, all *you* men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. 4And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5It shall come to pass, when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him."

6Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." 7And he said to the people, "Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD."

8So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD advanced and blew the

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5:3 [a]Hebrew *Gibeath Haaraloth* **5:6** [a]Exodus 3:8
5:9 [a]Literally *Rolling*

MAKING IT REAL // JOSHUA 6:20

Bring Down the Walls Jericho was an ungodly, corrupt city surrounded by a massive wall for protection. God wanted to take the city away from the people who did not serve Him, and give it to His people. So He sent Joshua to fight for the city in a very strange way: He told Joshua to take his men and march slowly around the city in silence once every day for six days. On the seventh day, they were to march around seven times, then blow trumpets and shout loudly. God promised if they would obey, the walls of Jericho would fall down, and Joshua's soldiers could just walk in and take the city. The plan worked perfectly because Joshua listened to God's instruction and did just as God directed.

God led Joshua into victory and He will do the same for you. No matter what you face, when you listen to God and obey His plan, He promises to help you. He will guide you every single day. His instructions will always lead to victory. What wall is God calling you to conquer? Are you listening to Him? Then start marching. (See also: 2 Chr. 14:11; Ps. 47; Rom. 8:26.)

Words to Live By

Trumpet: The word translated as "trumpet" in Joshua 6:20 is *shophar* (sho-far'). The word *shophar* is still used today but has been modernized into *shofar*; it is a musical instrument made from the horn of a male goat, a ram. God told His people to blow a shofar (*shophar*) as a call to worship, as a call to repentance, as a warning, as a call to battle, as a celebration, and as a reminder of God's ultimate victory. Although we may not praise God with the blast of a trumpet, or use a horn to warn others of the danger of life without God, we can definitely make sure our voices are heard. And then we can watch as God's power tears down the walls of sin and brings victory into the lives of those around us.

trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. 9The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while *the priests* continued blowing the trumpets. 10Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout." 11So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around *it* once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp.

12And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while *the priests* continued blowing the trumpets. 14And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days.

15But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. 16And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! 17Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who *are* in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. 18And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. 19But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, *are* consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."

20So the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. 21And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

22But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." 23And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. 24But they burned the city and all that *was* in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. 25And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26Then Joshua charged *them* at that time, saying, "Cursed *be* the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."

27So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

DEFEAT AT AI

7 But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi,[a] the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.

2Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. 3And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for *the people of Ai are* few." 4So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. 5And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them *from* before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

6Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. 7And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! 8O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? 9For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear *it,* and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?"

Joshua 7:6

Tearing one's clothes was a way of mourning a tragedy or death. Joshua and his soldiers expressed their grief over being defeated by the people of Ai by lying on the ground.

THE SIN OF ACHAN

10So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? 11Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put *it* among their own stuff. 12Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. 13Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: "*There is* an accursed thing in

7:1 [a]Called *Zimri* in 1 Chronicles 2:6

your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you." 14In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be *that* the tribe which the LORD takes shall come according to families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come man by man. 15Then it shall be *that* he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.'"

16So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. 17He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. 18Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

19Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide *it* from me."

20And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: 21When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."

SIN
Does sin have consequences?
Joshua 7:20–25

22So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. 23And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. 24Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. 25And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

26Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor[a] to this day.

THE FALL OF AI

8 Now the LORD said to Joshua: "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. 2And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an ambush for the city behind it."

DISCOURAGEMENT
Who encourages us with victories?
Joshua 8:1

3So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor and sent them away by night. 4And he commanded them, saying: "Behold, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready. 5Then I and all the people who *are* with me will approach the city; and it will come about, when they come out against us as at the first, that we shall flee before them. 6For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city, for they will say, '*They are* fleeing before us as at the first.' Therefore we will flee before them. 7Then you shall rise from the ambush and seize the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. 8And it will be, when you have taken the

7:26 [a]Literally *Trouble*

city, *that* you shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the LORD you shall do. See, I have commanded you."

9Joshua therefore sent them out; and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua lodged that night among the people. 10Then Joshua rose up early in the morning and mustered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. 11And all the people of war who *were* with him went up and drew near; and they came before the city and camped on the north side of Ai. Now a valley *lay* between them and Ai. 12So he took about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. 13And when they had set the people, all the army that *was* on the north of the city, and its rear guard on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

14Now it happened, when the king of Ai saw *it,* that the men of the city hurried and rose early and went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at an appointed place before the plain. But he did not know that *there was* an ambush against him behind the city. 15And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. 16So all the people who *were* in Ai were called together to pursue them. And they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. 17There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. So they left the city open and pursued Israel.

18Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that *is* in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." And Joshua stretched out the spear that *was* in his hand toward the city. 19So *those in* ambush arose quickly out of their place; they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and they entered the city and took it, and hurried to set the city on fire. 20And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold, the smoke of the city ascended to heaven. So they had no power to flee this way or that way, and the people who had fled to the wilderness turned back on the pursuers.

21Now when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. 22Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were *caught* in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they let none of them remain or escape. 23But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

24And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword. 25So it was *that* all who fell that day, both men and women, *were* twelve thousand—all the people of Ai. 26For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. 27Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua. 28So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. 29And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones *that remains* to this day.

Joshua 8:28, 29

The king's body was hung on a tree to show that no one had escaped the battle. Leaving the body on the tree overnight would have been against God's law. The corpse had to be buried by sunset.

JOSHUA RENEWS THE COVENANT

30Now Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal, 31as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: "an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron *tool.*"[a] And they offered on it burnt

8:31 [a]Deuteronomy 27:5, 6

offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. 32And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. 33Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them *were* in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. 34And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. 35There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.

THE TREATY WITH THE GIBEONITES

9 And it came to pass when all the kings who *were* on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite—heard *about it,* 2that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord.

3But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, 4they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, 5old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* moldy. 6And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us."

7Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?"

8But they said to Joshua, "We *are* your servants."

And Joshua said to them, "Who *are* you, and where do you come from?"

9So they said to him: "From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, 10and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth. 11Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, "We *are* your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us."' 12This bread of ours we took hot *for* our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. 13And these wineskins which we filled *were* new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey."

14Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. 15So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.

16And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbors who dwelt near them. 17Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim. 18But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation complained against the rulers.

19Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them. 20This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them." 21And the rulers said to them, "Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them."

22Then Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We *are* very far from you,' when you dwell near us? 23Now therefore, you *are* cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves—woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God."

24So they answered Joshua and said,

"Because your servants were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. 25And now, here we are, in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us." 26So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them. 27And that day Joshua made them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.

THE SUN STANDS STILL

10 Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it—as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king—and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, 2that they feared greatly, because Gibeon *was* a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it *was* greater than Ai, and all its men *were* mighty. 3Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, 4"Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel." 5Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it.

6And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, "Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us."

7So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. 8And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you." 9Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. 10So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. 11And it happened, as they fled before Israel *and* were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. *There were* more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.

12Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel:

"Sun, stand still over Gibeon;
And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon."
13So the sun stood still,
And the moon stopped,
Till the people had revenge
Upon their enemies.

Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day. 14And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

15Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

THE AMORITE KINGS EXECUTED

16But these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah. 17And it was told Joshua, saying, "The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah."

18So Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them. 19And do not stay *there* yourselves, *but* pursue your enemies, and attack their rear *guard.* Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand." 20Then it happened, while Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they had finished, that those who escaped entered fortified cities. 21And all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua at Makkedah, in peace.

No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

22Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave." 23And they did so, and brought out those five kings to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon.

24So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." And they drew near and put their feet on their necks. 25Then Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight." 26And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening. 27So it was at the time of the going down of the sun *that* Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave's mouth, *which remain* until this very day.

Joshua 10:24

Stepping on the neck or body of an enemy was a way of humiliating him and showing that you had defeated him.

ENEMIES

Who can defeat our enemies?

Joshua 10:25

CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHLAND

28On that day Joshua took Makkedah, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them[a]—all the people who *were* in it. He let none remain. He also did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

29Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, to Libnah; and they fought against Libnah. 30And the LORD also delivered it and its king into the hand of Israel; he struck it and all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword. He let none remain in it, but did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

31Then Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, to Lachish; and they encamped against it and fought against it. 32And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, who took it on the second day, and struck it and all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword, according to all that he had done to Libnah. 33Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua struck him and his people, until he left him none remaining.

34From Lachish Joshua passed to Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it and fought against it. 35They took it on that day and struck it with the edge of the sword; all the people who *were* in it he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

36So Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, to Hebron; and they fought against it. 37And they took it and struck it with the edge of the sword—its king, all its cities, and all the people who *were* in it; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon, but utterly destroyed it and all the people who *were* in it.

38Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and they fought against it. 39And he took it and its king and all its cities; they struck them with the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed all the people who *were* in it. He left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and its king, as he had done also to Libnah and its king.

40So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South[a] and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded. 41And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. 42All these kings and their land Joshua took at one

10:28 [a]Following Masoretic Text and most authorities; many Hebrew manuscripts, some manuscripts of the Septuagint, and some manuscripts of the Targum read *it*.
10:40 [a]Hebrew *Negev,* and so throughout this book

time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. 43Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

THE NORTHERN CONQUEST

11 And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard *these things,* that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, 2and to the kings who *were* from the north, in the mountains, in the plain south of Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west, 3to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpah. 4So they went out, they and all their armies with them, *as* many people *as* the sand that *is* on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots. 5And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.

6But the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire." 7So Joshua and all the people of war with him came against them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and they attacked them. 8And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who defeated them and chased them to Greater Sidon, to the Brook Misrephoth,[a] and to the Valley of Mizpah eastward; they attacked them until they left none of them remaining. 9So Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

10Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms. 11And they struck all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them.* There was none left breathing. Then he burned Hazor with fire.

12So all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. 13But *as for* the cities that stood on their mounds,[a] Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only, *which* Joshua burned. 14And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the children of Israel took as booty for themselves; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they left none breathing. 15As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

SUMMARY OF JOSHUA'S CONQUESTS

16Thus Joshua took all this land: the mountain country, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, and the Jordan plain[a]—the mountains of Israel and its lowlands, 17from Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings, and struck them down and killed them. 18Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. 19There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All *the others* they took in battle. 20For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, *and* that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

21And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. 22None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod.

23So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war.

THE KINGS CONQUERED BY MOSES

12 These *are* the kings of the land whom the children of Israel defeated, and whose land they

11:8 [a]Hebrew *Misrephoth Maim* **11:13** [a]Hebrew *tel,* a heap of successive city ruins
11:16 [a]Hebrew *arabah*

possessed on the other side of the Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon, and all the eastern Jordan plain: 2*One king was* Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon *and* ruled half of Gilead, from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, from the middle of that river, even as far as the River Jabbok, *which is* the border of the Ammonites, 3and the eastern Jordan plain from the Sea of Chinneroth as far as the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), the road to Beth Jeshimoth, and southward below the slopes of Pisgah. 4*The other king was* Og king of Bashan and his territory, *who was* of the remnant of the giants, who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, 5and reigned over Mount Hermon, over Salcah, over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and over half of Gilead *to* the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

6These Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel had conquered; and Moses the servant of the LORD had given it *as* a possession to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

THE KINGS CONQUERED BY JOSHUA

7And these *are* the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan, on the west, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon as far as Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, which Joshua gave to the tribes of Israel *as* a possession according to their divisions, 8in the mountain country, in the lowlands, in the *Jordan* plain, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the South—the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: 9the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which *is* beside Bethel, one; 10the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; 11the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; 12the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; 13the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; 14the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; 15the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; 16the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; 17the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one; 18the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; 19the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; 20the king of Shimron Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; 21the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; 22the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; 23the king of Dor in the heights of Dor, one; the king of the people of Gilgal, one; 24the king of Tirzah, one—all the kings, thirty-one.

REMAINING LAND TO BE CONQUERED

13 Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: "You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed. 2This is the land that yet remains: all the territory of the Philistines and all *that of* the Geshurites, 3from Sihor, which *is* east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (*which* is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines—the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites; 4from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorites; 5the land of the Gebalites,[a] and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath; 6all the inhabitants of the mountains from Lebanon as far as the Brook Misrephoth,[a] *and* all the Sidonians—them I will drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. 7Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh."

THE LAND DIVIDED EAST OF THE JORDAN

8With the other half-tribe the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses had given them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the LORD had given them: 9from Aroer which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, and the town that *is* in the midst of the ravine, and all the plain of Medeba as far as Dibon; 10all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned

13:5 [a]Or *Giblites* **13:6** [a]Hebrew *Misrephoth Maim*

in Heshbon, as far as the border of the children of Ammon; 11Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far as Salcah; 12all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants; for Moses had defeated and cast out these.

13Nevertheless the children of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maachathites, but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.

14Only to the tribe of Levi he had given no inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire *are* their inheritance, as He said to them.

THE LAND OF REUBEN

15And Moses had given to the tribe of the children of Reuben *an inheritance* according to their families. 16Their territory was from Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, and the city that *is* in the midst of the ravine, and all the plain by Medeba; 17Heshbon and all its cities that *are* in the plain: Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, 18Jahaza, Kedemoth, Mephaath, 19Kirjathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the mountain of the valley, 20Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth— 21all the cities of the plain and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses had struck with the princes of Midian: Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, who *were* princes of Sihon dwelling in the country. 22The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them. 23And the border of the children of Reuben was the bank of the Jordan. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their villages.

THE LAND OF GAD

24Moses also had given *an inheritance* to the tribe of Gad, to the children of Gad according to their families. 25Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites as far as Aroer, which *is* before Rabbah, 26and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir, 27and in the valley Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, with the Jordan as *its* border, as far as the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth, on the other side of the Jordan eastward. 28This *is* the inheritance of the children of Gad according to their families, the cities and their villages.

HALF THE TRIBE OF MANASSEH (EAST)

29Moses also had given *an inheritance* to half the tribe of Manasseh; it was for half the tribe of the children of Manasseh according to their families: 30Their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair which are in Bashan, sixty cities; 31half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, *were* for the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, for half of the children of Machir according to their families.

32These *are the areas* which Moses had distributed as an inheritance in the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward. 33But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel *was* their inheritance, as He had said to them.

THE LAND DIVIDED WEST OF THE JORDAN

14 These *are the areas* which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them. 2Their inheritance *was* by lot, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. 3For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe on the other side of the Jordan; but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them. 4For the children of Joseph were two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim. And they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell *in,* with their commonlands for their livestock and their property. 5As the LORD had commanded Moses, so

the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.

CALEB INHERITS HEBRON

6Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. 7I *was* forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as *it was* in my heart. 8Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God. 9So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' 10And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. 11As yet I *am as* strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength *was* then, so now *is* my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. 12Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great *and* fortified. It may be that the LORD *will be* with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said."

LIFE
Where do we get our strength to live?
Joshua 14:10, 11

13And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. 14Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. 15And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (*Arba was* the greatest man among the Anakim).

Then the land had rest from war.

THE LAND OF JUDAH

15 So *this* was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families:

The border of Edom at the Wilderness of Zin southward *was* the extreme southern boundary. 2And their southern border began at the shore of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces southward. 3Then it went out to the southern side of the Ascent of Akrabbim, passed along to Zin, ascended on the south side of Kadesh Barnea, passed along to Hezron, went up to Adar, and went around to Karkaa. 4*From there* it passed toward Azmon and went out to the Brook of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your southern border.

5The east border *was* the Salt Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan.

And the border on the northern quarter *began* at the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. 6The border went up to Beth Hoglah and passed north of Beth Arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. 7Then the border went up toward Debir from the Valley of Achor, and it turned northward toward Gilgal, which *is* before the Ascent of Adummim, which *is* on the south side of the valley. The border continued toward the waters of En Shemesh and ended at En Rogel. 8And the border went up by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to the southern slope of the Jebusite *city* (which *is* Jerusalem). The border went up to the top of the mountain that *lies* before the Valley of Hinnom westward, which *is* at the end of the Valley of Rephaim[a] northward. 9Then the border went around from the top of the hill to the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and extended to the cities of Mount Ephron. And the border went around to Baalah (which *is* Kirjath Jearim). 10Then the border turned westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, passed along to the side of Mount Jearim on the north (which *is* Chesalon), went down to Beth Shemesh, and passed on to Timnah. 11And the border went out to the side of Ekron northward. Then the border went around to Shicron, passed along to Mount Baalah, and extended to Jabneel; and the border ended at the sea.

12The west border *was* the coastline of

15:8 [a]Literally *Giants*

the Great Sea. This *is* the boundary of the children of Judah all around according to their families.

CALEB OCCUPIES HEBRON AND DEBIR

13Now to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a share among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, *namely,* Kirjath Arba, which *is* Hebron (*Arba was* the father of Anak). 14Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. 15Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir *was* Kirjath Sepher).

16And Caleb said, "He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife." 17So Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. 18Now it was so, when she came *to him,* that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she dismounted from *her* donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?" 19She answered, "Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water." So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

THE CITIES OF JUDAH

20This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families:

21The cities at the limits of the tribe of the children of Judah, toward the border of Edom in the South, were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, 22Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, 23Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, 24Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, 25Hazor, Hadattah, Kerioth, Hezron (which *is* Hazor), 26Amam, Shema, Moladah, 27Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, 28Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Bizjothjah, 29Baalah, Ijim, Ezem, 30Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah, 31Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, 32Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities *are* twenty-nine, with their villages.

33In the lowland: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, 34Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, 35Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, 36Sharaim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim: fourteen cities with their villages; 37Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, 38Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel, 39Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, 40Cabbon, Lahmas,[a] Kithlish, 41Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah: sixteen cities with their villages; 42Libnah, Ether, Ashan, 43Jiphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, 44Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities with their villages; 45Ekron, with its towns and villages; 46from Ekron to the sea, all that *lay* near Ashdod, with their villages; 47Ashdod with its towns and villages, Gaza with its towns and villages—as far as the Brook of Egypt and the Great Sea with *its* coastline.

48And in the mountain country: Shamir, Jattir, Sochoh, 49Dannah, Kirjath Sannah (which *is* Debir), 50Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, 51Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities with their villages; 52Arab, Dumah, Eshean, 53Janum, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, 54Humtah, Kirjath Arba (which *is* Hebron), and Zior: nine cities with their villages; 55Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, 56Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, 57Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities with their villages; 58Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, 59Maarath, Beth Anoth, and Eltekon: six cities with their villages; 60Kirjath Baal (which *is* Kirjath Jearim) and Rabbah: two cities with their villages.

61In the wilderness: Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah, 62Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En Gedi: six cities with their villages.

63As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

EPHRAIM AND WEST MANASSEH

16 The lot fell to the children of Joseph from the Jordan, by Jericho, to the waters of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goes up from Jericho through the mountains to Bethel, 2then went out from Bethel to Luz,[a] passed along to the border of the Archites at Ataroth, 3and went down westward to the boundary of the Japhletites, as far as the boundary of Lower Beth Horon to Gezer; and it ended at the sea.

4So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

15:40 [a]Or *Lahmam* **16:2** [a]Septuagint reads *Bethel* (that is, Luz).

THE LAND OF EPHRAIM

5The border of the children of Ephraim,
according to their families, was *thus:* The
border of their inheritance on the east side
was Ataroth Addar as far as Upper Beth
Horon.
6And the border went out toward the sea
on the north side of Michmethath; then the
border went around eastward to Taanath
Shiloh, and passed by it on the east of Jano-
hah. 7Then it went down from Janohah to
Ataroth and Naarah,[a] reached to Jericho,
and came out at the Jordan.
8The border went out from Tappuah
westward to the Brook Kanah, and it ended
at the sea. This *was* the inheritance of the
tribe of the children of Ephraim according
to their families. 9The separate cities for
the children of Ephraim *were* among the
inheritance of the children of Manasseh,
all the cities with their villages.
10And they did not drive out the Canaan-
ites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaan-
ites dwell among the Ephraimites to this
day and have become forced laborers.

THE OTHER HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH (WEST)

17 There was also a lot for the
tribe of Manasseh, for he *was*
the firstborn of Joseph: *namely*
for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the
father of Gilead, because he was a man of
war; therefore he was given Gilead and
Bashan. 2And there was *a lot* for the rest
of the children of Manasseh according to
their families: for the children of Abiezer,[a]
the children of Helek, the children of Asriel,
the children of Shechem, the children of
Hepher, and the children of Shemida; these
were the male children of Manasseh the
son of Joseph according to their families.
3But Zelophehad the son of Hepher,
the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the
son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only
daughters. And these *are* the names of his
daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah,
and Tirzah. 4And they came near before
Eleazar the priest, before Joshua the son
of Nun, and before the rulers, saying, "The
LORD commanded Moses to give us an
inheritance among our brothers." There-
fore, according to the commandment of
the LORD, he gave them an inheritance
among their father's brothers. 5Ten shares
fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead
and Bashan, which *were* on the other side
of the Jordan, 6because the daughters of
Manasseh received an inheritance among
his sons; and the rest of Manasseh's sons
had the land of Gilead.
7And the territory of Manasseh was
from Asher to Michmethath, that *lies* east
of Shechem; and the border went along
south to the inhabitants of En Tappuah.
8Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but
Tappuah on the border of Manasseh *be-
longed* to the children of Ephraim. 9And
the border descended to the Brook Kanah,
southward to the brook. These cities of
Ephraim *are* among the cities of Manasseh.
The border of Manasseh *was* on the north
side of the brook; and it ended at the sea.
10Southward *it was* Ephraim's, north-
ward *it was* Manasseh's, and the sea was
its border. Manasseh's territory was adjoin-
ing Asher on the north and Issachar on
the east. 11And in Issachar and in Asher,
Manasseh had Beth Shean and its towns,
Ibleam and its towns, the inhabitants of
Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of En
Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of Ta-
anach and its towns, and the inhabitants
of Megiddo and its towns—three hilly re-
gions. 12Yet the children of Manasseh could
not drive out *the inhabitants of* those cities,
but the Canaanites were determined to
dwell in that land. 13And it happened, when
the children of Israel grew strong, that they
put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did
not utterly drive them out.

MORE LAND FOR EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH

14Then the children of Joseph spoke to
Joshua, saying, "Why have you given us
only one lot and one share to inherit, since
we *are* a great people, inasmuch as the
LORD has blessed us until now?"
15So Joshua answered them, "If you *are* a
great people, *then* go up to the forest *coun-
try* and clear a place for yourself there in
the land of the Perizzites and the giants,
since the mountains of Ephraim are too
confined for you."
16But the children of Joseph said, "The

16:7 [a]Or *Naaran* (compare 1 Chronicles 7:28)
17:2 [a]Called *Jeezer* in Numbers 26:30

mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, *both those* who *are* of Beth Shean and its towns and *those* who *are* of the Valley of Jezreel."

17And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—saying, "You *are* a great people and have great power; you shall not have *only* one lot, 18but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it *is* wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots *and* are strong."

Joshua 17:16

Most ancient chariots were made of wood held together by leather strips. The iron chariots mentioned here probably had iron only in strategic places on the vehicle, for extra support and durability. Chariots were designed to carry at least two people—one person to drive and one person, armed with a bow, to fight the enemy.

THE REMAINDER OF THE LAND DIVIDED

18 Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was subdued before them. 2But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance.

3Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: "How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers has given you? 4Pick out from among you three men for *each* tribe, and I will send them; they shall rise and go through the land, survey it according to their inheritance, and come *back* to me. 5And they shall divide it into seven parts. Judah shall remain in their territory on the south, and the house of Joseph shall remain in their territory on the north. 6You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts and bring *the survey* here to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. 7But the Levites have no part among you, for the priesthood of the LORD *is* their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them."

8Then the men arose to go away; and Joshua charged those who went to survey the land, saying, "Go, walk through the land, survey it, and come back to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh." 9So the men went, passed through the land, and wrote the survey in a book in seven parts by cities; and they came to Joshua at the camp in Shiloh. 10Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and there Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions.

THE LAND OF BENJAMIN

11Now the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families, and the territory of their lot came out between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. 12Their border on the north side began at the Jordan, and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north, and went up through the mountains westward; it ended at the Wilderness of Beth Aven. 13The border went over from there toward Luz, to the side of Luz (which *is* Bethel) southward; and the border descended to Ataroth Addar, near the hill that *lies* on the south side of Lower Beth Horon.

14Then the border extended around the west side to the south, from the hill that *lies* before Beth Horon southward; and it ended at Kirjath Baal (which *is* Kirjath Jearim), a city of the children of Judah. This *was* the west side.

15The south side *began* at the end of Kirjath Jearim, and the border extended on the west and went out to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah. 16Then the border came down to the end of the mountain that *lies* before the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which *is* in the Valley of the Rephaim[a] on the north, descended to the Valley of Hinnom, to the side of the Jebusite *city* on the south, and descended to

18:16 [a]Literally *Giants*

En Rogel. 17And it went around from the north, went out to En Shemesh, and extended toward Geliloth, which is before the Ascent of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. 18Then it passed along toward the north side of Arabah,[a] and went down to Arabah. 19And the border passed along to the north side of Beth Hoglah; then the border ended at the north bay at the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan. This *was* the southern boundary.

20The Jordan was its border on the east side. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, according to its boundaries all around, according to their families.

21Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, according to their families, were Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, 22Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, 23Avim, Parah, Ophrah, 24Chephar Haammoni, Ophni, and Gaba: twelve cities with their villages; 25Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, 26Mizpah, Chephirah, Mozah, 27Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, 28Zelah, Eleph, Jebus (which *is* Jerusalem), Gibeath, *and* Kirjath: fourteen cities with their villages. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

SIMEON'S INHERITANCE WITH JUDAH

19 The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. 2They had in their inheritance Beersheba (Sheba), Moladah, 3Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, 4Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, 5Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah, 6Beth Lebaoth, and Sharuhen: thirteen cities and their villages; 7Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan: four cities and their villages; 8and all the villages that *were* all around these cities as far as Baalath Beer, Ramah of the South. This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families.

9The inheritance of the children of Simeon *was included* in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had *their* inheritance within the inheritance of that people.

THE LAND OF ZEBULUN

10The third lot came out for the children of Zebulun according to their families, and the border of their inheritance was as far as Sarid. 11Their border went toward the west and to Maralah, went to Dabbasheth, and extended along the brook that is east of Jokneam. 12Then from Sarid it went eastward toward the sunrise along the border of Chisloth Tabor, and went out toward Daberath, bypassing Japhia. 13And from there it passed along on the east of Gath Hepher, toward Eth Kazin, and extended to Rimmon, which borders on Neah. 14Then the border went around it on the north side of Hannathon, and it ended in the Valley of Jiphthah El. 15Included were Kattath, Nahallal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities with their villages. 16This *was* the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

THE LAND OF ISSACHAR

17The fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families. 18And their territory went to Jezreel, and *included* Chesulloth, Shunem, 19Haphraim, Shion, Anaharath, 20Rabbith, Kishion, Abez, 21Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah, and Beth Pazzez. 22And the border reached to Tabor, Shahazimah, and Beth Shemesh; their border ended at the Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages. 23This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

THE LAND OF ASHER

24The fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. 25And their territory included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph, 26Alammelech, Amad, and Mishal; it reached to Mount Carmel westward, along *the Brook* Shihor Libnath. 27It turned toward the sunrise to Beth Dagon; and it reached to Zebulun and to the Valley of Jiphthah El, then northward beyond Beth Emek and Neiel,

18:18 [a]Or *Beth Arabah* (compare 15:6 and 18:22)

bypassing Cabul *which was* on the left,
28including Ebron,[a] Rehob, Hammon, and
Kanah, as far as Greater Sidon. 29And the
border turned to Ramah and to the fortified city of Tyre; then the border turned to
Hosah, and ended at the sea by the region
of Achzib. 30Also Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob *were included:* twenty-two cities with
their villages. 31This *was* the inheritance of
the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their
villages.

THE LAND OF NAPHTALI

32The sixth lot came out to the children
of Naphtali, for the children of Naphtali
according to their families. 33And their
border began at Heleph, enclosing the
territory from the terebinth tree in Zaanannim, Adami Nekeb, and Jabneel, as far as
Lakkum; it ended at the Jordan. 34From
Heleph the border extended westward to
Aznoth Tabor, and went out from there toward Hukkok; it adjoined Zebulun on the
south side and Asher on the west side, and
ended at Judah by the Jordan toward the
sunrise. 35And the fortified cities *are* Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth,
36Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, 37Kedesh, Edrei,
En Hazor, 38Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth
Anath, and Beth Shemesh: nineteen cities with their villages. 39This *was* the
inheritance of the tribe of the children of
Naphtali according to their families, the
cities and their villages.

THE LAND OF DAN

40The seventh lot came out for the tribe
of the children of Dan according to their
families. 41And the territory of their
inheritance was Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, 42Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Jethlah, 43Elon,
Timnah, Ekron, 44Eltekeh, Gibbethon,
Baalath, 45Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, 46Me Jarkon, and Rakkon, with the
region near Joppa. 47And the border of
the children of Dan went beyond these,
because the children of Dan went up to
fight against Leshem and took it; and
they struck it with the edge of the sword,
took possession of it, and dwelt in it.
They called Leshem, Dan, after the name
of Dan their father. 48This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan
according to their families, these cities
with their villages.

JOSHUA'S INHERITANCE

49When they had made an end of dividing
the land as an inheritance according to
their borders, the children of Israel gave
an inheritance among them to Joshua the
son of Nun. 50According to the word of
the LORD they gave him the city which he
asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains
of Ephraim; and he built the city and dwelt
in it.

51These *were* the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and
the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the
children of Israel divided as an inheritance
by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door
of the tabernacle of meeting. So they made
an end of dividing the country.

THE CITIES OF REFUGE

20 The LORD also spoke to Joshua,
saying, 2"Speak to the children
of Israel, saying: 'Appoint for
yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke
to you through Moses, 3that the slayer who
kills a person accidentally *or* unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your
refuge from the avenger of blood. 4And
when he flees to one of those cities, and
stands at the entrance of the gate of the
city, and declares his case in the hearing of
the elders of that city, they shall take him
into the city as one of them, and give him
a place, that he may dwell among them.
5Then if the avenger of blood pursues him,
they shall not deliver the slayer into his
hand, because he struck his neighbor unintentionally, but did not hate him beforehand. 6And he shall dwell in that city until
he stands before the congregation for judgment, *and* until the death of the one who is
high priest in those days. Then the slayer
may return and come to his own city and
his own house, to the city from which he
fled.'"

7So they appointed Kedesh in Galilee, in
the mountains of Naphtali, Shechem in the
mountains of Ephraim, and Kirjath Arba
(which *is* Hebron) in the mountains of Ju-

19:28 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; a few Hebrew manuscripts read *Abdon* (compare 21:30 and 1 Chronicles 6:74).

dah. 8And on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness on the plain, from the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh. 9These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwelt among them, that whoever killed a person accidentally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation.

CITIES OF THE LEVITES

21 Then the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites came near to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the tribes of the children of Israel. 2And they spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, "The LORD commanded through Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for our livestock." 3So the children of Israel gave to the Levites from their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their common-lands:

4Now the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. And the children of Aaron the priest, *who were* of the Levites, had thirteen cities by lot from the tribe of Judah, from the tribe of Simeon, and from the tribe of Benjamin. 5The rest of the children of Kohath had ten cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh.

6And the children of Gershon had thirteen cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

7The children of Merari according to their families had twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun.

8And the children of Israel gave these cities with their common-lands by lot to the Levites, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses.

9So they gave from the tribe of the children of Judah and from the tribe of the children of Simeon these cities which are designated by name, 10which were for the children of Aaron, one of the families of the Kohathites, *who were* of the children of Levi; for the lot was theirs first. 11And they gave them Kirjath Arba (*Arba was* the father of Anak), which *is* Hebron, in the mountains of Judah, with the common-land surrounding it. 12But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession.

13Thus to the children of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Libnah with its common-land, 14Jattir with its common-land, Eshtemoa with its common-land, 15Holon with its common-land, Debir with its common-land, 16Ain with its common-land, Juttah with its common-land, and Beth Shemesh with its common-land: nine cities from those two tribes; 17and from the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its common-land, Geba with its common-land, 18Anathoth with its common-land, and Almon with its common-land: four cities. 19All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, *were* thirteen cities with their common-lands.

20And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites, the rest of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot from the tribe of Ephraim. 21For they gave them Shechem with its common-land in the mountains of Ephraim (a city of refuge for the slayer), Gezer with its common-land, 22Kibzaim with its common-land, and Beth Horon with its common-land: four cities; 23and from the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with its common-land, Gibbethon with its common-land, 24Aijalon with its common-land, *and* Gath Rimmon with its common-land: four cities; 25and from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with its common-land and Gath Rimmon with its common-land: two cities. 26All the ten cities with their common-lands were for the rest of the families of the children of Kohath.

27Also to the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, from the *other* half-tribe of Manasseh, *they gave* Golan in Bashan with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), and Be Eshterah with its common-land: two cities; 28and from the tribe of Issachar, Kishion with its common-land, Daberath with its common-land, 29Jarmuth with its common-land, *and* En Gannim with its common-land: four cities; 30and from the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its common-land,

Abdon with its common-land, 31Helkath with its common-land, and Rehob with its common-land: four cities; 32and from the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Hammoth Dor with its common-land, and Kartan with its common-land: three cities. 33All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families *were* thirteen cities with their common-lands.

34And to the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its common-land, Kartah with its common-land, 35Dimnah with its common-land, *and* Nahalal with its common-land: four cities; 36and from the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with its common-land, Jahaz with its common-land, 37Kedemoth with its common-land, and Mephaath with its common-land: four cities;[a] 38and from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Mahanaim with its common-land, 39Heshbon with its common-land, *and* Jazer with its common-land: four cities in all. 40So all the cities for the children of Merari according to their families, the rest of the families of the Levites, were *by* their lot twelve cities.

41All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel *were* forty-eight cities with their common-lands. 42Every one of these cities had its common-land surrounding it; thus *were* all these cities.

THE PROMISE FULFILLED

43So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. 44The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

EASTERN TRIBES RETURN TO THEIR LANDS

22 Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, 2and said to them: "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. 3You have not left your brethren these many days, up to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God. 4And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brethren, as He promised them; now therefore, return and go to your tents *and* to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. 5But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." 6So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.

FOLLOWING GOD
How should we follow God?
Joshua 22:5

7Now to half the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the *other* half of it Joshua gave *a possession* among their brethren on this side of the Jordan, westward. And indeed, when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he blessed them, 8and spoke to them, saying, "Return with much riches to your tents, with very much livestock, with silver, with gold, with bronze, with iron, and with very much clothing. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren."

9So the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel at Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go to the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, which they had obtained according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

AN ALTAR BY THE JORDAN

10And when they came to the region of the Jordan which *is* in the land of Canaan,

21:37 [a]Following Septuagint and Vulgate (compare 1 Chronicles 6:78, 79); Masoretic Text, Bomberg, and Targum omit verses 36 and 37.

the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan—a great, impressive altar. 11Now the children of Israel heard *someone* say, "Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan—on the children of Israel's side." 12And when the children of Israel heard *of it,* the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.

Joshua 22:16

The word for altar in Hebrew means "a place of sacrifice." Once the tabernacle of meeting was in place, it became the official place for sacrifice in Canaan. When a second altar was built on the east side of the Jordan River by people who were tired of traveling to make their sacrifices, the Israelites on the west side of the river thought their neighbors were being unfaithful to God.

13Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, 14and with him ten rulers, one ruler each from the chief house of every tribe of Israel; and each one *was* the head of the house of his father among the divisions[a] of Israel. 15Then they came to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying, 16"Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD: 'What treachery *is* this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the LORD? 17*Is* the iniquity of Peor not enough for us, from which we are not cleansed till this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD, 18but that you must turn away this day from following the LORD? And it shall be, if you rebel today against the LORD, that tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. 19Nevertheless, if the land of your possession *is* unclean, *then* cross over to the land of the possession of the LORD, where the LORD's tabernacle stands, and take possession among us; but do not rebel against the LORD, nor rebel against us, by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the LORD our God. 20Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And that man did not perish alone in his iniquity.'"

21Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the divisions[a] of Israel: 22"The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, He knows, and let Israel itself know—if *it is* in rebellion, or if in treachery against the LORD, do not save us this day. 23If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the LORD Himself require *an account.* 24But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, 'In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, "What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel? 25For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between you and us, *you* children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the LORD." So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the LORD.' 26Therefore we said, 'Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice, 27but *that* it *may be* a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the LORD before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, "You have no part in the LORD."' 28Therefore we said that it will be, when they say *this* to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, 'Here is the replica of the altar of the LORD which our fathers made, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it *is* a witness between you and us.' 29Far be it from us that we should rebel

22:14 [a]Literally *thousands* **22:21** [a]Literally *thousands*

against the LORD, and turn from following the LORD this day, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the LORD our God which *is* before His tabernacle."

30Now when Phinehas the priest and the rulers of the congregation, the heads of the divisions[a] of Israel who *were* with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them. 31Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh, "This day we perceive that the LORD *is* among us, because you have not committed this treachery against the LORD. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD."

32And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the rulers, returned from the children of Reuben and the children of Gad, from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought back word to them. 33So the thing pleased the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God; they spoke no more of going against them in battle, to destroy the land where the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

34The children of Reuben and the children of Gad[a] called the altar, *Witness,* "For *it is* a witness between us that the LORD *is* God."

JOSHUA'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

23 Now it came to pass, a long time after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. 2And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them:

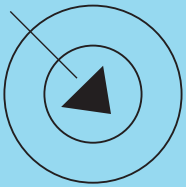
"I am old, advanced in age. 3You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God *is* He who has fought for you. 4See, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward. 5And the LORD your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you. 6Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, 7*and* lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause *anyone* to swear *by them;* you shall not serve them nor bow down to them, 8but you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. 9For the LORD has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but *as for* you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. 10One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God *is* He who fights for you, as He promised you. 11Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God. 12Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, 13know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

GOD
Does God keep His promises?
Joshua 23:5

BIBLE
Why should we obey the Bible?
Joshua 23:6

14"Behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed. 15Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things

22:30 [a]Literally *thousands* **22:34** [a]Septuagint adds *and half the tribe of Manasseh.*



PROMISE

God will do what He has promised.

"Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the LORD your God promised you . . ." (Josh. 23:15a).

All through the Bible, God models what good character is, then calls us to be like Him. In the verse above, He promises to keep His word.

You're a person of strong character if you do what you say you will do—if you keep your promises. Do you normally slide in after curfew? Do you keep people waiting for you? Do you really go where you tell your parents you'll be? If you find yourself always making excuses, it's time for a character adjustment. Look at God and imitate Him. You can be successful at almost anything if you do what you've said you will do. Be dependable, trustworthy, and faithful. Those are all attributes of God. He doesn't need to make any excuses.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Genesis 28:15; Numbers 23:19; Deuteronomy 4:31; 1 Kings 8:56; Nehemiah 1:5

have come upon you which the LORD your God promised you, so the LORD will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. 16When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you."

THE COVENANT AT SHECHEM

24 Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. 2And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Your fathers, *including* Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River[a] in old times; and they served other gods. 3Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. 4To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. 5Also I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to what I did among them. Afterward I brought you out.

6"Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. 7So they cried out to the LORD; and He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, brought the sea upon them, and covered them. And your eyes saw what I did in Egypt. Then you dwelt in the wilderness a long time. 8And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, who dwelt on the other side of the Jordan, and they fought with you. But I gave them into your hand, that you might possess their land, and I destroyed them from before you. 9Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose to make war against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. 10But I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he continued to bless you. So I delivered you out of his hand. 11Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the men of Jericho fought against you—*also* the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I delivered them into your hand. 12I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, *also* the two kings of the Amorites, *but* not with your sword or

24:2 [a]Hebrew *Nahar,* the Euphrates, and so in verses 3, 14, and 15



LIFE APP

Home / Joshua 24:15

What do you think of when you hear the word "home"? Most likely you think of your family—the people God has placed in your life to help you become the person He wants you to be. That means your sisters, your brothers, your parents; they are all God's gift to you. Don't laugh. Just because you may not appreciate a gift, doesn't make it less valuable.

Your family is one of the most important parts of your life. They know you better than anyone else and they love you in a way no one else ever will. And they can drive you crazy better than anyone else you know! Even a Christian, you can get totally fed up and start seeing your family as the enemy—the people who get in your way and stop you from living life the way you choose. If you are feeling this way, maybe it's time to take an honest look at yourself.

Your family is in your life by design; God didn't make a mistake when He chose the family for you. Each person has a particular reason to be in your life. Each member of your family has something to give you or teach you that no one else could. Like it or not, your family is handpicked by God for your good. He means for you all to love and serve one another as you love and serve Him.

Instead of fighting against the people in your family, try seeing the ways God is using them to improve your life. Instead of setting yourself up as their enemy, why not try to discover what you can do for them. Instead of thinking about how they are getting in your way, try realizing how they are helping you get to where God means for you to go. Instead of fighting them, try loving and serving them. You may just find they will do the same for you.

with your bow. 13I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'

14"Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! 15And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

DEVOTION
How should we show our devotion to God?
Joshua 24:14

FAMILY
How should a Godly family look?
Joshua 24:15

16So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; 17for the LORD our God *is* He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. 18And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He *is* our God."

19But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for He *is* a holy God. He *is* a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. 20If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good."

21And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD!"

22So Joshua said to the people, "You *are* witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve Him."

And they said, "*We are* witnesses!"

23"Now therefore," *he said,* "put away the foreign gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel."

24And the people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!"

25So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

26Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD. 27And Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God." 28So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance.

DEATH OF JOSHUA AND ELEAZAR

29Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* one hundred and ten years old. 30And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which *is* in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.

31Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

32The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.

33And Eleazar the son of Aaron died. They buried him in a hill *belonging to* Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim.

Judges

DATE OF WRITING: 1043–1004 B.C.
AUTHOR: SAMUEL (ACCORDING TO LATE JEWISH TRADITION)
THEME: GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IS CONTRASTED WITH ISRAEL'S APOSTASY (TURNING AWAY FROM GOD)
PURPOSE: WHAT WE FAIL TO LEARN FROM HISTORY WE MUST OFTEN LEARN BY PAINFUL EXPERIENCE.

OUTLINE

1:1–36 .....Israel Captures Only Part of the Land
2:1—3:6 .....The Lord Chooses Judges for Israel
3:7–31 .....Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar
4:1—5:31 .....Deborah, Barak, and Jael
6:1—8:35 .....Gideon
9:1–57 .....Abimelech
10:1—12:7 .....Tola, Jair, and Jephthah
12:8–15 .....Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon
13:1—16:31 .....Samson
17:1—18:31 .....The Tribe of Dan and Their Place of Worship
19:1—21:25 .....Civil War Against the Tribe of Benjamin

KEY VERSE:

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25).

THEN /// In their earliest days the Hebrews were a family led by a dad named Jacob who had twelve sons. Then the descendants of those twelve sons grew to be a nation of slaves in Egypt, a country led by a Pharaoh, or king. Then they became exiles led by Moses. Then they became an army led by Joshua. Then came the Book of Judges.

The Book of Judges is about a time in the life of the Hebrews before they had a king. When they needed to make decisions, they went to a judge, a national leader. A judge was sort of like a king, but no castle or crown or bowing—just a leader.

During the time of the judges, the Hebrews went up and down like a morality yo-yo. They would obey God if they were listening to a good judge. Then that judge would die and the people would fall away again. In fact, the phrase you'll most often read about in this book is "and everyone did as he saw fit . . ." When you read that in Judges, you know that it means, "and here they go again—doing their own thing no matter what God wants." Then another judge would come into leadership and they'd clean up their act for a while. It was a vicious cycle.

NOW /// While it's easy to look at the Hebrews' situation and point out where they went wrong, it's not always as easy to admit the same mistakes in our own lives. But the truth is that we often find ourselves in the same type of vicious cycle. It is still far too easy to get distracted by sins and temptations while we are serving God. But we can remember what we learn from Judges. We do not have to get caught up in the same vicious cycle. We can determine to stay focused on serving God and worshiping Him, instead of being led into the harmful consequences of sin.

REALITY CHECK /// In the culture of the ancient days when the Bible was written, women were considered second-class citizens. It's important to notice, though, that women were never second-class citizens in God's eyes. Deborah is a great example.

Deborah was a judge, a national leader. People came to her for judgments and she was known for her wisdom and close relationship with God. She was even asked to go to battle, and oversaw an amazing victory God brought His people. Deborah was certainly not second-class. She was faithful to God, and He did great things with her life.

THE CONTINUING CONQUEST OF CANAAN

1 Now after the death of Joshua it came
to pass that the children of Israel
asked the LORD, saying, "Who shall
be first to go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?"

2 And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up.
Indeed I have delivered the land into his
hand."

3 So Judah said to Simeon his brother,
"Come up with me to my allotted territory,
that we may fight against the Canaanites;
and I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory." And Simeon went with
him. 4 Then Judah went up, and the LORD
delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten
thousand men at Bezek. 5 And they found
Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and fought against
him; and they defeated the Canaanites and
the Perizzites. 6 Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and
they pursued him and caught him and cut
off his thumbs and big toes. 7 And Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with their
thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather
scraps under my table; as I have done, so
God has repaid me." Then they brought
him to Jerusalem, and there he died.

8 Now the children of Judah fought
against Jerusalem and took it; they struck
it with the edge of the sword and set the
city on fire. 9 And afterward the children
of Judah went down to fight against the
Canaanites who dwelt in the mountains,
in the South,[a] and in the lowland. 10 Then
Judah went against the Canaanites who

1:9 [a]Hebrew *Negev,* and so throughout this book

dwelt in Hebron. (Now the name of Hebron *was* formerly Kirjath Arba.) And they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

11From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. (The name of Debir *was* formerly Kirjath Sepher.)

12Then Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife." 13And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife. 14Now it happened, when she came *to him,* that she urged him[a] to ask her father for a field. And she dismounted from *her* donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?" 15So she said to him, "Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water."

And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

16Now the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up from the City of Palms with the children of Judah into the Wilderness of Judah, which *lies* in the South *near* Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people. 17And Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called Hormah. 18Also Judah took Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory. 19So the LORD was with Judah. And they drove out the mountaineers, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had chariots of iron. 20And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had said. Then he expelled from there the three sons of Anak. 21But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

22And the house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, and the LORD *was* with them. 23So the house of Joseph sent men to spy out Bethel. (The name of the city *was* formerly Luz.) 24And when the spies saw a man coming out of the city, they said to him, "Please show us the entrance to the city, and we will show you mercy." 25So he showed them the entrance to the city, and they struck the city with the edge of the sword; but they let the man and all his family go. 26And the man went to the land of the Hittites, built a city, and called its name Luz, which *is* its name to this day.

INCOMPLETE CONQUEST OF THE LAND

27However, Manasseh did not drive out *the inhabitants of* Beth Shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. 28And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.

29Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

30Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and were put under tribute.

31Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. 32So the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

33Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them.

34And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley; 35and the Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim;[a] yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they were put under tribute.

36Now the boundary of the Amorites *was* from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela, and upward.

ISRAEL'S DISOBEDIENCE

2 Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought

1:14 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *he urged her.*
1:35 [a]Spelled *Shaalabbin* in Joshua 19:42

you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. 2And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? 3Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be *thorns* in your side,[a] and their gods shall be a snare to you.'" 4So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.

5Then they called the name of that place Bochim;[a] and they sacrificed there to the LORD. 6And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land.

DEATH OF JOSHUA

7So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel. 8Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died *when he was* one hundred and ten years old. 9And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. 10When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.

ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS

11Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; 12and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from *among* the gods of the people who *were* all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. 13They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.[a] 14And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

Judges 2:11–13

The Canaanites believed that their god Baal was responsible for making things fertile and productive, including crops, animals, and humans. In addition to Baal, they worshiped the Ashtoreths, Canaanite goddesses.

16Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. 18And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

Judges 2:16

Judges were a lot more important in ancient Israel than they are today. Not only did they decide legal cases, they acted as military leaders. Judges were responsible for inspiring the Israelites when they didn't seem to care about God's plan, leading them into battle against the people who were oppressing them, and encouraging them to worship the Lord.

20Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this

2:3 [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *enemies to you.* **2:5** [a]Literally *Weeping*
2:13 [a]Canaanite goddesses

nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, 21I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept *them,* or not." 23Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

THE NATIONS REMAINING IN THE LAND

3 Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, *that is,* all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan 2(*this was* only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), 3*namely,* five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. 4And they were *left, that He might* test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

5Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 6And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods.

OTHNIEL

7So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.[a] 8Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. 9When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. 11So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

GOD
What happens when we forget about God?
Judges 3:7, 8

HELP
Who should we call for help?
Judges 3:9

EHUD

12And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. 13Then he gathered to himself the people of Ammon and Amalek, went and defeated Israel, and took possession of the City of Palms. 14So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.

15But when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab. 16Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh. 17So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (Now Eglon *was* a very fat man.) 18And when he had finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute. 19But he himself turned back from the stone images that *were* at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king."

He said, "Keep silence!" And all who attended him went out from him.

20So Ehud came to him (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber). Then Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." So he arose from *his* seat. 21Then Ehud reached with his left hand,

3:7 [a]Name or symbol for Canaanite goddesses

took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. 22Even the hilt went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; and his entrails came out. 23Then Ehud went out through the porch and shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

24When he had gone out, *Eglon's*[a] servants came to look, and *to their* surprise, the doors of the upper room were locked. So they said, "He is probably attending to his needs in the cool chamber." 25So they waited till they were embarrassed, and still he had not opened the doors of the upper room. Therefore they took the key and opened *them.* And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor.

26But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the stone images and escaped to Seirah. 27And it happened, when he arrived, that he blew the trumpet in the mountains of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mountains; and he led them. 28Then he said to them, "Follow *me,* for the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand." So they went down after him, seized the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over. 29And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, all stout men of valor; not a man escaped. 30So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

SHAMGAR

31After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.

DEBORAH

4 When Ehud was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. 2So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army *was* Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. 3And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.

4Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. 5And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. 6Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy *troops* at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; 7and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand'?"

8And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!"

9So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command,[a] and Deborah went up with him.

11Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which *is* beside Kedesh.

12And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. 13So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who *were* with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.

14Then Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this *is* the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. 15And the LORD routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and fled away on foot. 16But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left.

17However, Sisera had fled away on foot

3:24 [a]Literally *his* **4:10** [a]Literally *at his feet*

to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for *there was* peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. 18And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear." And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket.

19Then he said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. 20And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, 'Is there any man here?' you shall say, 'No.'"

21Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. 22And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, I will show you the man whom you seek." And when he went into her *tent,* there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple.

23So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel. 24And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

THE SONG OF DEBORAH

5 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying:

2"When leaders lead in Israel,
When the people willingly offer themselves,
Bless the LORD!

3"Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes!
I, *even* I, will sing to the LORD;
I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.

WORSHIP
Who should we worship?
Judges 5:3

4"LORD, when You went out from Seir,
When You marched from the field of Edom,
The earth trembled and the heavens poured,
The clouds also poured water;
5The mountains gushed before the LORD,
This Sinai, before the LORD God of Israel.

6"In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,
The highways were deserted,
And the travelers walked along the byways.

Judges 5:6
Conditions in Israel were terrible at this time. As if the outrageous taxes and evil foreign rulers weren't enough, the crime rate was so bad that it was impossible to live a normal life.

7Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel,
Until I, Deborah, arose,
Arose a mother in Israel.
8They chose new gods;
Then *there was* war in the gates;
Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.
9My heart *is* with the rulers of Israel
Who offered themselves willingly with the people.
Bless the LORD!

10"Speak, you who ride on white donkeys,
Who sit in judges' attire,
And who walk along the road.
11Far from the noise of the archers, among the watering places,
There they shall recount the righteous acts of the LORD,
The righteous acts *for* His villagers in Israel;
Then the people of the LORD shall go down to the gates.

12"Awake, awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake, sing a song!
Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away,
O son of Abinoam!

13"Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles;

The LORD came down for me against
the mighty.
14 From Ephraim *were* those whose roots
were in Amalek.
After you, Benjamin, with your
peoples,
From Machir rulers came down,
And from Zebulun those who bear the
recruiter's staff.
15 And the princes of Issachar[a] *were* with
Deborah;
As Issachar, so *was* Barak
Sent into the valley under his
command;[b]
Among the divisions of Reuben
There were great resolves of heart.
16 Why did you sit among the sheepfolds,
To hear the pipings for the flocks?
The divisions of Reuben have great
searchings of heart.
17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan,
And why did Dan remain on ships?[a]
Asher continued at the seashore,
And stayed by his inlets.
18 Zebulun *is* a people *who* jeopardized
their lives to the point of death,
Naphtali also, on the heights of the
battlefield.

19 "The kings came *and* fought,
Then the kings of Canaan fought
In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo;
They took no spoils of silver.
20 They fought from the heavens;
The stars from their courses fought
against Sisera.
21 The torrent of Kishon swept them
away,
That ancient torrent, the torrent of
Kishon.
O my soul, march on in strength!
22 Then the horses' hooves pounded,
The galloping, galloping of his steeds.
23 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel[a] of the
LORD,
'Curse its inhabitants bitterly,
Because they did not come to the help
of the LORD,
To the help of the LORD against the
mighty.'

24 "Most blessed among women is Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite;
Blessed is she among women in
tents.
25 He asked for water, she gave milk;
She brought out cream in a lordly
bowl.
26 She stretched her hand to the tent
peg,
Her right hand to the workmen's
hammer;
She pounded Sisera, she pierced his
head,
She split and struck through his
temple.
27 At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still;
At her feet he sank, he fell;
Where he sank, there he fell dead.

28 "The mother of Sisera looked through
the window,
And cried out through the lattice,
'Why is his chariot *so* long in coming?
Why tarries the clatter of his
chariots?'
29 Her wisest ladies answered her,
Yes, she answered herself,

Judges 5:30

Have you ever heard the expression "To the winners go the spoils"? The spoils of war were whatever the victorious armies felt like taking from the cities they conquered. Not only did they take material possessions; they also captured women to be their wives, servants, or slaves.

30 'Are they not finding and dividing the
spoil:
To every man a girl *or* two;
For Sisera, plunder of dyed garments,
Plunder of garments embroidered and
dyed,
Two pieces of dyed embroidery for the
neck of the looter?'

FOLLOWING GOD
What are Christians like?
Judges 5:31

5:15 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *And my princes in Issachar.* [b]Literally *at his feet* **5:17** [a]Or *at ease* **5:23** [a]Or *Angel*



PROFILE
GIDEON

You can learn a lot from watching kids. Some sit in their playpens and randomly handle the blocks and toys around them. Others immediately try to build a skyscraper. Those are the resourceful ones. They grow up to be natural problem solvers. Gideon may have been such a kid. God made good use of Gideon's skills when he called the boy to be a judge of Israel.

The Jewish people lived under crushing oppression by the Midianites. God had allowed it because Israel had ignored their unique role as God's people. But they had been calling out to God for relief. Meanwhile, Gideon was busy providing food for his family by using a winepress to thresh his wheat ("in order to hide it from the Midianites") (Judg. 6:11). His plan was a difficult one, but it worked.

God then called Gideon to lead the rebellion against Midian. Gideon did not think of himself as a naturally strong military leader; he even considered himself the weakest person in his own family. But God chose Gideon, and Gideon's band of three hundred—each armed with a clay jar, a torch, and a trumpet—routed an army of over one hundred and twenty thousand. God made a big difference! And Gideon had the wonderful honor of participating in God's plan.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

You may have some unusual skills, or you may be given an unusual opportunity to use what may seem like ordinary skills. Remember that God is behind the events of life. God gives us what we need; then He invites us to use it in His service. When you consider and pray about what God might want to do in your life, remember this: God's plan will always include tasks that you will not be able to accomplish without His help. Making a difference isn't just about what you can do; its even more about what God can do with you, in you, and through you!

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Gideon in Judges 6—8. He is also listed in the hall of faith in Hebrews 11:32.

Gideon was a man with plenty of weaknesses, but God gave him the strength he needed to make a real difference. God can give you that strength to make a difference, too!

31 "Thus let all Your enemies perish,
O LORD!
But *let* those who love Him *be* like the sun
When it comes out in full strength."

So the land had rest for forty years.

MIDIANITES OPPRESS ISRAEL

6 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, 2 and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which *are* in the mountains. 3 So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. 4 Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox

nor donkey. 5For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. 6So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.

DECISIONS
Do bad decisions have consequences?
Judges 6:1

7And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, 8that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; 9and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10Also I said to you, "I *am* the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice.'"

GIDEON

11Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which *was* in Ophrah, which *belonged* to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide *it* from the Midianites. 12And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD *is* with you, you mighty man of valor!"

13Gideon said to Him, "O my lord,[a] if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where *are* all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

14Then the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"

15So he said to Him, "O my Lord,[a] how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan *is* the weakest in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house."

16And the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."

17Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. 18Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set *it* before You."

And He said, "I will wait until you come back."

19So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought *them* out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented *them.* 20The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay *them* on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so.

21Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that *was* in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

22Now Gideon perceived that He *was* the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face."

23Then the LORD said to him, "Peace *be* with you; do not fear, you shall not die." 24So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-*Is*-Peace.[a] To this day it *is* still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

25Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image[a] that *is* beside it; 26and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which

6:13 [a]Hebrew *adoni,* used of man
6:15 [a]Hebrew *Adonai,* used of God
6:24 [a]Hebrew *YHWH Shalom* **6:25** [a]Hebrew *Asherah,* a Canaanite goddess

MAKING IT REAL // JUDGES 6:34

An Army of Two In Judges 6:34, we read that the Holy Spirit "came upon Gideon," giving him the divine power he needed to carry out God's plan. The assignment was big: rescue Israel. It required one faithful man and supernatural help from the Holy Spirit. One man plus God is mightier than any army and stronger than any opposition.

If God is calling you to do something you feel totally unable to do, you can bet that He will also send you the power of the Holy Spirit. You won't be alone. God goes before you to clear the way for you, and He sends the Holy Spirit to take control of the situation—and of you. You'll know what to do. You'll know what to say. You can run to the battle with the total confidence that the Spirit of God is in control. (See also: Judg. 14:19; 1 Sam. 10:6; Eph. 3:14–21.)

Words to Live By

LORD: The word *Lord* is one of the most commonly used words in the Bible. When it appears in small capital letters as in Judges 6:34, it is the English translation of the Hebrew word *YHWH* (this is known as the tetragrammaton). *YHWH* is the name God gave Himself in Exodus 3:15. The exact pronunciation of God's name is debated by Bible scholars, but Jehovah, Yehovah, and Yahweh are the most commonly accepted.

you shall cut down." 27So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do *it* by day, he did *it* by night.

GIDEON DESTROYS THE ALTAR OF BAAL

28And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that *was* beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar *which had been* built. 29So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." 30Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that *was* beside it."

31But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he *is* a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!" 32Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal,[a] saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar."

33Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. 34But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. 35And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

THE SIGN OF THE FLEECE

36So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said— 37look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and *it is* dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." 38And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. 39Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the

6:32 [a]Literally *Let Baal Plead*

fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." 40And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

GIDEON'S VALIANT THREE HUNDRED

7 Then Jerubbaal (that *is,* Gideon) and all the people who *were* with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

2And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' 3Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

4But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people *are* still *too* many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, *that* of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go." 5So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." 6And the number of those who lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. 7Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the *other* people go, every man to his place." 8So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all *the rest of* Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

9It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. 10But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, 11and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who *were* in the camp. 12Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.

13And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: *To my* surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed."

Judges 7:13

In ancient times, God spoke to people through their dreams, revealing His plans for them while they slept. Not all of these dreams made obvious sense at first. Sometimes the dreamers needed other people to help them understand what their nighttime visions meant.

14Then his companion answered and said, "This *is* nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

15And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." 16Then he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. 17And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: 18When I blow the trumpet, I and all who *are* with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, '*The sword of* the LORD and of Gideon!'"

19So Gideon and the hundred men who

were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that *were* in their hands. 20Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" 21And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. 22When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia,[a] toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

23And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

Judges 7:25

A winepress was a place where ripe grapes were stomped for their juice. When that juice "fermented" for a certain period of time, it became wine. Not only was wine a common drink among the Israelites, it was also used as medicine and as part of their religious ceremonies.

24Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan. 25And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.

GIDEON SUBDUES THE MIDIANITES

8 Now the men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?" And they reprimanded him sharply.

2So he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? *Is* not the gleaning *of the grapes* of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? 3God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that.

4When Gideon came to the Jordan, he and the three hundred men who *were* with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit. 5Then he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian."

6And the leaders of Succoth said, "*Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your army?"

7So Gideon said, "For this cause, when the LORD has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers!" 8Then he went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way. And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. 9So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I come back in peace, I will tear down this tower!"

10Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of all the army of the people of the East; for one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen. 11Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; and he attacked the army while the camp felt secure. 12When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.

13Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle, from the Ascent of Heres. 14And he caught a young man of the men of Succoth and interrogated him; and he wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men. 15Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you ridiculed me, saying, '*Are*

7:22 [a]Hebrew *Beth Shittah*

the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men?'" 16And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. 17Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

18And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men *were they* whom you killed at Tabor?"

So they answered, "As you *are,* so *were* they; each one resembled the son of a king."

19Then he said, "They *were* my brothers, the sons of my mother. *As* the LORD lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you." 20And he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise, kill them!" But the youth would not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he *was* still a youth.

21So Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise yourself, and kill us; for as a man *is, so is* his strength." So Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments that *were* on their camels' necks.

GIDEON'S EPHOD

22Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian."

> ***Judges 8:23***
> From the time the Israelites left Egypt, God had been their only King. Human leaders like Moses and judges like Deborah and Gideon were used simply to communicate God's will to the people. Gideon recognized that only God had the right to be King of Israel.

23But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you." 24Then Gideon said to them, "I would like to make a request of you, that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder." For they had golden earrings, because they *were* Ishmaelites.

25So they answered, "We will gladly give *them.*" And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder. 26Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred *shekels* of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which *were* on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that *were* around their camels' necks. 27Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house.

28Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.

DEATH OF GIDEON

29Then Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. 30Gideon had seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives. 31And his concubine who *was* in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech. 32Now Gideon the son of Joash died at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

33So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god. 34Thus the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side; 35nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.

ABIMELECH'S CONSPIRACY

9 Then Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to his mother's brothers, and spoke with them and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, 2"Please speak in the hearing of all the men of Shechem: 'Which is better for you, that all seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal reign over you, or that one reign over you?' Remember that I *am* your own flesh and bone."

3And his mother's brothers spoke all these words concerning him in the hearing of all the men of Shechem; and their heart was inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother." 4So they gave him seventy *shekels* of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, with which Abimelech hired

worthless and reckless men; and they followed him. 5Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers, the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, on one stone. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, because he hid himself. 6And all the men of Shechem gathered together, all of Beth Millo, and they went and made Abimelech king beside the terebinth tree at the pillar that *was* in Shechem.

Judges 9:4

Not only were temples used as places of worship in ancient cultures, they were also used as vaults, places to store valuables for safekeeping. Using money from Baal-Berith's temple made it look as though Abimelech was getting help from Baal and not just from his human supporters.

THE PARABLE OF THE TREES

7Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and cried out. And he said to them:

"Listen to me, you men of Shechem,
That God may listen to you!

8"The trees once went forth to anoint a king over them.
And they said to the olive tree,
'Reign over us!'
9But the olive tree said to them,
'Should I cease giving my oil,
With which they honor God and men,
And go to sway over trees?'

10"Then the trees said to the fig tree,
'You come *and* reign over us!'
11But the fig tree said to them,
'Should I cease my sweetness and my good fruit,
And go to sway over trees?'

12"Then the trees said to the vine,
'You come *and* reign over us!'
13But the vine said to them,
'Should I cease my new wine,
Which cheers *both* God and men,
And go to sway over trees?'

14"Then all the trees said to the bramble,
'You come *and* reign over us!'
15And the bramble said to the trees,
'If in truth you anoint me as king over you,
Then come *and* take shelter in my shade;
But if not, let fire come out of the bramble
And devour the cedars of Lebanon!'

Judges 9:15

Jotham compared Abimelech to a bramble, a tree that is practically worthless. Jotham warned that Abimelech was powerless to protect the people and that making him king would only lead to disaster.

16"Now therefore, if you have acted in truth and sincerity in making Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done to him as he deserves— 17for my father fought for you, risked his life, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; 18but you have risen up against my father's house this day, and killed his seventy sons on one stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his female servant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother— 19if then you have acted in truth and sincerity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, *then* rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you. 20"But if not, let fire come from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and Beth Millo; and let fire come from the men of Shechem and from Beth Millo and devour Abimelech!" 21And Jotham ran away and fled; and he went to Beer and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

DOWNFALL OF ABIMELECH

22After Abimelech had reigned over Israel three years, 23God sent a spirit of ill will between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech, 24that the crime *done* to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be settled and their blood be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem,

who aided him in the killing of his brothers. 25And the men of Shechem set men in ambush against him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed all who passed by them along that way; and it was told Abimelech.

26Now Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and went over to Shechem; and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. 27So they went out into the fields, and gathered *grapes* from their vineyards and trod *them,* and made merry. And they went into the house of their god, and ate and drank, and cursed Abimelech. 28Then Gaal the son of Ebed said, "Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* Shechem, that we should serve him? *Is he* not the son of Jerubbaal, and *is not* Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; but why should we serve him? 29If only this people were under my authority![a] Then I would remove Abimelech." So he[b] said to Abimelech, "Increase your army and come out!"

30When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was aroused. 31And he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly, saying, "Take note! Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem; and here they are, fortifying the city against you. 32Now therefore, get up by night, you and the people who *are* with you, and lie in wait in the field. 33And it shall be, as soon as the sun is up in the morning, *that* you shall rise early and rush upon the city; and *when* he and the people who are with him come out against you, you may then do to them as you find opportunity."

34So Abimelech and all the people who *were* with him rose by night, and lay in wait against Shechem in four companies. 35When Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance to the city gate, Abimelech and the people who *were* with him rose from lying in wait. 36And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, "Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!"

But Zebul said to him, "You see the shadows of the mountains as *if they were* men."

37So Gaal spoke again and said, "See, people are coming down from the center of the land, and another company is coming from the Diviners'[a] Terebinth Tree."

Judges 9:37

The "center of the land" probably refers to Mount Gerizim. This site was well known in Israelite history as the place where both Abraham and Jacob had built altars. In ancient times, most places of worship were built on hilltops.

38Then Zebul said to him, "Where indeed *is* your mouth now, with which you said, 'Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?' *Are* not these the people whom you despised? Go out, if you will, and fight with them now."

39So Gaal went out, leading the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. 40And Abimelech chased him, and he fled from him; and many fell wounded, to the *very* entrance of the gate. 41Then Abimelech dwelt at Arumah, and Zebul drove out Gaal and his brothers, so that they would not dwell in Shechem.

Judges 9:45

Sowing salt was Abimelech's way of cursing the land and destroying its ability to produce crops.

42And it came about on the next day that the people went out into the field, and they told Abimelech. 43So he took his people, divided them into three companies, and lay in wait in the field. And he looked, and there were the people, coming out of the city; and he rose against them and attacked them. 44Then Abimelech and the company that *was* with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city; and the *other* two companies rushed upon all who *were* in the fields and killed them. 45So Abimelech fought against the city all that day; he took the city and killed the people who *were* in it; and he demolished the city and sowed it with salt.

46Now when all the men of the tower of Shechem had heard *that,* they entered the stronghold of the temple of the god Berith.

9:29 [a]Literally *hand* [b]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls read *they;* Septuagint reads *I.* **9:37** [a]Hebrew *Meonenim*

47And it was told Abimelech that all the
men of the tower of Shechem were gath-
ered together. 48Then Abimelech went up
to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people
who *were* with him. And Abimelech took
an ax in his hand and cut down a bough
from the trees, and took it and laid *it* on his
shoulder; then he said to the people who
were with him, "What you have seen me
do, make haste *and* do as I *have done.*" 49So
each of the people likewise cut down his
own bough and followed Abimelech, put
them against the stronghold, and set the
stronghold on fire above them, so that all
the people of the tower of Shechem died,
about a thousand men and women.

50Then Abimelech went to Thebez, and
he encamped against Thebez and took it.
51But there was a strong tower in the city,
and all the men and women—all the peo-
ple of the city—fled there and shut them-
selves in; then they went up to the top of the
tower. 52So Abimelech came as far as the
tower and fought against it; and he drew
near the door of the tower to burn it with
fire. 53But a certain woman dropped an
upper millstone on Abimelech's head and
crushed his skull. 54Then he called quickly
to the young man, his armorbearer, and
said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me,
lest men say of me, 'A woman killed him.'"
So his young man thrust him through, and
he died. 55And when the men of Israel saw
that Abimelech was dead, they departed,
every man to his place.

56Thus God repaid the wickedness of
Abimelech, which he had done to his father
by killing his seventy brothers. 57And all the
evil of the men of Shechem God returned
on their own heads, and on them came the
curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

TOLA

10 After Abimelech there arose to
save Israel Tola the son of Puah,
the son of Dodo, a man of Issa-
char; and he dwelt in Shamir in the moun-
tains of Ephraim. 2He judged Israel twenty-
three years; and he died and was buried in
Shamir.

JAIR

3After him arose Jair, a Gileadite; and he
judged Israel twenty-two years. 4Now he
had thirty sons who rode on thirty don-
keys; they also had thirty towns, which are
called "Havoth Jair"[a] to this day, which *are*
in the land of Gilead. 5And Jair died and
was buried in Camon.

ISRAEL OPPRESSED AGAIN

6Then the children of Israel again did
evil in the sight of the LORD, and served
the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods
of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of
Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon,
and the gods of the Philistines; and they
forsook the LORD and did not serve Him.
7So the anger of the LORD was hot against
Israel; and He sold them into the hands of
the Philistines and into the hands of the
people of Ammon. 8From that year they
harassed and oppressed the children of
Israel for eighteen years—all the children
of Israel who *were* on the other side of
the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in
Gilead. 9Moreover the people of Ammon
crossed over the Jordan to fight against
Judah also, against Benjamin, and against
the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was
severely distressed.

10And the children of Israel cried out to
the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against
You, because we have both forsaken our
God and served the Baals!"

11So the LORD said to the children of Is-
rael, "*Did I* not *deliver you* from the Egyp-
tians and from the Amorites and from the
people of Ammon and from the Philis-
tines? 12Also the Sidonians and Amalekites
and Maonites[a] oppressed you; and you
cried out to Me, and I delivered you from
their hand. 13Yet you have forsaken Me and
served other gods. Therefore I will deliver
you no more. 14Go and cry out to the gods
which you have chosen; let them deliver
you in your time of distress."

15And the children of Israel said to the
LORD, "We have sinned! Do to us whatever
seems best to You; only deliver us this day,
we pray." 16So they put away the foreign
gods from among them and served the
LORD. And His soul could no longer endure
the misery of Israel.

17Then the people of Ammon gathered

10:4 [a]Literally *Towns of Jair* (compare Numbers 32:41 and Deuteronomy 3:14) **10:12** [a]Some Septuagint manuscripts read *Midianites.*



PROFILE
JEPHTHAH

Jephthah was an Old Testament hero, but he was also a dad, with a daughter he loved. Unfortunately, Jephthah didn't always see how his job as a hero might affect the life of his daughter, and so he got them both into trouble with a rash promise. He publicly announced he would sacrifice the first thing that came out of his house if he returned from war victorious. His great victory march came to a halt when the first thing he saw from home was his daughter.

Some scholars believe the sacrifice Jephthah made was to actually end his only daughter's life, even though God did not ask for such a thing. Other scholars believe his sacrifice was to commit her to lifelong virginity. Either way, Jephthah's rash promise was reckless and harmful not only to himself but also to his daughter. Though his daughter grieved over her loss, she honored her father's rash vow. That honor probably stung Jephthah deeply. There is little that hurts loving parents more than when their mistakes cause their children to suffer. But Jephthah's daughter made a difference with her acceptance.

The dignity Jephthah's daughter displayed was so powerful that she is remembered. She offers an example of a costly obedience to the fifth commandment—to honor your father and mother. She did so even when her father had made a terrible mistake.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

When parents make mistakes, children find out how difficult it is to honor and forgive. But dishonor and unforgiveness do not lead to freedom. Honoring and forgiving other people doesn't let them off the hook; it lets us off the hook. As long as we hold hurts against other people, we, too, are bound. Jephthah's daughter was free to grieve and then play for a time in the mountains because she forgave . . . because she honored. Do you have that freedom?

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Jephthah's daughter in Judges 11:1—12:7.

Jephthah's daughter was a young lady in a heartbreaking situation. But her respectfulness and honoring attitude allowed her to make a real difference. You can, too!

together and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled together and encamped in Mizpah. 18And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, "Who *is* the man who will begin the fight against the people of Ammon? He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

JEPHTHAH

11 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, but he *was* the son of a harlot; and Gilead begot Jephthah. 2Gilead's wife bore sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out, and said to him, "You shall have no inheritance in our father's house, for you *are* the son of another woman." 3Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out *raiding* with him.

4It came to pass after a time that the people of Ammon made war against Israel. 5And so it was, when the people of Ammon

made war against Israel, that the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. 6Then they said to Jephthah, "Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon."

7So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "Did you not hate me, and expel me from my father's house? Why have you come to me now when you are in distress?"

8And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "That is why we have turned again to you now, that you may go with us and fight against the people of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

9So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you take me back home to fight against the people of Ammon, and the LORD delivers them to me, shall I be your head?"

10And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The LORD will be a witness between us, if we do not do according to your words." 11Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words before the LORD in Mizpah.

12Now Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon, saying, "What do you have against me, that you have come to fight against me in my land?"

13And the king of the people of Ammon answered the messengers of Jephthah, "Because Israel took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from the Arnon as far as the Jabbok, and to the Jordan. Now therefore, restore those *lands* peaceably."

14So Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon, 15and said to him, "Thus says Jephthah: 'Israel did not take away the land of Moab, nor the land of the people of Ammon; 16for when Israel came up from Egypt, they walked through the wilderness as far as the Red Sea and came to Kadesh. 17Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, "Please let me pass through your land." But the king of Edom would not heed. And in like manner they sent to the king of Moab, but he would not *consent.* So Israel remained in Kadesh. 18And they went along through the wilderness and bypassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab, came to the east side of the land of Moab, and encamped on the other side of the Arnon. But they did not enter the border of Moab, for the Arnon *was* the border of Moab. 19Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon; and Israel said to him, "Please let us pass through your land into our place." 20But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his people together, encamped in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. 21And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they defeated them. Thus Israel gained possession of all the land of the Amorites, who inhabited that country. 22They took possession of all the territory of the Amorites, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan.

23'And now the LORD God of Israel has dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel; should you then possess it? 24Will you not possess whatever Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever the LORD our God takes possession of before us, we will possess. 25And now, *are* you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel? Did he ever fight against them? 26While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along the banks of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why did you not recover *them* within that time? 27Therefore I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me by fighting against me. May the LORD, the Judge, render judgment this day between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon.'" 28However, the king of the people of Ammon did not heed the words which Jephthah sent him.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW AND VICTORY

29Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced *toward* the people of Ammon. 30And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, 31then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

32So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and the LORD delivered them into his hands. 33And he defeated them from Aroer as far as Minnith—twenty cities—and to Abel Keramim,[a] with a very great slaughter. Thus the people of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

34When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing; and she *was his* only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter. 35And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes, and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me! For I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it."

> ***Judges 11:34–39***
> Human sacrifice was forbidden by God's law. Therefore, this passage may suggest that Jephthah "sacrificed" his daughter to the temple, meaning that she had to spend the rest of her life serving in God's house—never being able to marry or have a family of her own.

36So she said to him, "My father, *if* you have given your word to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, because the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon." 37Then she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my friends and I."

38So he said, "Go." And he sent her away *for* two months; and she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains. 39And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man.

And it became a custom in Israel 40*that* the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

JEPHTHAH'S CONFLICT WITH EPHRAIM

12 Then the men of Ephraim gathered together, crossed over toward Zaphon, and said to Jephthah, "Why did you cross over to fight against the people of Ammon, and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down on you with fire!"

2And Jephthah said to them, "My people and I were in a great struggle with the people of Ammon; and when I called you, you did not deliver me out of their hands. 3So when I saw that you would not deliver *me,* I took my life in my hands and crossed over against the people of Ammon; and the LORD delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?" 4Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. And the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because they said, "You Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites *and* among the Manassites." 5The Gileadites seized the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites *arrived.* And when *any* Ephraimite who escaped said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead would say to him, "*Are* you an Ephraimite?" If he said, "No," 6then they would say to him, "Then say, 'Shibboleth'!" And he would say, "Sibboleth," for he could not pronounce *it* right. Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. There fell at that time forty-two thousand Ephraimites.

7And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in among the cities of Gilead.

IBZAN, ELON, AND ABDON

8After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. 9He had thirty sons. And he gave away thirty daughters in marriage, and brought in thirty daughters from elsewhere for his sons. He judged Israel seven years. 10Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem.

11After him, Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel. He judged Israel ten years. 12And Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.

13After him, Abdon the son of Hillel the

11:33 [a]Literally *Plain of Vineyards*

Pirathonite judged Israel. 14He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy young donkeys. He judged Israel eight years. 15Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mountains of the Amalekites.

THE BIRTH OF SAMSON

13 Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

2Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren and had no children. 3And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. 4Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or *similar* drink, and not to eat anything unclean. 5For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

Judges 13:2–5

Manoah and his wife agreed to dedicate their child (Samson, v. 24) to God, and in return, God would use their son to one day free the Israelites from the control of the Philistines. Wearing his hair long and refusing to drink wine were outward signs of Samson's dedication to God.

6So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance *was* like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He *was* from, and He did not tell me His name. 7And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.'"

8Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."

9And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband *was* not with her. 10Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the *other* day has just now appeared to me!"

11So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?"

And He said, "I *am*."

12Manoah said, "Now let Your words come *to pass!* What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?"

13So the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. 14She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe."

15Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You."

16And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD." (For Manoah did not know He *was* the Angel of the LORD.)

Judges 13:18

Here's an odd tradition from biblical times: knowing and using someone's name was believed to give you a certain amount of power over that person. The fact that the angel refused to tell Manoah his name indicated that the angel had a higher rank than Manoah.

17Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "What *is* Your name, that when Your words come *to pass* we may honor You?"

18And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it *is* wonderful?"

19So Manoah took the young goat with



PROFILE
SAMSON

Samson never wore an *S* on his chest, but he was probably one of the few men who could claim the title of *superman*. His physical prowess astonished both friends and enemies. In battle, Samson proved lethal. There was little question that Samson had the basic qualifications to be a champion for his people. God had promised to give Samson unique gifts. He was designed with a special task in mind. Samson succeeded in some ways, but far less than his potential promised.

Unfortunately, Samson made at least two errors in judgment early in his life, and they cost him dearly. First, he never learned to control the connection between his eyes and his heart. He failed to see his own disobedience or the dangers in his relationships with his Philistine wife, and especially with Delilah. Not until he lost his eyes did he finally see the mess he had made of much of his life.

Second, Sampson did not acknowledge the source of his amazing strength or take seriously the responsibilities that came with it. Though his long hair was a reminder of the source of his strength, Samson lost sight of God's presence in his life. In his mind, his hair became his strength. When he told Delilah the source of his strength, he thought he was just revealing a secret, but he was actually revealing his failure. Once his hair was cut, Samson was faced with his true weaknesses.

One of the consequences of Samson's failure was that he was blinded; he never regained his sight, but he learned to see the truth. He lost his hair, but in the end he turned to God as the source of his strength. Samson learned from his losses, but too late. He represents so many other lives that might have made a big difference, but fell short. By learning from Samson's mistakes, others can avoid his errors and gain insight from his lessons.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Youthful mistakes are part of the learning cycle. Hopefully, we learn from them. Fortunately, few of them prove to be fatal. But most of us could benefit from paying closer attention to the lessons we learn while we're young. We don't have to repeat the mistakes of others. When we see others receive painful and sometimes permanent consequences from their behaviors, we must resist the thought that such results cannot happen to us.

The more we seek to learn from our own mistakes, as well as from others' mistakes, the more we will be able to make a difference with our lives. Continually acknowledge God for the strengths He's given you and ask for His help with your mistakes.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Samson's life in Judges 13—16.

Samson was a true superman but he also possessed real flaws. He ultimately saw beyond himself to the God who made him, and finally made a real difference. You can, too!

the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on— 20it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw *this,* they fell on their faces to the ground. 21When the Angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then

Manoah knew that He *was* the Angel of the LORD.

22And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!"

23But his wife said to him, "If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these *things*, nor would He have told us *such things* as these at this time."

24So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. 25And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan[a] between Zorah and Eshtaol.

SAMSON'S PHILISTINE WIFE

14 Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. 2So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife."

3Then his father and mother said to him, "*Is there* no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?"

And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well."

4But his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

5So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah.

Now *to his* surprise, a young lion *came* roaring against him. 6And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though *he had* nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

7Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. 8After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey *were* in the carcass of the lion. 9He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave *some* to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

10So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. 11And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. 13But if you cannot explain *it* to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing."

> ***Judges 14:12***
> Riddles weren't kids' stuff in ancient times. They were used as tests of people's wisdom. Often a great deal of pride and money rode on the outcome of a riddle.

And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it."

14So he said to them:

"Out of the eater came something to eat,
And out of the strong came something sweet."

Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.

15But it came to pass on the seventh[a] day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? *Is that* not *so?*"

16Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, "You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained *it* to me."

And he said to her, "Look, I have not

13:25 [a]Literally *Camp of Dan* (compare 18:12)
14:15 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *fourth.*

explained *it* to my father or my mother; so should I explain *it* to you?" 17Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people. 18So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down:

"What *is* sweeter than honey?
And what *is* stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them:

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,
You would not have solved my riddle!"

19Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes *of clothing* to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house. 20And Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, who had been his best man.

SAMSON DEFEATS THE PHILISTINES

15 After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into *her* room." But her father would not permit him to go in.

2Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. *Is* not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead."

3And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!" 4Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned *the foxes* tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. 5When he had set the torches on fire, he let *the foxes* go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards *and* olive groves.

6Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?"

And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

7Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease." 8So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

9Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi. 10And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?"

So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us."

11Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What *is* this you have done to us?"

And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them."

12But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines."

Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves."

13So they spoke to him, saying, "No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you." And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

14When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that *were* on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands. 15He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it. 16Then Samson said:

"With the jawbone of a donkey,
Heaps upon heaps,
With the jawbone of a donkey
I have slain a thousand men!"

17And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi.[a]

18Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the LORD and said, "You have

15:17 [a]Literally *Jawbone Height*

given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" 19So God split the hollow place that *is* in Lehi,[a] and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name En Hakkore,[b] which is in Lehi to this day. 20And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

SAMSON AND DELILAH

16 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. 2*When* the Gazites *were told,* "Samson has come here!" they surrounded *the place* and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, "In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him." 3And Samson lay *low* till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put *them* on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

4Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name *was* Delilah. 5And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Entice him, and find out where his great strength *lies,* and by what *means* we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver."

6So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength *lies,* and with what you may be bound to afflict you."

7And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man."

8So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them. 9Now *men were* lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

10Then Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with."

11So he said to her, "If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man."

12Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" And *men were* lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms like a thread.

13Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with."

And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom"—

14So she wove *it* tightly with the batten of the loom, and said to him, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.

15Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart *is* not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength *lies.*" 16And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, *so* that his soul was vexed to death, 17that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I *have been* a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man."

18When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart." So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand. 19Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him,[a] and his strength left him. 20And she said, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.

15:19 [a]Literally *Jawbone* (compare verse 14) [b]Literally *Spring of the Caller* **16:19** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *he began to be weak.*

21Then the Philistines took him and
put out his eyes, and brought him down
to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fet-
ters, and he became a grinder in the prison.
22However, the hair of his head began to
grow again after it had been shaven.

SAMSON DIES WITH THE PHILISTINES

23Now the lords of the Philistines gathered
together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon
their god, and to rejoice. And they said:

"Our god has delivered into our hands
Samson our enemy!"

24When the people saw him, they
praised their god; for they said:

"Our god has delivered into our hands
our enemy,
The destroyer of our land,
And the one who multiplied our
dead."

25So it happened, when their hearts were
merry, that they said, "Call for Samson,
that he may perform for us." So they
called for Samson from the prison, and he
performed for them. And they stationed
him between the pillars. 26Then Samson
said to the lad who held him by the hand,
"Let me feel the pillars which support
the temple, so that I can lean on them."
27Now the temple was full of men and
women. All the lords of the Philistines
were there—about three thousand men
and women on the roof watching while
Samson performed.

28Then Samson called to the LORD, say-
ing, "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray!
Strengthen me, I pray, just this once,
O God, that I may with one *blow* take ven-
geance on the Philistines for my two eyes!"
29And Samson took hold of the two middle
pillars which supported the temple, and he
braced himself against them, one on his
right and the other on his left. 30Then Sam-
son said, "Let me die with the Philistines!"
And he pushed with *all his* might, and the
temple fell on the lords and all the people
who *were* in it. So the dead that he killed
at his death were more than he had killed
in his life.

31And his brothers and all his father's
household came down and took him, and
brought *him* up and buried him between
Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his fa-
ther Manoah. He had judged Israel twenty
years.

MICAH'S IDOLATRY

17 Now there was a man from the
mountains of Ephraim, whose
name *was* Micah. 2And he said
to his mother, "The eleven hundred *shek-
els* of silver that were taken from you, and
on which you put a curse, even saying it
in my ears—here *is* the silver with me; I
took it."

And his mother said, "*May you be*
blessed by the LORD, my son!" 3So when he
had returned the eleven hundred *shekels*
of silver to his mother, his mother said, "I
had wholly dedicated the silver from my
hand to the LORD for my son, to make a
carved image and a molded image; now
therefore, I will return it to you." 4Thus he
returned the silver to his mother. Then his
mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver
and gave them to the silversmith, and he
made it into a carved image and a molded
image; and they were in the house of Mi-
cah.

> ***Judges 17:3, 4***
> Some offerings to God were required. Other offerings were voluntary. People chose to make them for private reasons. The priests, who were chosen from the descendants of Levi, handled the gifts and offerings according to God's law. Micah and his family were not descendants of Levi; so they were not legally qualified to handle the gifts. Not to mention the fact that using the money to create an idol violated God's law.

5The man Micah had a shrine, and made
an ephod and household idols;[a] and he
consecrated one of his sons, who became
his priest. 6In those days *there was* no king
in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his
own eyes.

7Now there was a young man from

17:5 [a]Hebrew *teraphim*

Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah; he *was* a Levite, and was staying there. 8The man departed from the city of Bethlehem in Judah to stay wherever he could find *a place.* Then he came to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. 9And Micah said to him, "Where do you come from?"

So he said to him, "I *am* a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am on my way to find *a place* to stay."

10Micah said to him, "Dwell with me, and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten *shekels* of silver per year, a suit of clothes, and your sustenance." So the Levite went in. 11Then the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man became like one of his sons to him. 12So Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and lived in the house of Micah. 13Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since I have a Levite as priest!"

THE DANITES ADOPT MICAH'S IDOLATRY

18 In those days *there was* no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for itself to dwell in; for until that day *their* inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to them. 2So the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, men of valor from Zorah and Eshtaol, to spy out the land and search it. They said to them, "Go, search the land." So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, and lodged there. 3While they *were* at the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite. They turned aside and said to him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this *place?* What do you have here?"

4He said to them, "Thus and so Micah did for me. He has hired me, and I have become his priest."

5So they said to him, "Please inquire of God, that we may know whether the journey on which we go will be prosperous."

6And the priest said to them, "Go in peace. The presence of the LORD *be* with you on your way."

7So the five men departed and went to Laish. They saw the people who *were* there, how they dwelt safely, in the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure. *There were* no rulers in the land who might put *them* to shame for anything. They *were* far from the Sidonians, and they had no ties with anyone.[a]

8Then *the spies* came back to their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol, and their brethren said to them, "What *is* your *report?*"

9So they said, "Arise, let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and indeed it *is* very good. *Would* you *do* nothing? Do not hesitate to go, *and* enter to possess the land. 10When you go, you will come to a secure people and a large land. For God has given it into your hands, a place where *there is* no lack of anything that *is* on the earth."

11And six hundred men of the family of the Danites went from there, from Zorah and Eshtaol, armed with weapons of war. 12Then they went up and encamped in Kirjath Jearim in Judah. (Therefore they call that place Mahaneh Dan[a] to this day. There *it is,* west of Kirjath Jearim.) 13And they passed from there to the mountains of Ephraim, and came to the house of Micah.

14Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of Laish answered and said to their brethren, "Do you know that there are in these houses an ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image? Now therefore, consider what you should do." 15So they turned aside there, and came to the house of the young Levite man—to the house of Micah—and greeted him. 16The six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who *were* of the children of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate. 17Then the five men who had gone to spy out the land went up. Entering there, they took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image. The priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men *who were* armed with weapons of war.

18When these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image,

18:7 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *with Syria.*
18:12 [a]Literally *Camp of Dan*

the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

19And they said to him, "Be quiet, put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; be a father and a priest to us. *Is it* better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?" 20So the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image, and took his place among the people.

21Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones, the livestock, and the goods in front of them. 22When they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men who *were* in the houses near Micah's house gathered together and overtook the children of Dan. 23And they called out to the children of Dan. So they turned around and said to Micah, "What ails you, that you have gathered such a company?"

24So he said, "You have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and you have gone away. Now what more do I have? How can you say to me, 'What ails you?'"

25And the children of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest angry men fall upon you, and you lose your life, with the lives of your household!" 26Then the children of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw that they *were* too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house.

DANITES SETTLE IN LAISH

27So they took *the things* Micah had made, and the priest who had belonged to him, and went to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire. 28*There was* no deliverer, because it *was* far from Sidon, and they had no ties with anyone. It was in the valley that belongs to Beth Rehob. So they rebuilt the city and dwelt there. 29And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel. However, the name of the city formerly *was* Laish.

30Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh,[a] and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. 31So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

THE LEVITE'S CONCUBINE

19 And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. 2But his concubine played the harlot against him, and went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months. 3Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her *and* bring her back, having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him. So she brought him into her father's house; and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him. 4Now his father-in-law, the young woman's father, detained him; and he stayed with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there.

5Then it came to pass on the fourth day that they arose early in the morning, and he stood to depart; but the young woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way."

6So they sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the young woman's father said to the man, "Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry." 7And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he lodged there again. 8Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart, but the young woman's father said, "Please refresh your heart." So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate.

9And when the man stood to depart—he and his concubine and his servant—his father-in-law, the young woman's father, said to him, "Look, the day is now drawing toward evening; please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here, that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get home."

18:30 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Moses.*

10However, the man was not willing to spend that night; so he rose and departed, and came opposite Jebus (that *is,* Jerusalem). With him were the two saddled donkeys; his concubine *was* also with him. 11They *were* near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said to his master, "Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it."

12But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who *are* not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah." 13So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah." 14And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. 15They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, for no one would take them into *his* house to spend the night.

16Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who also *was* from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place *were* Benjamites. 17And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?"

Judges 19:20, 21

Hospitality was serious business in ancient Israel. God commanded His people to show kindness to strangers. Often this involved offering food and shelter to travelers and their animals. Since most travelers wore open shoes, hosts were also expected to provide water so that their guests could wash their dirty feet.

18So he said to him, "We *are* passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I *am* from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; *now* I am going to the house of the LORD. But there *is* no one who will take me into his house, 19although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant, and for the young man *who is* with your servant; *there is* no lack of anything."

20And the old man said, "Peace *be* with you! However, *let* all your needs *be* my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square." 21So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

GIBEAH'S CRIME

22As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men,[a] surrounded the house *and* beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him *carnally!*"

HOMOSEXUALITY
When is sex perverted?
Judges 19:22

23But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act *so* wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage. 24Look, *here is* my virgin daughter and *the man's*[a] concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!" 25But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought *her* out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.

26Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master *was,* till it was light.

27When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen *at* the door of the house with her hands on the threshold. 28And he said to her, "Get up and let us be going." But there was no answer. So the man lifted her

19:22 [a]Literally *sons of Belial* **19:24** [a]Literally *his*

onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place.

29When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb,[a] and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel. 30And so it was that all who saw it said, "No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, confer, and speak up!"

ISRAEL'S WAR WITH THE BENJAMITES

20 So all the children of Israel came out, from Dan to Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the LORD at Mizpah. 2And the leaders of all the people, all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand foot soldiers who drew the sword. 3(Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.)

Then the children of Israel said, "Tell *us,* how did this wicked deed happen?"

4So the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, "My concubine and I went into Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, to spend the night. 5And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and surrounded the house at night because of me. They intended to kill me, but instead they ravished my concubine so that she died. 6So I took hold of my concubine, cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of the inheritance of Israel, because they committed lewdness and outrage in Israel. 7Look! All of you *are* children of Israel; give your advice and counsel here and now!"

8So all the people arose as one man, saying, "None *of us* will go to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house; 9but now this *is* the thing which we will do to Gibeah: *We will go up* against it by lot. 10We will take ten men out of *every* hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, a hundred out of *every* thousand, and a thousand out of *every* ten thousand, to make provisions for the people, that when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin, they may repay all the vileness that they have done in Israel." 11So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united together as one man.

12Then the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What *is* this wickedness that has occurred among you? 13Now therefore, deliver up the men, the perverted men[a] who *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and remove the evil from Israel!" But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel. 14Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel. 15And from their cities at that time the children of Benjamin numbered twenty-six thousand men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered seven hundred select men. 16Among all this people *were* seven hundred select men *who were* left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's *breadth* and not miss. 17Now besides Benjamin, the men of Israel numbered four hundred thousand men who drew the sword; all of these *were* men of war.

Judges 20:16

A sling was a leather strap designed to hold a rock. The strap was whirled around and around until the rock was released. Because of the whirling motion, the rock flew out of the sling with great force. Most people used small clay pebbles in their slings. Some warriors, though, used baseball-sized limestone or flint rocks. You can imagine the damage they caused.

18Then the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God[a] to inquire of God. They said, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?"

The LORD said, "Judah first!"

19So the children of Israel rose in the morning and encamped against Gibeah. 20And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin, and the men of Israel

19:29 [a]Literally *with her bones* **20:13** [a]Literally *sons of Belial* **20:18** [a]Or *Bethel*

put themselves in battle array to fight against them at Gibeah. 21Then the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and on that day cut down to the ground twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites. 22And the people, that is, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day. 23Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, "Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of my brother Benjamin?"

And the LORD said, "Go up against him."

24So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on the second day. 25And Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah on the second day, and cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of the children of Israel; all these drew the sword.

26Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, went up and came to the house of God[a] and wept. They sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 27So the children of Israel inquired of the LORD (the ark of the covenant of God *was* there in those days, 28and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days), saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?"

And the LORD said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand."

29Then Israel set men in ambush all around Gibeah. 30And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in battle array against Gibeah as at the other times. 31So the children of Benjamin went out against the people, *and* were drawn away from the city. They began to strike down *and* kill some of the people, as at the other times, in the highways (one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah) and in the field, about thirty men of Israel. 32And the children of Benjamin said, "They *are* defeated before us, as at first."

But the children of Israel said, "Let us flee and draw them away from the city to the highways." 33So all the men of Israel rose from their place and put themselves in battle array at Baal Tamar. Then Israel's men in ambush burst forth from their position in the plain of Geba. 34And ten thousand select men from all Israel came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce. But *the Benjamites*[a] did not know that disaster *was* upon them. 35The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel. And the children of Israel destroyed that day twenty-five thousand one hundred Benjamites; all these drew the sword.

36So the children of Benjamin saw that they were defeated. The men of Israel had given ground to the Benjamites, because they relied on the men in ambush whom they had set against Gibeah. 37And the men in ambush quickly rushed upon Gibeah; the men in ambush spread out and struck the whole city with the edge of the sword. 38Now the appointed signal between the men of Israel and the men in ambush was that they would make a great cloud of smoke rise up from the city, 39whereupon the men of Israel would turn in battle. Now Benjamin had begun to strike *and* kill about thirty of the men of Israel. For they said, "Surely they are defeated before us, as *in* the first battle." 40But when the cloud began to rise from the city in a column of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and there was the whole city going up *in smoke* to heaven. 41And when the men of Israel turned back, the men of Benjamin panicked, for they saw that disaster had come upon them. 42Therefore they turned *their backs* before the men of Israel in the direction of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them, and whoever *came* out of the cities they destroyed in their midst. 43They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them, *and* easily trampled them down as far as the front of Gibeah toward the east. 44And eighteen thousand men of Benjamin fell; all these *were* men of valor. 45Then they[a] turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon; and they cut down five thousand of them on the highways. Then they pursued them relentlessly up to Gidom, and killed two thousand of them. 46So all who fell of Benjamin that day were

20:26 [a]Or *Bethel* **20:34** [a]Literally *they*
20:45 [a]Septuagint reads *the rest.*

twenty-five thousand men who drew the sword; all these *were* men of valor.

47But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and they stayed at the rock of Rimmon for four months. 48And the men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin, and struck them down with the edge of the sword—from *every* city, men and beasts, all who were found. They also set fire to all the cities they came to.

WIVES PROVIDED FOR THE BENJAMITES

21 Now the men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah, saying, "None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife." 2Then the people came to the house of God,[a] and remained there before God till evening. They lifted up their voices and wept bitterly, 3and said, "O LORD God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel, that today there should be one tribe *missing* in Israel?"

> ***Judges 21:1***
> This was more than a promise the Israelites made. It was a vow, and vows were unbreakable. The men of Israel weren't required to make this pledge, but once they did, they were bound by it. It was unthinkable for people in ancient times to go back on their word.

4So it was, on the next morning, that the people rose early and built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. 5The children of Israel said, "Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the LORD?" For they had made a great oath concerning anyone who had not come up to the LORD at Mizpah, saying, "He shall surely be put to death." 6And the children of Israel grieved for Benjamin their brother, and said, "One tribe is cut off from Israel today. 7What shall we do for wives for those who remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them our daughters as wives?"

8And they said, "What one *is there* from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to Mizpah to the LORD?" And, in fact, no one had come to the camp from Jabesh Gilead to the assembly. 9For when the people were counted, indeed, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead *was* there. 10So the congregation sent out there twelve thousand of their most valiant men, and commanded them, saying, "Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, including the women and children. 11And this *is* the thing that you shall do: You shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman who has known a man intimately." 12So they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man intimately; and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

13Then the whole congregation sent *word* to the children of Benjamin who *were* at the rock of Rimmon, and announced peace to them. 14So Benjamin came back at that time, and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh Gilead; and yet they had not found enough for them.

15And the people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a void in the tribes of Israel.

16Then the elders of the congregation said, "What shall we do for wives for those who remain, since the women of Benjamin have been destroyed?" 17And they said, "*There must be* an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe may not be destroyed from Israel. 18However, we cannot give them wives from our daughters, for the children of Israel have sworn an oath, saying, 'Cursed *be* the one who gives a wife to Benjamin.'" 19Then they said, "In fact, *there is* a yearly feast of the LORD in Shiloh, which *is* north of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah."

20Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying, "Go, lie in wait in the vineyards, 21and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out to perform their dances, then come out from the vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the land of Benjamin. 22Then it shall be, when their fathers or their brothers come

21:2 [a]Or *Bethel*

to us to complain, that we will say to them, 'Be kind to them for our sakes, because we did not take a wife for any of them in the war; for *it is* not *as though* you have given the *women* to them at this time, making yourselves guilty of your oath.'"

23And the children of Benjamin did so; they took enough wives for their number from those who danced, whom they caught. Then they went and returned to their inheritance, and they rebuilt the cities and dwelt in them. 24So the children of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family; they went out from there, every man to his inheritance.

AUTHORITY
Do laws help us live rightly?
Judges 21:25

25In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.

Ruth

DATE OF WRITING: UNCERTAIN
AUTHOR: UNCERTAIN
THEME: GOD'S SOVEREIGN INTERVENTION BRINGS UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION
PURPOSE: FAITHFUL PEOPLE LIVE GODLY LIVES IN THE WORST OF TIMES.

OUTLINE

1:1–22 .....Ruth Is Loyal to Naomi
2:1–23 .....Ruth Meets Boaz
3:1–18 .....Naomi Makes Plans for Ruth
4:1–22 .....Ruth and Boaz Get Married

KEY VERSE:

But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16).

THEN /// The Book of Ruth is a story about a woman and, of all people, her mother-in-law. If it were a movie, you could call it a chick-flick. It has all the elements: drama, tragedy, danger, loyalty, flirtation, a love story, brave women, an honorable man, a marriage, and a baby. But this is a real story and it speaks clearly to all who read it.

This is actually an incredible love story that shows us something about the Jewish culture and reveals an important link in the genetic chain that led to Jesus Christ. In the character of Ruth, we see a woman who goes the extra mile to be faithful. In Boaz, we see a man of honor. The Book of Ruth tells us a lot about the kind of people we should be: people who stick by their families and ask for the love they need while honoring their cultural traditions.

NOW /// The Book of Ruth is about the kind of love that draws people together and then helps them stay connected. It's about the kind of love you need in your own life. The key to finding it is recognizing the kind of people who can give it. Ruth was this type of person. So was Boaz. They not only knew how to love, they knew how to commit to what was right even when it was hard. They both could have taken shortcuts and tried to find the easy way around their responsibilities. But they didn't.

We don't have to take shortcuts either, when it comes to love or responsibility. We can step up and do what we know is right, simply because it is right. We know that God is the ultimate source of love; He will help us through the difficult times and will always honor our faithfulness.

REALITY CHECK /// Boaz first noticed Ruth when she was "gleaning" in his wheat fields. So what was Ruth actually doing when she was out gleaning? Basically she was walking behind the guys who were gathering the wheat. Because harvesting was done by hand in those days, some wheat would be left behind. Ladies would go behind the harvesters and gather up the leftovers. This was one of the ways society took care of its poor.

Boaz saw Ruth gleaning, got a little crush on her, and told his guys to be sure and drop something extra for her to pick up. Boaz was impressed with Ruth's strong work ethic and faithfulness to her mother-in-law. This shows us that we never know who may be watching us, even in our most trying times. The faithfulness we show, especially during difficult times, can not only encourage others but also lead to wonderful, unexpected blessings.

ELIMELECH'S FAMILY GOES TO MOAB

1 Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. 2 The name of the man *was* Elimelech, the name of his wife *was* Naomi, and the names of his two sons *were* Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. 3 Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4 Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. 5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

Ruth 1:1, 2

Here's what you need to know about the geography of this story: Bethlehem and Jerusalem are neighboring cities on the western side of the Dead Sea. The country of Moab was an enemy of Israel located about fifty miles away, on the eastern side of the Dead Sea.



PROFILE
RUTH

Moab and Israel were neighboring countries and enemies. They shared a history of conflicts. But hardship and famine sometimes change attitudes; and during an extreme food shortage in Israel, Naomi, her husband, and their two sons moved from Israel to Moab. There the boys eventually married local girls. One of those girls was Ruth.

Years later, after Naomi's husband and both sons died, she was grief-stricken and decided to return to her hometown in Israel, Bethlehem. Somewhat to her amazement, Ruth insisted on returning with her. Ruth and Naomi had grown together into a close family and even closer friends, but an even stronger bond was created when Ruth accepted Naomi's faith.

The events that led up to Ruth's marriage to Boaz of Bethlehem were full of romance and excitement. God brought goodness out of grief. God adopted a foreign daughter into His own family. For we discover at the end of Ruth's story that she was an ancestor of King David. This fact also makes her part of the family tree of Jesus, the Savior and King.

In the relationship between Ruth and Naomi, we find a lovely example of the way younger and older people make a difference in each other's lives. Even mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law can be friends. They can also become sisters in their shared relationship with God. Ruth made a difference as she honored and cooperated with Naomi's wisdom. Her trust in God allowed Him to make a difference through her and in her life.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Every relationship in your life offers God an opportunity to work. Relationships are His fertile ground. When God describes His highest purposes for us, He uses relationship language: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" and "Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Mark 12:30, 31). Relationships are where God wants to make a difference. Shouldn't that be our goal, too?

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read Ruth's delightful story in the book that bears her name.

Ruth was a real woman with real problems. Her faithfulness to her mother-in-law and her God made a real difference. You can, too!

NAOMI RETURNS WITH RUTH

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law
that she might return from the country of
Moab, for she had heard in the country of
Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. 7 Therefore she
went out from the place where she was,
and her two daughters-in-law with her;
and they went on the way to return to the
land of Judah. 8 And Naomi said to her two
daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her
mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with
you, as you have dealt with the dead and
with me. 9 The LORD grant that you may
find rest, each in the house of her husband."

So she kissed them, and they lifted up
their voices and wept. 10 And they said to
her, "Surely we will return with you to your
people."

11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my
daughters; why will you go with me? *Are*
there still sons in my womb, that they
may be your husbands? 12 Turn back, my



LIFE APP

Loyalty / Ruth 1:16, 17

When you think of the word "loyal" you might think of a devoted pet. Though your pet can't talk, it definitely knows what it means to be loyal. It loves you no matter what you do; it wants nothing more than to make you happy; it acts like the best thing in the world happens when you simply walk through the door. Pets love you and will go up against any enemy if they think you are in danger. And only death can end their complete loyalty to the one they love.

For us to be loyal means we choose to be faithful to someone or something, like a friend or our country. It means to be absolutely devoted no matter what. It means to be just as unselfish and loving as the most loyal pet. Loyalty considers others before it considers itself. And true loyalty doesn't end.

Unfortunately, loyalty is hard to come by. People are so concerned with themselves and their own wants that they rarely give their loyalty to anyone but themselves. Loyalty always considers another as more important. And that's just not something most of the world does very well. Instead, we are used to hearing about the end of loyalty: marriages and friendships come to an end, countries are betrayed, families go their separate ways. It seems we've forgotten how to commit ourselves to someone else and remain faithful even when it's not convenient.

As Christians, loyalty should come much more easily to us. God teaches us in His Word that we should always choose to act in love. He tells us how important it is that we consider others as just as important as ourselves. God makes it clear that we should devote our lives to serving Him and doing all we can to serve other people. We have the perfect example of loyalty in Jesus. He devoted His life to saving yours.

daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, *if* I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, 13would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!"

14Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

FAMILY
What's a good example of loyalty for family?
Ruth 1:16

15And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."

16But Ruth said:

"Entreat me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people *shall be* my people,
And your God, my God.
17Where you die, I will die,
And there will I be buried.
The LORD do so to me, and more also,
If *anything but* death parts you and me."

18When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

19Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, "*Is* this Naomi?"

20But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi;[a] call me Mara,[b] for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

22So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

RUTH MEETS BOAZ

2 There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name *was* Boaz. 2So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after *him* in whose sight I may find favor."

Ruth 2:1–3
When God gave His laws to the Israelites, He made sure that everyone was taken care of. For example, a farmer was not allowed to go back to get grain he might have missed during harvesting. The remaining grain was left in the field so the poor could find food.

And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

3Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field *belonging* to Boaz, who *was* of the family of Elimelech.

4Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The LORD *be* with you!"

And they answered him, "The LORD bless you!"

5Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman *is* this?"

6So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It *is* the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."

8Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. 9*Let* your eyes *be* on the field which they

1:20 [a]Literally *Pleasant* [b]Literally *Bitter*

reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."

10So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?"

11And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and *how* you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. 12The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

13Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

14Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched *grain* to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back. 15And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16Also let *grain* from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

17So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. 18Then she took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.

19And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you."

So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today *is* Boaz."

20Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" And Naomi said to her, "This man *is* a relation of ours, one of our close relatives."

21Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'"

22And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "*It is* good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field." 23So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

RUTH'S REDEMPTION ASSURED

3 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? 2Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, *is he* not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your *best* garment and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do."

5And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."

6So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. 7And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

8Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. 9And he said, "Who *are* you?"

So she answered, "I *am* Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing,[a] for you are a close relative."

10Then he said, "Blessed *are* you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. 11And now, my

3:9 [a]Or *Spread the corner of your garment over your maidservant*

daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you *are* a virtuous woman. 12Now it is true that I *am* a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. 13Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be *that* if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, *as* the LORD lives! Lie down until morning."

14So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, "Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." 15Also he said, "Bring the shawl that *is* on you and hold it." And when she held it, he measured six *ephahs* of barley, and laid *it* on her. Then she[a] went into the city.

16When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "*Is* that you, my daughter?"

Then she told her all that the man had done for her. 17And she said, "These six *ephahs* of barley he gave me; for he said to me, 'Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'"

18Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."

BOAZ REDEEMS RUTH

4 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend,[a] sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. 2And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. 3Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which *belonged* to our brother Elimelech. 4And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy *it* back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it,* redeem *it;* but if you[a] will not redeem *it, then* tell me, that I may know; for *there is* no one but you to redeem *it,* and I *am* next after you.'"

Ruth 4:1

The town gate was the center of activity in ancient cities. Village elders often gathered at the gate to discuss the things that were going on in their communities. It was also the place where most legal proceedings took place.

And he said, "I will redeem *it.*"

5Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate[a] the name of the dead through his inheritance."

6And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it.*"

7Now this *was the custom* in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave *it* to the other, and this *was* a confirmation in Israel.

8Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy *it* for yourself." So he took off his sandal. 9And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You *are* witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. 10Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate.[a] You *are* witnesses this day."

11And all the people who *were* at the gate, and the elders, said, "*We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be

3:15 [a]Many Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Vulgate read *she;* Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Targum read *he.* **4:1** [a]Hebrew *peloni almoni;* literally *so and so* **4:4** [a]Following many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *he.* **4:5** [a]Literally *raise up* **4:10** [a]Probably his civic office

famous in Bethlehem. 12May your house be
like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore
to Judah, because of the offspring which
the LORD will give you from this young
woman."

DESCENDANTS OF BOAZ AND RUTH

13So Boaz took Ruth and she became his
wife; and when he went in to her, the
LORD gave her conception, and she bore
a son. 14Then the women said to Naomi,
"Blessed *be* the LORD, who has not left
you this day without a close relative;
and may his name be famous in Israel!
15And may he be to you a restorer of life
and a nourisher of your old age; for your
daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is
better to you than seven sons, has borne
him." 16Then Naomi took the child and
laid him on her bosom, and became a
nurse to him. 17Also the neighbor women
gave him a name, saying, "There is a son
born to Naomi." And they called his name
Obed. He *is* the father of Jesse, the father
of David.

18Now this *is* the genealogy of Perez:
Perez begot Hezron; 19Hezron begot Ram,
and Ram begot Amminadab; 20Ammin-
adab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot
Salmon;[a] 21Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz
begot Obed; 22Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse
begot David.

FAMILY
When is the right time to have children?
Ruth 4:13

4:20 [a]Hebrew *Salmah*

1 Samuel

DATE OF WRITING: 1050–750 B.C.
AUTHOR: TRADITION SUGGESTS SAMUEL, ALONG WITH THE PROPHET NATHAN AND THE SEER GAD
THEME: GOD IS WORKING IN HISTORY
PURPOSE: IN LEADERS, CHARACTER AND COMMITMENT DO COUNT.

OUTLINE

1:1—2:10 ..... The Birth and Early Childhood of Samuel
2:11—3:21 ..... Samuel at the Tabernacle
4:1—7:2 ..... The Ark Is Captured and Returned
7:3–17 ..... Samuel as the Leader of Israel
8:1—11:15 ..... Saul, the First King of Israel
12:1–25 ..... Samuel's Farewell Speech
13:1—15:35 ..... Saul Disobeys the Lord, and the Lord Rejects Him as King
16:1–13 ..... The Lord Chooses David to Be the Next King
16:14–23 ..... David Plays a Harp for Saul
17:1–58 ..... David Kills Goliath
18:1–30 ..... Saul Tries to Kill David
19:1—21:9 ..... Jonathan, Michal, Samuel, and Ahimelech Help David
21:10—22:5 ..... David Runs from Saul
22:6–23 ..... Saul Kills the Priests of the Lord
23:1—26:25 ..... David Refuses to Kill Saul
27:1–12 ..... David in Philistia
28:1–25 ..... Saul Talks with Samuel's Ghost
29:1—30:31 ..... David Rescues the Families of His Troops
31:1–13 ..... Saul and His Sons Die in Battle Against the Philistines

KEY VERSE:

So Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

THEN ///

Reading 1 Samuel is like seeing a home video of the Hebrew nation's family history, with the skeletons all hanging out of the family closets.

This history starts with one of the key players, Samuel, as a child being raised by the church. He grows up to be a national leader, a judge, and a prophet who anoints the first king of Israel, King Saul.

Saul was a warrior kind of king. He protected his territory and fought off the bad guys. This time in history would have looked a little like a battle scene from an epic movie with shields and horses, and armor.

Saul's downfall began when he became violently jealous of an up-and-coming leader named David. Saul eventually lost his mind and then his life while he was losing his kingdom. He's an example to us of someone who failed to do things God's way and lost it all.

NOW ///

Before Saul, the nation of Israel had never had a king! That's like America never having had a president. Even though their old system of having leaders who answered directly to God had worked well for them, they did exactly what we sometimes do: they let themselves be filled up with envy and jealousy. They looked at the nations around them, and said, "We want a king like *they've* got."

Sometimes God gives us what we want even though He knows we won't like the consequences. Wanting to be like everyone else didn't exactly work out well for the Hebrews, and it doesn't often work out well for us either. We would be better off to focus on God and what He wants specifically for us, rather than looking at others and asking God for what they have.

REALITY CHECK ///

In First Samuel, we get a front row seat to a heated personal conflict. David and Saul's relationship was, at the *very* least, a difficult one. Saul was intimidated by David. He felt threatened because the people respected David.

Saul even put out a contract on David as if he were a criminal. The amazing thing was that David didn't strike back at Saul. David realized that God had made Saul king and so Saul deserved respect. David also realized that in a conflict you can only control your own attitude, not the other person's. Pretty smart guy and a great model for us.

THE FAMILY OF ELKANAH

1 Now there was a certain man of
Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name *was*
Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of
Elihu,[a] the son of Tohu,[b] the son of Zuph,
an Ephraimite. 2And he had two wives: the
name of one *was* Hannah, and the name

1:1 [a]Spelled *Eliel* in 1 Chronicles 6:34 [b]Spelled *Toah* in 1 Chronicles 6:34



PROFILE
SAMUEL

What would be your first words in response if you heard God speak to you? The first time God spoke to Samuel, the young man didn't even recognize the voice. Fortunately, Samuel knew someone who steered him in the right direction. Eli told Samuel if he heard the voice again to keep the conversation going.

That was one thing Eli got right. He didn't explain God to Samuel at that point. He might not even have been absolutely sure God was speaking to Samuel. But he helped Samuel let God settle the issue. The fact that Samuel learned at a young age to give attention to God indicates the central reason why Samuel's life made such a difference.

Samuel bridged the time in history between the judges and the prophets in Israel. He anointed the first two kings of Israel (Saul and David). He conveyed God's warnings to the people that, in begging for a king, they were not only asking for trouble, they were separating themselves from God's guidance. He held kings accountable in God's name for their behavior. Samuel listened to God and, as a result, was able to speak for God. But it all began when he was still very young. The conversation he began with God lasted a lifetime.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

You have a tremendous spiritual advantage over Samuel. God has not only spoken, He has made His Word available in writing. Samuel had Moses' inspired writings; you have God's complete Word. Eli's wisdom still applies. God's Word will make a difference in your life only if you listen and obey. So if you want your life to make a difference for God, pay attention to what your Creator has to say. Respond to the conversation He has begun with you!

? WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read the story of Samuel's effective life in 1 Samuel 1—28. He is also listed in the great hall of faith (Heb. 11:32).

Samuel dedicated his entire life to hearing God and communicating His message to His people. Samuel's faithfulness, even in difficult times, made a real difference. Listen closely to God and act on what He says. Your life can make a difference, too!

of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. 3This man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. Also the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, *were* there. 4And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. 5But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the LORD had closed her womb. 6And her rival also provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the LORD had closed her womb. 7So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, that she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat.

HANNAH'S VOW

8Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? *Am* I not better to you than ten sons?"

9So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost

of the tabernacle[a] of the LORD. 10And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish. 11Then she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."

EMOTIONS
Who is the best one to turn to when we are sad?
1 Samuel 1:10

12And it happened, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth. 13Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. 14So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!"

15But Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I *am* a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16"Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman,[a] for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now."

17Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him."

PRAYER
Who answers prayer?
1 Samuel 1:17

18And she said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer *sad*.

SAMUEL IS BORN AND DEDICATED

19Then they rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. 20So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel,[a] *saying*, "Because I have asked for him from the LORD."

21Now the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and his vow. 22But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "*Not* until the child is weaned; then I will take him, that he may appear before the LORD and remain there forever."

1 Samuel 1:22, 23
In biblical days, the age of weaning usually occurred somewhere between a child's second and third birthdays. Samuel was probably still a toddler when his parents took him to Shiloh to be raised and taught by Eli the priest.

23So Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the LORD establish His[a] word." Then the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

24Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls,[a] one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child *was* young. 25Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli. 26And she said, "O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I *am* the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD. 27For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. 28Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD." So they worshiped the LORD there.

HANNAH'S PRAYER

2 And Hannah prayed and said:

"My heart rejoices in the LORD;
My horn[a] is exalted in the LORD.

1:9 [a]Hebrew *heykal*, palace or temple **1:16** [a]Literally *daughter of Belial* **1:20** [a]Literally *Heard by God* **1:23** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Syriac read *your*. **1:24** [a]Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Syriac read *a three-year-old bull*. **2:1** [a]That is, strength



LIFE APP

Science / 1 Samuel 2:3

Most likely, you have taken many science classes in your school career. You may have many more to go; especially if you are planning on a career in medicine or another science-based profession. You may have noticed that some of what you've covered in science classes doesn't seem to line up with what the Bible teaches. That can be really confusing and can even make you wonder whether the Bible is true.

What is important to remember is all knowledge comes from God. He created everything and knows exactly how all of creation works. People know some things, but we do not know everything, and we never will.

Our minds are limited. Although the human brain is an incredibly complex organ that operates like a God-designed computer, it is still limited to acquiring knowledge based on three dimensions and five senses. We are not capable of fully understanding the invisible, spiritual world. And we certainly are not capable of understanding the mind of God any more than a computer program can understand the engineer who developed it.

When you come across something in a science class (or any class for that matter) that seems to disagree with the Word of God, take time to really search the Bible for more information. Ask God to help you understand.

One thing you can be sure of: the Bible is always right. Any time a supposed "truth" does not line up with the Bible, it is not really true. If something you are taught disagrees with what God has revealed in His Word, then the information you were given is mistaken.

When it comes to understanding the things of God, the human mind is incapable. The invisible, spiritual world is not one that can be explained by science, because it is above and beyond our comprehension.

I smile at my enemies,
Because I rejoice in Your salvation.

HAPPINESS
Where can we find happiness?
1 Samuel 2:1

2 "No one is holy like the LORD,
For *there is* none besides You,
Nor *is there* any rock like our God.

GOD
Who is like God?
1 Samuel 2:2

3 "Talk no more so very proudly;
Let no arrogance come from your mouth,
For the LORD *is* the God of knowledge;
And by Him actions are weighed.

4 "The bows of the mighty men *are* broken,
And those who stumbled are girded with strength.
5 *Those who were* full have hired themselves out for bread,
And the hungry have ceased *to hunger.*
Even the barren has borne seven,
And she who has many children has become feeble.

6 "The LORD kills and makes alive;
He brings down to the grave and brings up.

GOD
Is God sovereign?
1 Samuel 2:6–10

7 The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
He brings low and lifts up.
8 He raises the poor from the dust
And lifts the beggar from the ash heap,
To set *them* among princes
And make them inherit the throne of glory.

"For the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD's,
And He has set the world upon them.
9 He will guard the feet of His saints,
But the wicked shall be silent in darkness.
"For by strength no man shall prevail.
10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces;
From heaven He will thunder against them.
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth.

"He will give strength to His king,
And exalt the horn of His anointed."

11 Then Elkanah went to his house at Ramah. But the child ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest.

THE WICKED SONS OF ELI

12 Now the sons of Eli *were* corrupt;[a] they did not know the LORD. 13 And the priests' custom with the people *was that* when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. 14 Then he would thrust *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw."

16 And *if* the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; *then* you may take *as much* as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "*No,* but you must give *it* now; and if not, I will take *it* by force."

17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

SAMUEL'S CHILDHOOD MINISTRY

18 But Samuel ministered before the LORD, *even as* a child, wearing a linen ephod.

2:12 [a]Literally *sons of Belial*

19Moreover his mother used to make him a
little robe, and bring *it* to him year by year
when she came up with her husband to
offer the yearly sacrifice. 20And Eli would
bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "The
LORD give you descendants from this
woman for the loan that was given to the
LORD." Then they would go to their own
home.

21And the LORD visited Hannah, so that
she conceived and bore three sons and two
daughters. Meanwhile the child Samuel
grew before the LORD.

PROPHECY AGAINST ELI'S HOUSEHOLD

22Now Eli was very old; and he heard ev-
erything his sons did to all Israel,[a] and
how they lay with the women who as-
sembled at the door of the tabernacle of
meeting. 23So he said to them, "Why do
you do such things? For I hear of your
evil dealings from all the people. 24No, my
sons! For *it is* not a good report that I hear.
You make the LORD's people transgress.
25If one man sins against another, God
will judge him. But if a man sins against
the LORD, who will intercede for him?"
Nevertheless they did not heed the voice
of their father, because the LORD desired
to kill them.

26And the child Samuel grew in stature,
and in favor both with the LORD and men.

27Then a man of God came to Eli and
said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Did I
not clearly reveal Myself to the house of
your father when they were in Egypt in
Pharaoh's house? 28Did I not choose him
out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* My priest,
to offer upon My altar, to burn incense,
and to wear an ephod before Me? And did
I not give to the house of your father all the
offerings of the children of Israel made by
fire? 29Why do you kick at My sacrifice and
My offering which I have commanded *in
My* dwelling place, and honor your sons
more than Me, to make yourselves fat
with the best of all the offerings of Israel
My people?' 30Therefore the LORD God of
Israel says: 'I said indeed *that* your house
and the house of your father would walk
before Me forever.' But now the LORD says:
'Far be it from Me; for those who honor
Me I will honor, and those who despise
Me shall be lightly esteemed. 31Behold, the
days are coming that I will cut off your arm
and the arm of your father's house, so that
there will not be an old man in your house.
32And you will see an enemy *in My* dwell-
ing place, *despite* all the good which God
does for Israel. And there shall not be an
old man in your house forever. 33But any of
your men *whom* I do not cut off from My
altar shall consume your eyes and grieve
your heart. And all the descendants of
your house shall die in the flower of their
age. 34Now this *shall be* a sign to you that
will come upon your two sons, on Hophni
and Phinehas: in one day they shall die,
both of them. 35Then I will raise up for My-
self a faithful priest *who* shall do according
to what *is* in My heart and in My mind. I
will build him a sure house, and he shall
walk before My anointed forever. 36And it
shall come to pass that everyone who is
left in your house will come *and* bow down
to him for a piece of silver and a morsel
of bread, and say, "Please, put me in one
of the priestly positions, that I may eat a
piece of bread."'"

SAMUEL'S FIRST PROPHECY

3 Now the boy Samuel ministered to
the LORD before Eli. And the word
of the LORD was rare in those days;
there was no widespread revelation. 2And
it came to pass at that time, while Eli *was*
lying down in his place, and when his eyes
had begun to grow so dim that he could
not see, 3and before the lamp of God went
out in the tabernacle[a] of the LORD where
the ark of God *was,* and while Samuel was
lying down, 4that the LORD called Samuel.
And he answered, "Here I am!" 5So he ran to
Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me."

And he said, "I did not call; lie down
again." And he went and lay down.

6Then the LORD called yet again, "Sam-
uel!"

So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and
said, "Here I am, for you called me." He
answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down
again." 7(Now Samuel did not yet know the
LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet re-
vealed to him.)

2:22 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint omit the rest of this verse. **3:3** [a]Hebrew *heykal,* palace or temple

8And the LORD called Samuel again the
third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and
said, "Here I am, for you did call me."

Then Eli perceived that the LORD had
called the boy. 9Therefore Eli said to Sam-
uel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls
you, that you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for
Your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and
lay down in his place.

10Now the LORD came and stood and
called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

FOLLOWING GOD
What should our response be when God speaks?
1 Samuel 3:10

And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your
servant hears."

11Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Be-
hold, I will do something in Israel at
which both ears of everyone who hears
it will tingle. 12In that day I will perform
against Eli all that I have spoken con-
cerning his house, from beginning to
end. 13For I have told him that I will judge
his house forever for the iniquity which
he knows, because his sons made them-
selves vile, and he did not restrain them.
14And therefore I have sworn to the house
of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall
not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering
forever."

15So Samuel lay down until morning,[a]
and opened the doors of the house of the
LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the
vision. 16Then Eli called Samuel and said,
"Samuel, my son!"

He answered, "Here I am."

17And he said, "What *is* the word that
the LORD spoke to you? Please do not hide
it from me. God do so to you, and more
also, if you hide anything from me of all the
things that He said to you." 18Then Samuel
told him everything, and hid nothing from
him. And he said, "It *is* the LORD. Let Him
do what seems good to Him."

19So Samuel grew, and the LORD was
with him and let none of his words fall to
the ground. 20And all Israel from Dan to
Beersheba knew that Samuel *had been* es-
tablished as a prophet of the LORD. 21Then
the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the
LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh
by the word of the LORD.

4 And the word of Samuel came to all
Israel.[a]

THE ARK OF GOD CAPTURED

Now Israel went out to battle against the
Philistines, and encamped beside Eb-
enezer; and the Philistines encamped in
Aphek. 2Then the Philistines put them-
selves in battle array against Israel. And
when they joined battle, Israel was de-
feated by the Philistines, who killed about
four thousand men of the army in the field.
3And when the people had come into the
camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has
the LORD defeated us today before the
Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the
covenant of the LORD from Shiloh to us,
that when it comes among us it may save
us from the hand of our enemies." 4So the
people sent to Shiloh, that they might
bring from there the ark of the covenant of
the LORD of hosts, who dwells *between* the
cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni
and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of
the covenant of God.

5And when the ark of the covenant of
the LORD came into the camp, all Israel
shouted so loudly that the earth shook.
6Now when the Philistines heard the noise
of the shout, they said, "What *does* the
sound of this great shout in the camp of the
Hebrews *mean?*" Then they understood
that the ark of the LORD had come into the
camp. 7So the Philistines were afraid, for
they said, "God has come into the camp!"
And they said, "Woe to us! For such a thing
has never happened before. 8Woe to us!
Who will deliver us from the hand of these
mighty gods? These *are* the gods who
struck the Egyptians with all the plagues
in the wilderness. 9Be strong and conduct
yourselves like men, you Philistines, that
you do not become servants of the He-
brews, as they have been to you. Conduct
yourselves like men, and fight!"

3:15 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint adds *and he arose in the morning.* **4:1** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate add *And it came to pass in those days that the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight;* Septuagint adds further *against Israel.*

10So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. 11Also the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

DEATH OF ELI

12Then a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line the same day, and came to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. 13Now when he came, there was Eli, sitting on a seat by the wayside watching,[a] for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told *it,* all the city cried out. 14When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What *does* the sound of this tumult *mean?*" And the man came quickly and told Eli. 15Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were so dim that he could not see.

16Then the man said to Eli, "I *am* he who came from the battle. And I fled today from the battle line."

And he said, "What happened, my son?"

17So the messenger answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God has been captured."

18Then it happened, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell off the seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

ICHABOD

19Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas's wife, was with child, *due* to be delivered; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and gave birth, for her labor pains came upon her. 20And about the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, "Do not fear, for you have borne a son." But she did not answer, nor did she regard *it.* 21Then she named the child Ichabod,[a] saying, "The glory has departed from Israel!" because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. 22And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

THE PHILISTINES AND THE ARK

5 Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon[a] and set it by Dagon. 3And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again. 4And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands *were* broken off on the threshold; only Dagon's *torso*[a] was left of it. 5Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

6But the hand of the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors,[a] *both* Ashdod and its territory. 7And when the men of Ashdod saw how *it was,* they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god." 8Therefore they sent and gathered to themselves all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?"

And they answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried away to Gath." So they carried the ark of the God of Israel away. 9So it was, after they had carried it away, that the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction; and He struck the men of the city, both small and great, and tumors broke out on them.

10Therefore they sent the ark of God to

4:13 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *beside the gate watching the road.* **4:21** [a]Literally *Inglorious* **5:2** [a]A Philistine idol **5:4** [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *Dagon.* **5:6** [a]Probably bubonic plague. Septuagint and Vulgate add here *And in the midst of their land rats sprang up, and there was a great death panic in the city.*

Ekron. So it was, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people!" 11So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go back to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. 12And the men who did not die were stricken with the tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

THE ARK RETURNED TO ISRAEL

6 Now the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. 2And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it to its place."

3So they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but by all means return *it* to Him *with* a trespass offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you."

4Then they said, "What *is* the trespass offering which we shall return to Him?"

They answered, "Five golden tumors and five golden rats, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines. For the same plague *was* on all of you and on your lords. 5Therefore you shall make images of your tumors and images of your rats that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lighten His hand from you, from your gods, and from your land. 6Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, did they not let the people go, that they might depart? 7Now therefore, make a new cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. 8Then take the ark of the LORD and set it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you are returning to Him *as* a trespass offering in a chest by its side. Then send it away, and let it go. 9And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, *then* He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that *it is* not His hand *that* struck us—it happened to us by chance."

1 Samuel 6:7

The Philistines knew that under normal circumstances, the cows would not leave their calves behind. They also knew that if the cows left to carry the ark back to the Israelites, it would be a sign that Israel's God was on the job—guiding, protecting, and avenging His people.

10Then the men did so; they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. 11And they set the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the chest with the gold rats and the images of their tumors. 12Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth Shemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh.

13Now *the people of* Beth Shemesh *were* reaping their wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it.* 14Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; a large stone *was* there. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. 15The Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the chest that *was* with it, in which *were* the articles of gold, and put *them* on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the LORD. 16So when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it,* they returned to Ekron the same day.

17These *are* the golden tumors which the Philistines returned *as* a trespass offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; 18and the golden rats, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging* to the five lords, *both* fortified cities and country villages, even as far as the large *stone of* Abel on which they set the ark of the LORD, *which stone remains*

to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

19Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men[a] of the people, and the people lamented because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter.

GOD
Why do we kneel before God?
1 Samuel 6:20

THE ARK AT KIRJATH JEARIM

20And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? And to whom shall it go up from us?" 21So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD; come down *and* take it up with you."

7 Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

SAMUEL JUDGES ISRAEL

2So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

3Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths[a] from among you, and prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." 4So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths,[a] and served the LORD only.

TRUTH
What are the benefits of following truth?
1 Samuel 7:3

5And Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you." 6So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD. And they fasted that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah.

7Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *of it,* they were afraid of the Philistines. 8So the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."

9And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered *it as* a whole burnt offering to the LORD. Then Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. 10Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. 11And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car. 12Then Samuel took a stone and set *it* up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer,[a] saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."

13So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14Then the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered its territory from the hands of the Philistines. Also there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 16He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. 17But he always returned to Ramah, for his home *was* there. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

ISRAEL DEMANDS A KING

8 Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2The name of his

6:19 [a]Or *He struck seventy men of the people and fifty oxen of a man* **7:3** [a]Canaanite goddesses **7:4** [a]Canaanite goddesses **7:12** [a]Literally *Stone of Help*

firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; *they were* judges in Beersheba. 3But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.

4Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

6But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD. 7And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. 8According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. 9Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them."

10So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. 11And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint *them* for his own chariots and *to be* his horsemen, and *some* will run before his chariots. 12He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, *will set some* to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and *some* to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13He will take your daughters *to be* perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give *them* to his servants. 15He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. 16And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men,[a] and your donkeys, and put *them* to his work. 17He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. 18And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day."

19Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, 20that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

21And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the LORD. 22So the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed their voice, and make them a king."

And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man go to his city."

SAUL CHOSEN TO BE KING

9 There was a man of Benjamin whose name *was* Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. 2And he had a choice and handsome son whose name *was* Saul. *There was* not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward *he was* taller than any of the people.

3Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to his son Saul, "Please take one of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." 4So he passed through the mountains of Ephraim and through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find *them.* Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, and *they were* not *there.* Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find *them.*

5When they had come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who *was* with him, "Come, let us return, lest my father cease *caring* about the donkeys and become worried about us."

6And he said to him, "Look now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honorable man; all that he says surely comes to pass. So let us go there; perhaps he can show us the way that we should go."

7Then Saul said to his servant, "But look, *if* we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread in our vessels is all gone, and *there is* no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"

8And the servant answered Saul again and said, "Look, I have here at hand one-fourth of a shekel of silver. I will give *that* to the man of God, to tell us our way." 9(Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: "Come, let us go to

8:16 [a]Septuagint reads *cattle.*

the seer"; for *he who is* now *called* a prophet was formerly called a seer.)

10Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God *was*.

11As they went up the hill to the city, they met some young women going out to draw water, and said to them, "Is the seer here?"

12And they answered them and said, "Yes, there he is, just ahead of you. Hurry now; for today he came to this city, because there is a sacrifice of the people today on the high place. 13As soon as you come into the city, you will surely find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now therefore, go up, for about this time you will find him." 14So they went up to the city. As they were coming into the city, there was Samuel, coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

15Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear the day before Saul came, saying, 16"Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him commander over My people Israel, that he may save My people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me."

1 Samuel 9:16

Pouring oil on a person's head, or anointing, was a way of announcing that the Lord had chosen him for a specific position, whether it was king, priest, or prophet. The oil was poured by a priest or prophet, acting on orders from God Himself!

17So when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, "There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over My people." 18Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, "Please tell me, where *is* the seer's house?"

19Samuel answered Saul and said, "I *am* the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and tomorrow I will let you go and will tell you all that *is* in your heart. 20But as for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not be anxious about them, for they have been found. And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on you and on all your father's house?"

21And Saul answered and said, "*Am* I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe[a] of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?"

22Now Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall, and had them sit in the place of honor among those who were invited; there *were* about thirty persons. 23And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Set it apart.'" 24So the cook took up the thigh with its upper part and set *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, "Here it is, what was kept back. *It* was set apart for you. Eat; for until this time it has been kept for you, since I said I invited the people." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

25When they had come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* spoke with Saul on the top of the house.[a] 26They arose early; and it was about the dawning of the day that Samuel called to Saul on the top of the house, saying, "Get up, that I may send you on your way." And Saul arose, and both of them went outside, he and Samuel.

SAUL ANOINTED KING

27As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to go on ahead of us." And he went on. "But you stand here awhile, that I may announce to you the word of God."

10 Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured *it* on his head, and kissed him and said: "*Is it* not because the LORD has anointed you commander over His inheritance?[a] 2When you

9:21 [a]Literally *tribes* **9:25** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint omits *He spoke with Saul on the top of the house;* Septuagint and Vulgate add *And he prepared a bed for Saul on the top of the house, and he slept.*
10:1 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *His people Israel; and you shall rule the people of the Lord;* Septuagint and Vulgate add *And you shall deliver His people from the hands of their enemies all around them. And this shall be a sign to you, that God has anointed you to be a prince.*

have departed from me today, you will find two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. And now your father has ceased caring about the donkeys and is worrying about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?"' 3Then you shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor. There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. 4And they will greet you and give you two *loaves* of bread, which you shall receive from their hands. 5After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison *is.* And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying. 6Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. 7And let it be, when these signs come to you, *that* you do as the occasion demands; for God *is* with you. 8You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings *and* make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do."

9So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. 10When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. 11And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What *is* this *that* has come upon the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets?" 12Then a man from there answered and said, "But who *is* their father?" Therefore it became a proverb: "*Is* Saul also among the prophets?" 13And when he had finished prophesying, he went to the high place.

14Then Saul's uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?"

So he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that *they were* nowhere *to be found,* we went to Samuel."

15And Saul's uncle said, "Tell me, please, what Samuel said to you."

16So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, he did not tell him what Samuel had said.

SAUL PROCLAIMED KING

17Then Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah, 18and said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians *and* from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.' 19But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans."[a]

20And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. 21When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found. 22Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the LORD answered, "There he is, hidden among the equipment."

23So they ran and brought him from there; and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. 24And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen, that *there is* no one like him among all the people?"

So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!"

25Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote *it* in a book and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. 26And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and valiant *men* went with him, whose hearts God had touched. 27But some rebels said, "How can this man save

10:19 [a]Literally *thousands*

us?" So they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

SAUL SAVES JABESH GILEAD

11 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you."

2And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, "On this *condition* I will make *a covenant* with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel."

3Then the elders of Jabesh said to him, "Hold off for seven days, that we may send messengers to all the territory of Israel. And then, if *there is* no one to save us, we will come out to you."

4So the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and told the news in the hearing of the people. And all the people lifted up their voices and wept. 5Now there was Saul, coming behind the herd from the field; and Saul said, "What *troubles* the people, that they weep?" And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. 6Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard this news, and his anger was greatly aroused. 7So he took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the territory of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, "Whoever does not go out with Saul and Samuel to battle, so it shall be done to his oxen."

And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent. 8When he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. 9And they said to the messengers who came, "Thus you shall say to the men of Jabesh Gilead: 'Tomorrow, by *the time* the sun is hot, you shall have help.'" Then the messengers came and reported *it* to the men of Jabesh, and they were glad. 10Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do with us whatever seems good to you."

11So it was, on the next day, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and killed Ammonites until the heat of the day. And it happened that those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

12Then the people said to Samuel, "Who *is* he who said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death."

13But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has accomplished salvation in Israel."

14Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there." 15So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

SAMUEL'S ADDRESS AT SAUL'S CORONATION

12 Now Samuel said to all Israel: "Indeed I have heeded your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you. 2And now here is the king, walking before you; and I am old and grayheaded, and look, my sons *are* with you. I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. 3Here I am. Witness against me before the LORD and before His anointed: Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received *any* bribe with which to blind my eyes? I will restore *it* to you."

4And they said, "You have not cheated us or oppressed us, nor have you taken anything from any man's hand."

5Then he said to them, "The LORD *is* witness against you, and His anointed *is* witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand."

And they answered, "*He is* witness."

6Then Samuel said to the people, "*It is* the LORD who raised up Moses and Aaron, and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. 7Now therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did to you and your fathers: 8When Jacob had gone into Egypt,[a] and your fathers cried out to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought

12:8 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint adds *and the Egyptians afflicted them.*

your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. 9And when they forgot the LORD their God, He sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; and they fought against them. 10Then they cried out to the LORD, and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and Ashtoreths;[a] but now deliver us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve You.' 11And the LORD sent Jerubbaal,[a] Bedan,[b] Jephthah, and Samuel,[c] and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you dwelt in safety. 12And when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the LORD your God *was* your king.

13"Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen *and* whom you have desired. And take note, the LORD has set a king over you. 14If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God. 15However, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.

16"Now therefore, stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes: 17*Is* today not the wheat harvest? I will call to the LORD, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking a king for yourselves."

18So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

19And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves."

20Then Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. 21And do not turn aside; for *then you would go* after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they *are* nothing. 22For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people. 23Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. 24Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. 25But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king."

TRUTH

Why are we to serve God in truth?

1 Samuel 12:24

SAUL'S UNLAWFUL SACRIFICE

13 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,[a] 2Saul chose for himself three thousand *men* of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent.

3And Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in Geba, and the Philistines heard *of it.* Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!" 4Now all Israel heard it said *that* Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel had also become an abomination to the Philistines. And the people were called together to Saul at Gilgal.

5Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty[a] thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and peo-

12:10 [a]Canaanite goddesses **12:11** [a]Syriac reads *Deborah;* Targum reads *Gideon.* [b]Septuagint and Syriac read *Barak;* Targum reads *Simson.* [c]Syriac reads *Simson.*
13:1 [a]The Hebrew is difficult (compare 2 Samuel 5:4; 2 Kings 14:2; see also 2 Samuel 2:10; Acts 13:21). **13:5** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; Syriac and some manuscripts of the Septuagint read *three.*

ple as the sand which *is* on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. 6When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. 7And *some of* the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

As for Saul, he *was* still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. 8Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. 9So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering. 10Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him.

11And Samuel said, "What have you done?"

Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* you did not come within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, 12then I said, 'The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD.' Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering."

13And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you. For now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him *to be* commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

15Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.[a] And Saul numbered the people present with him, about six hundred men.

NO WEAPONS FOR THE ARMY

16Saul, Jonathan his son, and the people present with them remained in Gibeah of Benjamin. But the Philistines encamped in Michmash. 17Then raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned onto the road to Ophrah, to the land of Shual, 18another company turned to the road *to* Beth Horon, and another company turned *to* the road of the border that overlooks the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

19Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears." 20But all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines to sharpen each man's plowshare, his mattock, his ax, and his sickle; 21and the charge for a sharpening was a pim[a] for the plowshares, the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to set the points of the goads. 22So it came about, on the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who *were* with Saul and Jonathan. But they were found with Saul and Jonathan his son.

23And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

1 Samuel 14:1–3

Priests received answers from God in three different ways: through prayer, through visions and dreams, and through the use of objects called "Urim" and "Thummim." These were small gems or stones carried by the high priest. Many Bible experts believe the stones were engraved with symbols and thrown like dice to determine God's will.

JONATHAN DEFEATS THE PHILISTINES

14 Now it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that *is* on the other side." But he did not tell his father. 2And Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron. The people who *were* with him *were* about six

13:15 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate add *And the rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the people who fought against them, going from Gilgal to Gibeah in the hill of Benjamin.* **13:21** [a]About two-thirds shekel weight



PROFILE
JONATHAN

Perhaps the most powerful way in which people make a difference in one another's lives is through true friendship—friendship like the one between Jonathan and David. For Jonathan, this friendship wasn't cheap. It cost him his father's trust, though Jonathan was not to blame.

Jonathan made a difference in David's life because he recognized God's hand on David. Jonathan was an able and courageous leader in his own right. If his father hadn't turned from God, Jonathan would have made a good king. Instead, he accepted the role of David's loyal friend.

Jonathan made a difference because he understood true loyalty and he had his priorities straight. He knew that loyalty doesn't justify helping someone do wrong. Jonathan's father, King Saul, wanted to kill David. Jonathan neither helped nor prevented his father's plans, but he warned his friend David. Jonathan remained with, and even died with, his father. Jonathan was able to be a loyal son and a loyal friend—to the death.

Jonathan was able to keep his loyalties straight because he had an ultimate loyalty to God and His ways. His human loyalties were always controlled by his loyalty to his heavenly Father. That ultimate loyalty allowed Jonathan to make a difference.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

You have probably found that loyalties at the human level compete for attention. How do you decide between family and friends? The choices can be heartbreaking. They can even seem practically impossible until you establish a higher, single loyalty.

No one deserves your ultimate loyalty but God. Have you established that ultimate loyalty?

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Jonathan in 1 Samuel 13—31. Note also 2 Samuel 1 and 9.

Jonathan faced real, tough decisions because of circumstances and divided loyalties. His ultimate loyalty to God allowed him to handle these challenges successfully and become an example of true friendship and faithfulness. Jonathan made a real difference. You can, too!

hundred men. 3Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.

4Between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side. And the name of one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. 5The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah.

6Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few."

7So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."

8Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to *these* men, and we will show ourselves to them. 9If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. 10But if they say thus, 'Come up to

us,' then we will go up. For the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and this *will be* a sign to us."

11So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden." 12Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something."

Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel." 13And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them. 14That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land.[a]

15And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling. 16Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and *there* was the multitude, melting away; and they went here and there. 17Then Saul said to the people who *were* with him, "Now call the roll and see who has gone from us." And when they had called the roll, surprisingly, Jonathan and his armorbearer *were* not *there.* 18And Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark[a] of God here" (for at that time the ark[b] of God was with the children of Israel). 19Now it happened, while Saul talked to the priest, that the noise which *was* in the camp of the Philistines continued to increase; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." 20Then Saul and all the people who *were* with him assembled, and they went to the battle; and indeed every man's sword was against his neighbor, *and there was* very great confusion. 21Moreover the Hebrews *who* were with the Philistines before that time, who went up with them into the camp *from the* surrounding *country,* they also joined the Israelites who *were* with Saul and Jonathan. 22Likewise all the men of Israel who had hidden in the mountains of Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, they also followed hard after them in the battle. 23So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted to Beth Aven.

SAUL'S RASH OATH

24And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed *is* the man who eats *any* food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food. 25Now all *the people* of the land came to a forest; and there was honey on the ground. 26And when the people had come into the woods, there was the honey, dripping; but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. 27But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; therefore he stretched out the end of the rod that *was* in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his countenance brightened. 28Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed *is* the man who eats food this day.'" And the people were faint.

29But Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. 30How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now would there not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

31Now they had driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. So the people were very faint. 32And the people rushed on the spoil, and took sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered *them* on the ground; and the people ate *them* with the blood. 33Then they told Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood!"

So he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone to me this day." 34Then Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and say to them, 'Bring me here every man's ox and every man's sheep, slaughter *them* here, and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the

14:14 [a]Literally *half the area plowed by a yoke* (of oxen in a day) **14:18** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *ephod.* [b]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *ephod.*

blood.'" So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night, and slaughtered *it* there. 35Then Saul built an altar to the LORD. This was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

36Now Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and plunder them until the morning light; and let us not leave a man of them."

And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you."

Then the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."

37So Saul asked counsel of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him that day. 38And Saul said, "Come over here, all you chiefs of the people, and know and see what this sin was today. 39For *as* the LORD lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But not a man among all the people answered him. 40Then he said to all Israel, "You be on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will be on the other side."

And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."

41Therefore Saul said to the LORD God of Israel, "Give a perfect *lot*."[a] So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped. 42And Saul said, "Cast *lots* between my son Jonathan and me." So Jonathan was taken. 43Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done."

And Jonathan told him, and said, "I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in my hand. So now I must die!"

44Saul answered, "God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan."

45But the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? Certainly not! *As* the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die.

46Then Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

SAUL'S CONTINUING WARS

47So Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the people of Ammon, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he harassed *them*.[a] 48And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.

49The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Jishui,[a] and Malchishua. And the names of his two daughters *were these:* the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal. 50The name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army *was* Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. 51Kish *was* the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner *was* the son of Abiel.

52Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.

SAUL SPARES KING AGAG

15 Samuel also said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD. 2Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek *for* what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. 3Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

4So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. 5And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley.

6Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. 7And Saul attacked the Ama-

14:41 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *Why do You not answer Your servant today? If the injustice is with me or Jonathan my son, O LORD God of Israel, give proof; and if You say it is with Your people Israel, give holiness.* **14:47** [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *prospered.* **14:49** [a]Called *Abinadab* in 1 Chronicles 8:33 and 9:39

MAKING IT REAL // 1 SAMUEL 15:22

Hear and Obey Obeying God is always the right thing to do. In 1 Samuel 15:22, Samuel makes it clear that you can't just do whatever you want, even if it seems okay or harmless. God wants you to obey Him.

If you read the story surrounding this verse, you will find that Saul, the first king of Israel, didn't always obey God. He thought he could revise God's instructions to suit himself. God was really disappointed with Saul's disobedience and took away his throne.

The Bible is God's word of instruction to us. It helps us live so that we can be safe, happy, and blessed. It is not up for revision. You can't just pick the parts you like. God wants you to obey Him and follow His Word—all of it, all the time. (See also: Ex. 19:5; Deut. 10:12, 13; Is. 1:19.)

Words to Live By

Obey: The word translated in 1 Samuel 15:22 as "obey" is the Hebrew word *shama* (shaw-mah'). It actually means "to hear intelligently." When we hear what God has said, the only intelligent response is to agree with Him and do as He says.

lekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all *that was* good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

SAUL REJECTED AS KING

10Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, 11"I greatly regret that I have set up Saul *as* king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night. 12So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." 13Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed *are* you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

14But Samuel said, "What then *is* this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

15And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

16Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night."

And he said to him, "Speak on."

17So Samuel said, "When you *were* little in your own eyes, *were* you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? 18Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' 19Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?"

20And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

22So Samuel said:

"Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt
offerings and sacrifices,
As in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.
23For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft,
And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and
idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of
the LORD,
He also has rejected you from *being*
king."

OBEDIENCE
Why should we obey God?
1 Samuel 15:22, 23

24Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."

26But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

BELIEF
What happens if we reject God?
1 Samuel 15:26

27And as Samuel turned around to go away, *Saul* seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, *who is* better than you. 29And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He *is* not a man, that He should relent."

30Then he said, "I have sinned; *yet* honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God." 31So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

32Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously.

And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

33But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

34Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. 35And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

DAVID ANOINTED KING

16 Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."

2And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears *it,* he will kill me."

But the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' 3Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you."

4So Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come peaceably?"

5And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.

6So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before Him!"

INTEGRITY
What's better: image or integrity?
1 Samuel 16:7

7But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the LORD does* not *see* as man sees;[a] for man

16:7 [a]Septuagint reads *For God does not see as man sees;* Targum reads *It is not by the appearance of a man;* Vulgate reads *Nor do I judge according to the looks of a man.*

MAKING IT REAL // 1 SAMUEL 16:7

Looks Can Be Deceiving We all know about first impressions; you look at someone, you check them out, and then you decide what you think. Without knowing much of anything about them, we make snap decisions and label people; they end up in one of only a few categories: cool, nerdy, wannabe, or loser. Based on nothing more than superficial, meaningless things, we decide if others are worth knowing or not. Unfortunately, others do that to us, too.

Thankfully, God couldn't care less about how we look. His doesn't look at our appearance; He looks at the inside. He doesn't take one look and categorize us. He can see all the reasons behind what others see. God knows the truth about people—good and bad. He always looks past the surface and sees your heart. (See also: 1 Chr. 28:9; 2 Chr. 6:30; Jer. 20:12; Acts 15:8, 9.)

Words to Live By

Heart: In 1 Samuel 16:7, the word translated as "heart" is the Hebrew word *leb* (labe). This word does not refer to the physical organ but to motives, feelings, affections, desires, aims, principles, thoughts, and intellect. *Leb* refers to the deep, inner being you really are. That's the part of you God sees.

looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

8So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 9Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 10Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." 11And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep."

And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down[a] till he comes here." 12So he sent and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this *is* the one!" 13Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

A DISTRESSING SPIRIT TROUBLES SAUL

14But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him. 15And Saul's servants said to him, "Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. 16Let our master now command your servants, *who are* before you, to seek out a man *who is* a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well."

17So Saul said to his servants, "Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring *him* to me."

18Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *who is* skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the LORD *is* with him."

19Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David, who *is* with the sheep." 20And Jesse took a donkey *loaded with* bread, a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent *them* by his son David to Saul. 21So David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armorbearer. 22Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Please let David

16:11 [a]Following Septuagint and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *turn around;* Targum and Syriac read *turn away*.

stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight." 23And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play *it* with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.

1 Samuel 16:23

The distressing spirit may have been some kind of mental illness or manic depression. While David's music seemed to make Saul feel better for a while, eventually the king's mental disorder became untreatable.

DAVID AND GOLIATH

17 Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered at Sochoh, which *belongs* to Judah; they encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim. 2And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. 3The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.

1 Samuel 17:1–10

Occasionally, ancient armies showed efficiency in the way they fought battles. Rather than putting all of their soldiers to risk in an all-out war, each side could choose its best warrior for a one-on-one, winner-take-all, fight to the death. In such cases, the army whose representative won the fight won the battle.

4And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span. 5*He had* a bronze helmet on his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of bronze. 6And *he had* bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. 7Now the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead *weighed* six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him. 8Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle? *Am* I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. 9If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." 10And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together." 11When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

12Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name *was* Jesse, and who had eight sons. And the man was old, advanced *in years,* in the days of Saul. 13The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul to the battle. The names of his three sons who went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. 14David *was* the youngest. And the three oldest followed Saul. 15But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

16And the Philistine drew near and presented himself forty days, morning and evening.

17Then Jesse said to his son David, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried *grain* and these ten loaves, and run to your brothers at the camp. 18And carry these ten cheeses to the captain of *their* thousand, and see how your brothers fare, and bring back news of them." 19Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel *were* in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20So David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, and took *the things* and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the camp as the army was going out to the fight and shouting for the battle. 21For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array, army against army. 22And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper, ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers. 23Then as he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath

by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines; and he spoke according to the same words. So David heard *them.* 24And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid. 25So the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be *that* the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption *from taxes* in Israel."

26Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

27And the people answered him in this manner, saying, "So shall it be done for the man who kills him."

28Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle."

29And David said, "What have I done now? *Is there* not a cause?" 30Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones *did.*

31Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported *them* to Saul; and he sent for him. 32Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

33And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you *are* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

34But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, 35I went out after it and struck it, and delivered *the lamb* from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught *it* by its beard, and struck and killed it. 36Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." 37Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

38So Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail. 39David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested *them.* And David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested *them.*" So David took them off.

40Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine. 41So the Philistine came, and began drawing near to David, and the man who bore the shield *went* before him. 42And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was *only* a youth, ruddy and good-looking. 43So the Philistine said to David, "*Am* I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"

1 Samuel 17:44

Receiving a proper burial was very important in the Israelite culture. The thought of one's body not being buried would have been humiliating and shameful. That's why Goliath's threat to feed David's body to the birds and animals was so insulting.

45Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that

there is a God in Israel. 47Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle *is* the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands."

TRIALS
Where can we find strength?
1 Samuel 17:45

48So it was, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung *it* and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. 50So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But *there was* no sword in the hand of David. 51Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it.

And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. 52Now the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines as far as the entrance of the valley[a] and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell along the road to Shaaraim, even as far as Gath and Ekron. 53Then the children of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their tents. 54And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.

55When Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son *is* this youth?"

And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know."

56So the king said, "Inquire whose son this young man *is*."

57Then, as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. 58And Saul said to him, "Whose son *are* you, young man?"

So David answered, "*I am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

SAUL RESENTS DAVID

18 Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. 3Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4And Jonathan took off the robe that *was* on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

1 Samuel 18:7
Music was an important part of Israelite life. Songs were often used for honoring heroes, for celebrating victories, and for passing on the stories of those heroes and victories to future generations.

5So David went out wherever Saul sent him, *and* behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. 6Now it had happened as they were coming *home,* when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. 7So the women sang as they danced, and said:

"Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands."

8Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *only* thousands. Now *what* more can he have but the kingdom?" 9So Saul eyed David from that day forward.

10And it happened on the next day that

17:52 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Gath.*

the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played *music* with his hand, as at other times; but *there was* a spear in Saul's hand. 11And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice.

12Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul. 13Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. 14And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD *was* with him. 15Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him. 16But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

DAVID MARRIES MICHAL

17Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife. Only be valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles." For Saul thought, "Let my hand not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him."

18So David said to Saul, "Who *am* I, and what *is* my life *or* my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" 19But it happened at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.

20Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. 21So Saul said, "I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David a second time, "You shall be my son-in-law today."

22And Saul commanded his servants, "Communicate with David secretly, and say, 'Look, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you. Now therefore, become the king's son-in-law.'"

23So Saul's servants spoke those words in the hearing of David. And David said, "Does it seem to you *a* light *thing* to be a king's son-in-law, seeing I *am* a poor and lightly esteemed man?" 24And the servants of Saul told him, saying, "In this manner David spoke."

25Then Saul said, "Thus you shall say to David: 'The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'" But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. 26So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king's son-in-law. Now the days had not expired; 27therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife.

28Thus Saul saw and knew that the LORD *was* with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him; 29and Saul was still more afraid of David. So Saul became David's enemy continually. 30Then the princes of the Philistines went out *to war.* And so it was, whenever they went out, *that* David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed.

SAUL PERSECUTES DAVID

19 Now Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David; but Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted greatly in David. 2So Jonathan told David, saying, "My father Saul seeks to kill you. Therefore please be on your guard until morning, and stay in a secret *place* and hide. 3And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you *are,* and I will speak with my father about you. Then what I observe, I will tell you."

FRIENDSHIP
What's an example of good friendship?
1 Samuel 19:1–7

4Thus Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his works *have been* very good toward you. 5For he took his life in his hands and killed the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great deliverance

for all Israel. You saw *it* and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?"

6So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, "*As* the LORD lives, he shall not be killed." 7Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these things. So Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past.

8And there was war again; and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and struck them with a mighty blow, and they fled from him.

9Now the distressing spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing *music* with *his* hand. 10Then Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence; and he drove the spear into the wall. So David fled and escaped that night.

11Saul also sent messengers to David's house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." 12So Michal let David down through a window. And he went and fled and escaped. 13And Michal took an image and laid *it* in the bed, put a cover of goats' *hair* for his head, and covered *it* with clothes. 14So when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He *is* sick."

15Then Saul sent the messengers *back* to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." 16And when the messengers had come in, there was the image in the bed, with a cover of goats' *hair* for his head. 17Then Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me like this, and sent my enemy away, so that he has escaped?"

And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?' "

18So David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth. 19Now it was told Saul, saying, "Take note, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah!" 20Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *as* leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. 21And when Saul was told, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. Then Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. 22Then he also went to Ramah, and came to the great well that *is* at Sechu. So he asked, and said, "Where *are* Samuel and David?"

And *someone* said, "Indeed *they are* at Naioth in Ramah." 23So he went there to Naioth in Ramah. Then the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24And he also stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "*Is* Saul also among the prophets?"[a]

JONATHAN'S LOYALTY TO DAVID

20 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What *is* my iniquity, and what *is* my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

2So Jonathan said to him, "By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me? It *is* not *so!*"

3Then David took an oath again, and said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, *as* the LORD lives and *as* your soul lives, *there is* but a step between me and death."

4So Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you yourself desire, I will do *it* for you."

5And David said to Jonathan, "Indeed tomorrow *is* the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third *day* at evening. 6If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked *permission* of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' 7If he says thus: '*It is* well,' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, be sure that evil is determined by him. 8Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity

19:24 [a]Compare 1 Samuel 10:12



LIFE APP

Friendship / 1 Samuel 20:17

Friends—we all need them and we all want them. Most things in life seem much more fun when we share them with friends. And not having friendships can make for a boring, unhappy existence.

In today's cyberworld, the word *friend* can take on a meaning it was never meant to have. You may have a list of hundreds of so-called friends online, but how many of them are people you really know and like? How many of them are really a part of your real life? How many of them actually care about you?

As you learn about the Old Testament days, you will most likely hear a lot about King David. He was a very godly man chosen by God Himself to be Israel's second king. The first king of Israel was Saul. Saul hated David because people loved David more than they loved him. So Saul tried over and over to kill David.

But Saul had a son named Jonathan. David and Jonathan became very close friends. Jonathan continually watched out for David and protected him from Saul's cruel jealousy. The Bible says Jonathan loved David "as he loved his own soul" (1 Sam. 20:17). What a great definition of real friendship!

Friendship is not about popularity. It's not about collecting "virtual" friends. It's about a real relationship based on love and respect. A true friend is someone who loves you and wants only the best for you. Like Jonathan and David, true friends will always have each other's back. If you surround yourself with people who truly want what's best for you, you'll find yourself achieving things you never thought you could because friends will always cheer you on. They will laugh with you and cry with you. They will help you through the hard times and lift you up when you're down.

But even more important than having true friends is being a good friend. Take a look at the people in your life you consider friends. How does your friendship compare to Jonathan and David's?

in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?"

9But Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?"

10Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me, or what *if* your father answers you roughly?"

11And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So both of them went out into the field. 12Then Jonathan said to David: "The LORD God of Israel *is witness!* When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, *or* the third *day,* and indeed *there is* good toward David, and I do not send to you and tell you, 13may the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father *to do* you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father. 14And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die; 15but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." 16So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying,* "Let the LORD require *it* at the hand of David's enemies."

1 Samuel 20:11–16

Jonathan and David made a covenant to fulfill certain responsibilities for each other. Not only were they bound by this contract, their descendants were bound by it as well. This kind of promise was common in Israel. Asking God to witness the agreement and hold them to it was also a common practice.

17Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul. 18Then Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow *is* the New Moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19And *when* you have stayed three days, go down quickly and come to the place where you hid on the day of the deed; and remain by the stone Ezel. 20Then I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target; 21and there I will send a lad, *saying,* 'Go, find the arrows.' If I expressly say to the lad, 'Look, the arrows *are* on this side of you; get them and come'—then, as the LORD lives, *there is* safety for you and no harm. 22But if I say thus to the young man, 'Look, the arrows *are* beyond you'—go your way, for the LORD has sent you away. 23And as for the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed the LORD *be* between you and me forever."

24Then David hid in the field. And when the New Moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast. 25Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And Jonathan arose,[a] and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. 26Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him; he *is* unclean, surely he *is* unclean." 27And it happened the next day, the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?"

28So Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked *permission* of me *to go* to Bethlehem. 29And he said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me *to be there.* And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the king's table."

30Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious *woman!* Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? 31For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die."

32And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?" 33Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David.

20:25 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *he sat across from Jonathan.*

34So Jonathan arose from the table in
fierce anger, and ate no food the second
day of the month, for he was grieved for
David, because his father had treated him
shamefully.
35And so it was, in the morning, that
Jonathan went out into the field at the
time appointed with David, and a little lad
was with him. 36Then he said to his lad,
"Now run, find the arrows which I shoot."
As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond
him. 37When the lad had come to the place
where the arrow was which Jonathan had
shot, Jonathan cried out after the lad and
said, "*Is* not the arrow beyond you?" 38And
Jonathan cried out after the lad, "Make
haste, hurry, do not delay!" So Jonathan's
lad gathered up the arrows and came back
to his master. 39But the lad did not know
anything. Only Jonathan and David knew
of the matter. 40Then Jonathan gave his
weapons to his lad, and said to him, "Go,
carry *them* to the city."
41As soon as the lad had gone, David
arose from *a place* toward the south, fell
on his face to the ground, and bowed down
three times. And they kissed one another;
and they wept together, but David more
so. 42Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in
peace, since we have both sworn in the
name of the LORD, saying, 'May the LORD
be between you and me, and between your
descendants and my descendants, for-
ever.'" So he arose and departed, and Jona-
than went into the city.

1 Samuel 20:41

Even today in Palestine, a kiss is a common greeting between friends and relatives who haven't seen each other in a while. The kiss between David and Jonathan was an indication of their friendship.

DAVID AND THE HOLY BREAD

21 Now David came to Nob, to
Ahimelech the priest. And
Ahimelech was afraid when he
met David, and said to him, "Why *are* you
alone, and no one is with you?"
2So David said to Ahimelech the priest,
"The king has ordered me on some busi-
ness, and said to me, 'Do not let anyone
know anything about the business on
which I send you, or what I have com-
manded you.' And I have directed *my* young
men to such and such a place. 3Now there-
fore, what have you on hand? Give *me* five
loaves of bread in my hand, or whatever
can be found."
4And the priest answered David and
said, "*There is* no common bread on hand;
but there is holy bread, if the young men
have at least kept themselves from women."
5Then David answered the priest, and
said to him, "Truly, women *have been* kept
from us about three days since I came out.
And the vessels of the young men are holy,
and *the bread is* in effect common, even
though it was consecrated in the vessel
this day."
6So the priest gave him holy *bread;* for
there was no bread there but the show-
bread which had been taken from before
the LORD, in order to put hot bread *in its
place* on the day when it was taken away.

1 Samuel 21:1–6

The bread that was used for worship was replaced with a fresh loaf every seven days. Usually only priests were allowed to eat the old bread. Ahimelech wanted to make sure that David and his men were "clean" (worthy and undefiled by the standard of God's law) before he gave them the worship bread.

7Now a certain man of the servants of
Saul *was* there that day, detained before
the LORD. And his name *was* Doeg, an
Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen who
belonged to Saul.
8And David said to Ahimelech, "Is there
not here on hand a spear or a sword? For
I have brought neither my sword nor my
weapons with me, because the king's busi-
ness required haste."
9So the priest said, "The sword of Goli-
ath the Philistine, whom you killed in the
Valley of Elah, there it is, wrapped in a cloth
behind the ephod. If you will take that, take
it. For *there is* no other except that one
here."
And David said, "*There is* none like it;
give it to me."

1 Samuel 21:10
Gath was probably the last place anyone would expect to find David. It was one of the five capital cities of the Philistines, the enemies of Israel.

DAVID FLEES TO GATH

10Then David arose and fled that day from
before Saul, and went to Achish the king of
Gath. 11And the servants of Achish said to
him, "*Is* this not David the king of the land?
Did they not sing of him to one another in
dances, saying:

'Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands'?"[a]

12Now David took these words to heart,
and was very much afraid of Achish the
king of Gath. 13So he changed his behavior
before them, pretended madness in their
hands, scratched on the doors of the gate,
and let his saliva fall down on his beard.
14Then Achish said to his servants, "Look,
you see the man is insane. Why have you
brought him to me? 15Have I need of mad-
men, that you have brought this *fellow* to
play the madman in my presence? Shall
this *fellow* come into my house?"

DAVID'S FOUR HUNDRED MEN

22 David therefore departed from
there and escaped to the cave
of Adullam. So when his broth-
ers and all his father's house heard *it,* they
went down there to him. 2And everyone
who was in distress, everyone who *was* in
debt, and everyone *who was* discontented
gathered to him. So he became captain
over them. And there were about four hun-
dred men with him.

1 Samuel 22:3
Like the Philistines, the Moabites were continually at war with the Israelites. David must have assumed that the safest places for him to hide were with Saul's enemies.

3Then David went from there to Mizpah
of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab,
"Please let my father and mother come
here with you, till I know what God will
do for me." 4So he brought them before the
king of Moab, and they dwelt with him all
the time that David was in the stronghold.

5Now the prophet Gad said to David,
"Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and
go to the land of Judah." So David departed
and went into the forest of Hereth.

SAUL MURDERS THE PRIESTS

6When Saul heard that David and the men
who *were* with him had been discovered—
now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a
tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear
in his hand, and all his servants standing
about him— 7then Saul said to his servants
who stood about him, "Hear now, you Ben-
jamites! Will the son of Jesse give every
one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make
you all captains of thousands and captains
of hundreds? 8All of you have conspired
against me, and *there is* no one who reveals
to me that my son has made a covenant
with the son of Jesse; and *there is* not one
of you who is sorry for me or reveals to
me that my son has stirred up my servant
against me, to lie in wait, as *it is* this day."

9Then answered Doeg the Edomite,
who was set over the servants of Saul, and
said, "I saw the son of Jesse going to Nob,
to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. 10And he
inquired of the LORD for him, gave him pro-
visions, and gave him the sword of Goliath
the Philistine."

11So the king sent to call Ahimelech the
priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's
house, the priests who *were* in Nob. And
they all came to the king. 12And Saul said,
"Hear now, son of Ahitub!"

He answered, "Here I am, my lord."

13Then Saul said to him, "Why have you
conspired against me, you and the son of
Jesse, in that you have given him bread and
a sword, and have inquired of God for him,
that he should rise against me, to lie in
wait, as it is this day?"

14So Ahimelech answered the king and
said, "And who among all your servants *is*
as faithful as David, who is the king's son-
in-law, who goes at your bidding, and is
honorable in your house? 15Did I then be-
gin to inquire of God for him? Far be it from

21:11 [a]Compare 1 Samuel 18:7

me! Let not the king impute anything to his servant, *or* to any in the house of my father. For your servant knew nothing of all this, little or much."

16And the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house!" 17Then the king said to the guards who stood about him, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not tell it to me." But the servants of the king would not lift their hands to strike the priests of the LORD. 18And the king said to Doeg, "You turn and kill the priests!" So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod. 19Also Nob, the city of the priests, he struck with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and donkeys and sheep—with the edge of the sword.

20Now one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. 21And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the LORD's priests. 22So David said to Abiathar, "I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have caused *the death* of all the persons of your father's house. 23Stay with me; do not fear. For he who seeks my life seeks your life, but with me you *shall be* safe."

DAVID SAVES THE CITY OF KEILAH

23 Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors."

2Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?"

And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah."

3But David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" 4Then David inquired of the LORD once again.

And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand." 5And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, *that* he went down *with* an ephod in his hand.

7And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. So Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars." 8Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.

9When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." 10Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. 11Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant."

And the LORD said, "He will come down."

12Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?"

And the LORD said, "They will deliver *you*."

13So David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.

DAVID IN WILDERNESS STRONGHOLDS

14And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand. 15So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David *was* in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest.[a] 16Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. 17And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that." 18So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.

23:15 [a]Or *in Horesh*

19Then the Ziphites came up to Saul at
Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding with
us in strongholds in the woods, in the hill
of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshi-
mon? 20Now therefore, O king, come down
according to all the desire of your soul to
come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver
him into the king's hand."
21And Saul said, "Blessed *are* you of the
LORD, for you have compassion on me.
22Please go and find out for sure, and see
the place where his hideout is, *and* who
has seen him there. For I am told he is very
crafty. 23See therefore, and take knowledge
of all the lurking places where he hides;
and come back to me with certainty, and
I will go with you. And it shall be, if he is in
the land, that I will search for him through-
out all the clans[a] of Judah."
24So they arose and went to Ziph before
Saul. But David and his men *were* in the
Wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the
south of Jeshimon. 25When Saul and his
men went to seek *him,* they told David.
Therefore he went down to the rock, and
stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. And
when Saul heard *that,* he pursued David in
the Wilderness of Maon. 26Then Saul went
on one side of the mountain, and David
and his men on the other side of the moun-
tain. So David made haste to get away from
Saul, for Saul and his men were encircling
David and his men to take them.
27But a messenger came to Saul, say-
ing, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines
have invaded the land!" 28Therefore Saul
returned from pursuing David, and went
against the Philistines; so they called that
place the Rock of Escape.[a] 29Then David
went up from there and dwelt in strong-
holds at En Gedi.

DAVID SPARES SAUL

24 Now it happened, when Saul
had returned from following
the Philistines, that it was told
him, saying, "Take note! David *is* in the Wil-
derness of En Gedi." 2Then Saul took three
thousand chosen men from all Israel, and
went to seek David and his men on the
Rocks of the Wild Goats. 3So he came to the
sheepfolds by the road, where there *was* a
cave; and Saul went in to attend to his
needs. (David and his men were staying in
the recesses of the cave.) 4Then the men of
David said to him, "This is the day of which
the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver
your enemy into your hand, that you may
do to him as it seems good to you.'" And
David arose and secretly cut off a corner
of Saul's robe. 5Now it happened afterward
that David's heart troubled him because
he had cut Saul's robe. 6And he said to his
men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this
thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to
stretch out my hand against him, seeing
he *is* the anointed of the LORD." 7So David
restrained his servants with *these* words,
and did not allow them to rise against Saul.
And Saul got up from the cave and went on
his way.

LEADERSHIP
Why should we respect leaders?
1 Samuel 24:1–7

8David also arose afterward, went out
of the cave, and called out to Saul, say-
ing, "My lord the king!" And when Saul
looked behind him, David stooped with his
face to the earth, and bowed down. 9And
David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to
the words of men who say, 'Indeed David
seeks your harm'? 10Look, this day your
eyes have seen that the LORD delivered
you today into my hand in the cave, and
someone urged *me* to kill you. But *my eye*
spared you, and I said, 'I will not stretch
out my hand against my lord, for he *is* the
LORD's anointed.' 11Moreover, my father,
see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my
hand! For in that I cut off the corner of
your robe, and did not kill you, know and
see that *there is* neither evil nor rebellion
in my hand, and I have not sinned against
you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. 12Let the
LORD judge between you and me, and let
the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand
shall not be against you. 13As the proverb
of the ancients says, 'Wickedness proceeds
from the wicked.' But my hand shall not be
against you. 14After whom has the king of
Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A
dead dog? A flea? 15Therefore let the LORD

23:23 [a]Literally *thousands* **23:28** [a]Hebrew *Sela Hammahlekoth*

be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand."

REVENGE
From whom should vengence come?
1 Samuel 24:12

16So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "*Is* this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. 17Then he said to David: "You *are* more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. 18And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. 19For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. 20And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 21Therefore swear now to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house."

22So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

DEATH OF SAMUEL

25 Then Samuel died; and the Israelites gathered together and lamented for him, and buried him at his home in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the Wilderness of Paran.[a]

DAVID AND THE WIFE OF NABAL

2Now *there was* a man in Maon whose business *was* in Carmel, and the man *was* very rich. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. 3The name of the man *was* Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. And *she was* a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man *was* harsh and evil in *his* doings. He *was of the house of* Caleb.

4When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, 5David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. 6And thus you shall say to him who lives *in prosperity:* 'Peace *be* to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have! 7Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, nor was there anything missing from them all the while they were in Carmel. 8Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let *my* young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.'"

9So when David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and waited.

10Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "Who *is* David, and who *is* the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. 11Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* to men when I do not know where they *are* from?"

12So David's young men turned on their heels and went back; and they came and told him all these words. 13Then David said to his men, "Every man gird on his sword." So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred stayed with the supplies.

14Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he reviled them. 15But the men *were* very good to us, and we were not hurt, nor did we miss anything as long as we accompanied them, when we were in the fields. 16They were a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping the sheep. 17Now therefore, know and consider what you will do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his household. For he *is such* a scoundrel[a] that *one* cannot speak to him."

25:1 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Maon.*
25:17 [a]Literally *son of Belial*

18Then Abigail made haste and took
two hundred *loaves* of bread, two skins of
wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs
of roasted *grain,* one hundred clusters of
raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and
loaded *them* on donkeys. 19And she said to
her servants, "Go on before me; see, I am
coming after you." But she did not tell her
husband Nabal.

20So it was, *as* she rode on the donkey,
that she went down under cover of the hill;
and there were David and his men, coming
down toward her, and she met them. 21Now
David had said, "Surely in vain I have pro-
tected all that this *fellow* has in the wilder-
ness, so that nothing was missed of all that
belongs to him. And he has repaid me evil
for good. 22May God do so, and more also,
to the enemies of David, if I leave one male
of all who *belong* to him by morning light."

23Now when Abigail saw David, she dis-
mounted quickly from the donkey, fell on
her face before David, and bowed down
to the ground. 24So she fell at his feet and
said: "On me, my lord, *on* me *let* this iniq-
uity *be!* And please let your maidservant
speak in your ears, and hear the words
of your maidservant. 25Please, let not my
lord regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as
his name *is,* so *is* he: Nabal[a] *is* his name,
and folly *is* with him! But I, your maidser-
vant, did not see the young men of my lord
whom you sent. 26Now therefore, my lord,
as the LORD lives and *as* your soul lives,
since the LORD has held you back from
coming to bloodshed and from avenging
yourself with your own hand, now then, let
your enemies and those who seek harm for
my lord be as Nabal. 27And now this pres-
ent which your maidservant has brought
to my lord, let it be given to the young
men who follow my lord. 28Please forgive
the trespass of your maidservant. For the
LORD will certainly make for my lord an
enduring house, because my lord fights
the battles of the LORD, and evil is not
found in you throughout your days. 29Yet a
man has risen to pursue you and seek your
life, but the life of my lord shall be bound
in the bundle of the living with the LORD
your God; and the lives of your enemies
He shall sling out, *as from* the pocket of a
sling. 30And it shall come to pass, when the
LORD has done for my lord according to all
the good that He has spoken concerning
you, and has appointed you ruler over Is-
rael, 31that this will be no grief to you, nor
offense of heart to my lord, either that you
have shed blood without cause, or that my
lord has avenged himself. But when the
LORD has dealt well with my lord, then re-
member your maidservant."

32Then David said to Abigail: "Blessed
is the LORD God of Israel, who sent you
this day to meet me! 33And blessed *is* your
advice and blessed *are* you, because you
have kept me this day from coming to
bloodshed and from avenging myself with
my own hand. 34For indeed, *as* the LORD
God of Israel lives, who has kept me back
from hurting you, unless you had hurried
and come to meet me, surely by morning
light no males would have been left to
Nabal!" 35So David received from her hand
what she had brought him, and said to her,
"Go up in peace to your house. See, I have
heeded your voice and respected your per-
son."

36Now Abigail went to Nabal, and there
he was, holding a feast in his house, like
the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart *was*
merry within him, for he *was* very drunk;
therefore she told him nothing, little or
much, until morning light. 37So it was, in
the morning, when the wine had gone from
Nabal, and his wife had told him these
things, that his heart died within him, and
he became *like* a stone. 38Then it happened,
after about ten days, that the LORD struck
Nabal, and he died.

39So when David heard that Nabal was
dead, he said, "Blessed *be* the LORD, who
has pleaded the cause of my reproach from
the hand of Nabal, and has kept His servant
from evil! For the LORD has returned the
wickedness of Nabal on his own head."

And David sent and proposed to Abigail,
to take her as his wife. 40When the servants
of David had come to Abigail at Carmel,
they spoke to her saying, "David sent us to
you, to ask you to become his wife."

41Then she arose, bowed her face to the
earth, and said, "Here is your maidservant,
a servant to wash the feet of the servants
of my lord." 42So Abigail rose in haste and
rode on a donkey, attended by five of her
maidens; and she followed the messengers
of David, and became his wife. 43David also

25:25 [a]Literally *Fool*

took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and so both of them were his wives.

44But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti[a] the son of Laish, who *was* from Gallim.

DAVID SPARES SAUL A SECOND TIME

26 Now the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding in the hill of Hachilah, opposite Jeshimon?" 2Then Saul arose and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the Wilderness of Ziph. 3And Saul encamped in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* opposite Jeshimon, by the road. But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. 4David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul had indeed come.

5So David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Now Saul lay within the camp, with the people encamped all around him. 6Then David answered, and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother of Joab, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?"

And Abishai said, "I will go down with you."

7So David and Abishai came to the people by night; and there Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the people lay all around him. 8Then Abishai said to David, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear, right to the earth; and I will not *have to strike* him a second time!"

9But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?" 10David said furthermore, "*As* the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish. 11The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. But please, take now the spear and the jug of water that *are* by his head, and let us go." 12So David took the spear and the jug of water *by* Saul's head, and they got away; and no man saw or knew *it* or awoke. For they *were* all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them.

13Now David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off, a great distance *being* between them. 14And David called out to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Do you not answer, Abner?"

Then Abner answered and said, "Who *are* you, calling out to the king?"

15So David said to Abner, "*Are* you not a man? And who *is* like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy your lord the king. 16This thing that you have done *is* not good. *As* the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because you have not guarded your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is,* and the jug of water that *was* by his head."

17Then Saul knew David's voice, and said, "*Is* that your voice, my son David?"

1 Samuel 26:19

Shiloh, the city where the ark of the covenant was kept, was considered the official worship site of the Israelites. Kicking someone out of Israel, then, prevented that person from officially worshiping God. Because worship was so important to the Israelites, depriving someone of the opportunity to worship was considered cruel punishment and was reserved for serious criminals.

David said, "*It is* my voice, my lord, O king." 18And he said, "Why does my lord thus pursue his servant? For what have I done, or what evil *is* in my hand? 19Now therefore, please, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant: If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering. But if *it is* the children of men, *may* they *be* cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' 20So now, do not let

25:44 [a]Spelled *Paltiel* in 2 Samuel 3:15

my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD. For the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

21Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly."

22And David answered and said, "Here is the king's spear. Let one of the young men come over and get it. 23May the LORD repay every man *for* his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into *my* hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. 24And indeed, as your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the LORD, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation."

25Then Saul said to David, "*May* you *be* blessed, my son David! You shall both do great things and also still prevail."

So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

DAVID ALLIED WITH THE PHILISTINES

27 And David said in his heart, "Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. *There is* nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand." 2Then David arose and went over with the six hundred men who *were* with him to Achish the son of Maoch, king of Gath. 3So David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household, *and* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's widow. 4And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more.

5Then David said to Achish, "If I have now found favor in your eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there. For why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?" 6So Achish gave him Ziklag that day. Therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. 7Now the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was one full year and four months.

8And David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites,[a] and the Amalekites. For those *nations* were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt. 9Whenever David attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive, but took away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish. 10Then Achish would say, "Where have you made a raid today?" And David would say, "Against the southern *area* of Judah, or against the southern *area* of the Jerahmeelites, or against the southern *area* of the Kenites." 11David would save neither man nor woman alive, to bring *news* to Gath, saying, "Lest they should inform on us, saying, 'Thus David did.'" And thus *was* his behavior all the time he dwelt in the country of the Philistines. 12So Achish believed David, saying, "He has made his people Israel utterly abhor him; therefore he will be my servant forever."

28 Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men."

2So David said to Achish, "Surely you know what your servant can do."

And Achish said to David, "Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever."

SAUL CONSULTS A MEDIUM

3Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land.

OCCULT
Should we have anything to do with the occult?
1 Samuel 28:3

4Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa. 5When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and

27:8 [a]Or *Gezrites*

his heart trembled greatly. 6And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.

7Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her."

And his servants said to him, "In fact, *there is* a woman who is a medium at En Dor."

8So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you."

9Then the woman said to him, "Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?"

10And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "*As* the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing."

11Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?"

And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me."

12When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you *are* Saul!"

13And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?"

And the woman said to Saul, "I saw a spirit[a] ascending out of the earth."

14So he said to her, "What *is* his form?"

And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he *is* covered with a mantle." And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground and bowed down.

15Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do."

16Then Samuel said: "So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? 17And the LORD has done for Himself[a] as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. 19Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons *will be* with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

20Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day or all night.

21And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was severely troubled, and said to him, "Look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice, and I have put my life in my hands and heeded the words which you spoke to me. 22Now therefore, please, heed also the voice of your maidservant, and let me set a piece of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength when you go on *your* way."

23But he refused and said, "I will not eat."

So his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he heeded their voice. Then he arose from the ground and sat on the bed. 24Now the woman had a fatted calf in the house, and she hastened to kill it. And she took flour and kneaded *it,* and baked unleavened bread from it. 25So she brought *it* before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.

THE PHILISTINES REJECT DAVID

29 Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which *is* in Jezreel. 2And the lords of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish. 3Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What *are* these Hebrews *doing here?*"

And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, "*Is* this not David, the servant of Saul king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or these years? And to this

28:13 [a]Hebrew *elohim* **28:17** [a]Or *him,* that is, David

day I have found no fault in him since he defected *to me.*"

4But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; so the princes of the Philistines said to him, "Make this fellow return, that he may go back to the place which you have appointed for him, and do not let him go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become our adversary. For with what could he reconcile himself to his master, if not with the heads of these men? 5*Is* this not David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying:

'Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands'?"[a]

6Then Achish called David and said to him, "Surely, *as* the LORD lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army *is* good in my sight. For to this day I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me. Nevertheless the lords do not favor you. 7Therefore return now, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."

8So David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And to this day what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

9Then Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you *are* as good in my sight as an angel of God; nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' 10Now therefore, rise early in the morning with your master's servants who have come with you.[a] And as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light, depart."

11So David and his men rose early to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

DAVID'S CONFLICT WITH THE AMALEKITES

30 Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, 2and had taken captive the women and those who *were* there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried *them* away and went their way. 3So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. 4Then David and the people who *were* with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. 6Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

7Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 8So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?"

And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake *them* and without fail recover *all.*"

9So David went, he and the six hundred men who *were* with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. 10But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed *behind,* who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor.

11Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water. 12And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. 13Then David said to him, "To whom do you *belong,* and where *are* you from?"

And he said, "I *am* a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick. 14We made an invasion of the southern *area* of the Cherethites, in

29:5 [a]Compare 1 Samuel 18:7 **29:10** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint adds *and go to the place which I have selected for you there; and set no bothersome word in your heart, for you are good before me. And rise on your way.*

the *territory* which *belongs* to Judah, and of the southern *area* of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire."

15And David said to him, "Can you take me down to this troop?"

So he said, "Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this troop."

16And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. 17Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. 18So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. 19And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all. 20Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those *other* livestock, and said, "This *is* David's spoil."

21Now David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had made to stay at the Brook Besor. So they went out to meet David and to meet the people who *were* with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them. 22Then all the wicked and worthless men[a] of those who went with David answered and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them *any* of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead *them* away and depart."

23But David said, "My brethren, you shall not do so with what the LORD has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us. 24For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part *is* who goes down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike." 25So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

26Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent *some* of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD"— 27to *those* who *were* in Bethel, *those* who *were* in Ramoth of the South, *those* who *were* in Jattir, 28*those* who *were* in Aroer, *those* who *were* in Siphmoth, *those* who *were* in Eshtemoa, 29*those* who *were* in Rachal, *those* who *were* in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, *those* who *were* in the cities of the Kenites, 30*those* who *were* in Hormah, *those* who *were* in Chorashan,[a] *those* who *were* in Athach, 31*those* who *were* in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to rove.

THE TRAGIC END OF SAUL AND HIS SONS

31 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. 3The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers.

4Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me."

But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. 5And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him. 6So Saul, his three sons, his armorbearer, and all his men died together that same day.

7And when the men of Israel who *were* on the other side of the valley, and *those* who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. 8So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9And they cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and sent *word* throughout the land of the Philistines, to proclaim *it in* the temple of their idols and

30:22 [a]Literally *men of Belial* **30:30** [a]Or *Borashan*

1 Samuel 31:8–13

The Philistines paraded Saul's body about seven miles from Mount Gilboa to Beth Shan. Jabesh in Gilead was about fifteen miles away, on the other side of the Jordan River. The people of Jabesh owed Saul a favor because, early in his career, Saul had defended their town against Nahash, the king of the Ammonites.

among the people. [10]Then they put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.[a]

[11]Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, [12]all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. [13]Then they took their bones and buried *them* under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

31:10 [a]Spelled *Beth Shean* in Joshua 17:11 and elsewhere

2 Samuel

DATE OF WRITING: 1050–750 B.C.
AUTHOR: TRADITION SUGGESTS THE PROPHETS NATHAN AND GAD
THEME: KING DAVID WAS A FORERUNNER OF THE MESSIAH
PURPOSE: THE MOST COMMITTED BELIEVER CAN FAIL AND CONSTANTLY NEEDS GOD'S GRACE.

OUTLINE

1:1–27 ..... David Mourns for Saul
2:1—4:12 ..... David, King of Judah
5:1—6:23 ..... David, King of All Israel
7:1–29 ..... God's Promise to David
8:1—10:19 ..... The Wars of King David
11:1—12:31 ..... David's Affair with Bathsheba
13:1—14:33 ..... Violence in David's Family: Tamar, Amnon, and Absalom
15:1—20:26 ..... Absalom Leads a Rebellion
21:1–22 ..... Other Events from David's Rule
22:1—23:7 ..... Two Poems by David
23:8–39 ..... David's Warriors
24:1–25 ..... David Counts the People of Israel, and Israel Is Punished

KEY VERSE:

"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Samuel 7:12, 13).

THEN /// If 1 Samuel is like a home video, then 2 Samuel is like the sequel of this homegrown epic. In it, King Saul's worst fears come true: David replaces Saul as king. You've probably heard of King David. He was an ancestor of Jesus. He built the first temple, and he wrote many of the Psalms. He was the original Renaissance man. There are more stories in the Bible about David than about anyone else except Jesus Himself.

God called David a man after His own heart. That's why David's story is such an encouragement to us. He wasn't a perfect man, but he loved God and God was pleased with that.

NOW /// There are plenty of sad tales and mishaps in 2 Samuel but it's a book that shows us that God's concern is not that we never foul up. His concern is that we keep coming back to Him and starting over. What a comforting thought! Just because we mess up, it doesn't mean God gives up on us. We have to come to God honestly, expressing our remorse and our love, and He will forgive and restore.

REALITY CHECK /// The Bible doesn't sugarcoat the truth, even for its heroes. Look at David more closely. He was one of the best. He loved God. He was a fantastic musician and writer. He was a good king. The Bible could have left it at that. God could have swept all the rest of David's faults under a rug or into a closet.

That's not what God does, though. He accepts us and uses us as we are with all of our faults. David is famous for one *really* big blunder. He fell for a married woman. They had an affair. He even had her husband killed to try and clean up the mess.

David's story reminds us that we all make bad mistakes, but God never gives up on us. Sin does not have to win; we can come to God honestly to receive forgiveness, cleansing, and hope for the future. We can pray with David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. . . . Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You" (Psalm 51:10–13).

THE REPORT OF SAUL'S DEATH

1 Now it came to pass after the death
of Saul, when David had returned
from the slaughter of the Amalekites,
and David had stayed two days in Ziklag,
2 on the third day, behold, it happened that
a man came from Saul's camp with his
clothes torn and dust on his head. So it
was, when he came to David, that he fell to
the ground and prostrated himself.

3And David said to him, "Where have you come from?"

So he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel."

4Then David said to him, "How did the matter go? Please tell me."

And he answered, "The people have fled from the battle, many of the people are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."

5So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?"

6Then the young man who told him said, "As I happened by chance *to be* on Mount Gilboa, there was Saul, leaning on his spear; and indeed the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. 7Now when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' 8And he said to me, 'Who *are* you?' So I answered him, 'I *am* an Amalekite.' 9He said to me again, 'Please stand over me and kill me, for anguish has come upon me, but my life still *remains* in me.' 10So I stood over him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that *was* on his head and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them here to my lord."

11Therefore David took hold of his own clothes and tore them, and *so did* all the men who *were* with him. 12And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

13Then David said to the young man who told him, "Where *are* you from?"

And he answered, "I *am* the son of an alien, an Amalekite."

14So David said to him, "How was it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" 15Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go near, *and* execute him!" And he struck him so that he died. 16So David said to him, "Your blood *is* on your own head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed.'"

THE SONG OF THE BOW

17Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, 18and he told *them* to teach the children of Judah *the Song of* the Bow; indeed *it is* written in the Book of Jasher:

2 Samuel 1:18

Don't bother looking for the Book of Jasher in your Bible or your local library or your nearest bookstore. You won't find it. This ancient book, which contained everything from Joshua's speech at the battle of Gibeon to David's tribute to Saul and Jonathan, has been lost for centuries. In case you're wondering, Jasher means "Upright" or "Righteous."

19"The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places!
How the mighty have fallen!
20Tell *it* not in Gath,
Proclaim *it* not in the streets of Ashkelon—
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

21"O mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew nor rain upon you,
Nor fields of offerings.
For the shield of the mighty is cast away there!
The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.
22From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
And the sword of Saul did not return empty.

23"Saul and Jonathan *were* beloved and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

24"O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet, with luxury;
Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

25 "How the mighty have fallen in the
midst of the battle!
Jonathan *was* slain in your high places.
26 I am distressed for you, my brother
Jonathan;
You have been very pleasant to me;
Your love to me was wonderful,
Surpassing the love of women.

27 "How the mighty have fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!"

DAVID ANOINTED KING OF JUDAH

2 It happened after this that David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?"
And the LORD said to him, "Go up."
David said, "Where shall I go up?"
And He said, "To Hebron."
2 So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. 3 And David brought up the men who *were* with him, every man with his household. So they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.
4 Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, "The men of Jabesh Gilead *were the ones* who buried Saul." 5 So David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead, and said to them, "You *are* blessed of the LORD, for you have shown this kindness to your lord, to Saul, and have buried him. 6 And now may the LORD show kindness and truth to you. I also will repay you this kindness, because you have done this thing. 7 Now therefore, let your hands be strengthened, and be valiant; for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

ISHBOSHETH MADE KING OF ISRAEL

8 But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ishbosheth[a] the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim; 9 and he made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin, and over all Israel. 10 Ishbosheth, Saul's son, *was* forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. Only the house of Judah followed David. 11 And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

ISRAEL AND JUDAH AT WAR

12 Now Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. 13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out and met them by the pool of Gibeon. So they sat down, one on one side of the pool and the other on the other side of the pool. 14 Then Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men now arise and compete before us."
And Joab said, "Let them arise."

2 Samuel 2:14–17

Abner, the commander of Saul's army, was Saul's first cousin. Joab, the commander of David's army, was David's nephew. The gruesome game that Abner and Joab suggested was prompted by the rivalry between the tribe of Benjamin (Saul's tribe), which wanted the throne passed on to one of Saul's descendants, and the tribe of Judah (David's tribe), which had chosen David as its king.

15 So they arose and went over by number, twelve from Benjamin, *followers* of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve from the servants of David. 16 And each one grasped his opponent by the head and *thrust* his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called the Field of Sharp Swords,[a] which *is* in Gibeon. 17 So there was a very fierce battle that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.
18 Now the three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab and Abishai and Asahel. And Asahel *was as* fleet of foot as a wild gazelle. 19 So Asahel pursued Abner, and in going he did not turn to the right hand or to the left from following Abner.
20 Then Abner looked behind him and said, "*Are* you Asahel?"
He answered, "I *am*."

2:8 [a]Called *Esh-Baal* in 1 Chronicles 8:33 and 9:39 **2:16** [a]Hebrew *Helkath Hazzurim*

21And Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and lay hold on one of the young men and take his armor for yourself." But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. 22So Abner said again to Asahel, "Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I face your brother Joab?" 23However, he refused to turn aside. Therefore Abner struck him in the stomach with the blunt end of the spear, so that the spear came out of his back; and he fell down there and died on the spot. So it was *that* as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood still.

24Joab and Abishai also pursued Abner. And the sun was going down when they came to the hill of Ammah, which *is* before Giah by the road to the Wilderness of Gibeon. 25Now the children of Benjamin gathered together behind Abner and became a unit, and took their stand on top of a hill. 26Then Abner called to Joab and said, "Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that it will be bitter in the latter end? How long will it be then until you tell the people to return from pursuing their brethren?"

27And Joab said, "*As* God lives, unless you had spoken, surely then by morning all the people would have given up pursuing their brethren." 28So Joab blew a trumpet; and all the people stood still and did not pursue Israel anymore, nor did they fight anymore. 29Then Abner and his men went on all that night through the plain, crossed over the Jordan, and went through all Bithron; and they came to Mahanaim.

30So Joab returned from pursuing Abner. And when he had gathered all the people together, there were missing of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. 31But the servants of David had struck down, of Benjamin and Abner's men, three hundred and sixty men who died. 32Then they took up Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb, which *was in* Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at daybreak.

3 Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.

SONS OF DAVID

2Sons were born to David in Hebron: His firstborn was Amnon by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; 3his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; 4the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; 5and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron.

ABNER JOINS FORCES WITH DAVID

6Now it was so, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner was strengthening *his hold* on the house of Saul.

7And Saul had a concubine, whose name *was* Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. So *Ish-bosheth* said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"

8Then Abner became very angry at the words of Ishbosheth, and said, "*Am* I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? Today I show loyalty to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David; and you charge me today with a fault concerning this woman? 9May God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not do for David as the LORD has sworn to him— 10to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba." 11And he could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.

2 Samuel 3:10

The phrase "over Israel and over Judah" shows the division that was occurring among God's people. In this verse, "Judah" refers to David's tribe and his followers and "Israel" refers to the tribes who followed Saul and his descendants.

12Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to David, saying, "Whose *is* the land?" saying *also,* "Make your covenant with me, and indeed my hand *shall be* with you to bring all Israel to you."

13And *David* said, "Good, I will make a
covenant with you. But one thing I require
of you: you shall not see my face unless you
first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when
you come to see my face." 14So David sent
messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son, say-
ing, "Give *me* my wife Michal, whom I be-
trothed to myself for a hundred foreskins
of the Philistines." 15And Ishbosheth sent
and took her from *her* husband, from Pal-
tiel[a] the son of Laish. 16Then her husband
went along with her to Bahurim, weeping
behind her. So Abner said to him, "Go, re-
turn!" And he returned.

17Now Abner had communicated with
the elders of Israel, saying, "In time past you
were seeking for David *to be* king over you.
18Now then, do *it!* For the LORD has spoken
of David, saying, 'By the hand of My servant
David, I[a] will save My people Israel from
the hand of the Philistines and the hand of
all their enemies.'" 19And Abner also spoke
in the hearing of Benjamin. Then Abner
also went to speak in the hearing of David
in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel
and the whole house of Benjamin.

20So Abner and twenty men with him
came to David at Hebron. And David made
a feast for Abner and the men who *were*
with him. 21Then Abner said to David, "I
will arise and go, and gather all Israel to my
lord the king, that they may make a cove-
nant with you, and that you may reign over
all that your heart desires." So David sent
Abner away, and he went in peace.

JOAB MURDERS ABNER

22At that moment the servants of David and
Joab came from a raid and brought much
spoil with them. But Abner *was* not with
David in Hebron, for he had sent him away,
and he had gone in peace. 23When Joab and
all the troops that *were* with him had come,
they told Joab, saying, "Abner the son of Ner
came to the king, and he sent him away,
and he has gone in peace." 24Then Joab
came to the king and said, "What have you
done? Look, Abner came to you; why *is* it
that you sent him away, and he has already
gone? 25Surely you realize that Abner the
son of Ner came to deceive you, to know
your going out and your coming in, and to
know all that you are doing."

26And when Joab had gone from David's
presence, he sent messengers after Abner,
who brought him back from the well of
Sirah. But David did not know *it.* 27Now
when Abner had returned to Hebron, Joab
took him aside in the gate to speak with
him privately, and there stabbed him in the
stomach, so that he died for the blood of
Asahel his brother.

28Afterward, when David heard *it,* he
said, "My kingdom and I *are* guiltless be-
fore the LORD forever of the blood of Abner
the son of Ner. 29Let it rest on the head of
Joab and on all his father's house; and let
there never fail to be in the house of Joab
one who has a discharge or is a leper, who
leans on a staff or falls by the sword, or
who lacks bread." 30So Joab and Abishai
his brother killed Abner, because he had
killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the
battle.

2 Samuel 3:31

Grief was a much more public emo-
tion in ancient times than it is today.
People demonstrated their feelings
of loss and sadness by tearing their
clothes, putting ashes or dust in their
hair, and wearing really uncomfort-
able clothes called sackcloth. These
outward signs were used both for
mourning a death and for repenting
of sin, and were often continued for
several days.

DAVID'S MOURNING FOR ABNER

31Then David said to Joab and to all the
people who were with him, "Tear your
clothes, gird yourselves with sackcloth,
and mourn for Abner." And King David fol-
lowed the coffin. 32So they buried Abner
in Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice
and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the
people wept. 33And the king sang *a lament*
over Abner and said:

"Should Abner die as a fool dies?
34Your hands were not bound
Nor your feet put into fetters;
As a man falls before wicked men, *so*
you fell."

3:15 [a]Spelled *Palti* in 1 Samuel 25:44
3:18 [a]Following many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum; Masoretic Text reads *he.*

Then all the people wept over him again.

35And when all the people came to persuade David to eat food while it was still day, David took an oath, saying, "God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes down!" 36Now all the people took note *of it,* and it pleased them, since whatever the king did pleased all the people. 37For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's intent to kill Abner the son of Ner. 38Then the king said to his servants, "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? 39And I *am* weak today, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, *are* too harsh for me. The LORD shall repay the evildoer according to his wickedness."

ISHBOSHETH IS MURDERED

4 When Saul's son[a] heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost heart, and all Israel was troubled. 2Now Saul's son *had* two men *who were* captains of troops. The name of one *was* Baanah and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin. (For Beeroth also was *part* of Benjamin, 3because the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been sojourners there until this day.)

4Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *who was* lame in *his* feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel; and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. His name *was* Mephibosheth.[a]

5Then the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out and came at about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who was lying on his bed at noon. 6And they came there, all the way into the house, *as though* to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. 7For when they came into the house, he was lying on his bed in his bedroom; then they struck him and killed him, beheaded him and took his head, and were all night escaping through the plain. 8And they brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron, and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul your enemy, who sought your life; and the LORD has avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and his descendants."

9But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, "*As* the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all adversity, 10when someone told me, saying, 'Look, Saul is dead,' thinking to have brought good news, I arrested him and had him executed in Ziklag—the one who *thought* I would give him a reward for *his* news. 11How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous person in his own house on his bed? Therefore, shall I not now require his blood at your hand and remove you from the earth?" 12So David commanded his young men, and they executed them, cut off their hands and feet, and hanged *them* by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried *it* in the tomb of Abner in Hebron.

DAVID REIGNS OVER ALL ISRAEL

5 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, "Indeed we *are* your bone and your flesh. 2Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.'" 3Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel. 4David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years. 5In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

THE CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM

6And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here." 7Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that *is,* the City of David).

8Now David said on that day, "Whoever

4:1 [a]That is, Ishbosheth **4:4** [a]Called *Merib-Baal* in 1 Chronicles 8:34 and 9:40

climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, *who are* hated by David's soul), *he shall be chief and captain.*"[a] Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."

9Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo[a] and inward. 10So David went on and became great, and the LORD God of hosts *was* with him.

11Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons. And they built David a house. 12So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.

13And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David. 14Now these *are* the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua,[a] Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 15Ibhar, Elishua,[a] Nepheg, Japhia, 16Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

THE PHILISTINES DEFEATED

17Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard *of it* and went down to the stronghold. 18The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. 19So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?"

And the LORD said to David, "Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand."

20So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim.[a] 21And they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away.

22Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. 23Therefore David inquired of the LORD, and He said, "You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. 24And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines." 25And David did so, as the LORD commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba[a] as far as Gezer.

THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM

6 Again David gathered all *the* choice *men* of Israel, thirty thousand. 2And David arose and went with all the people who *were* with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name,[a] the LORD of Hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. 3So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart.[a] 4And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. 5Then David and all the house of Israel played *music* before the LORD on all kinds of *instruments of* fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals.

6And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out *his hand* to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. 7Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for *his* error; and he died there by the ark of God. 8And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah[a] to this day.

9David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" 10So David would not move the ark of the LORD with him into the City

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5:8 [a]Compare 1 Chronicles 11:6 **5:9** [a]Literally *The Landfill* **5:14** [a]Spelled *Shimea* in 1 Chronicles 3:5 **5:15** [a]Spelled *Elishama* in 1 Chronicles 3:6 **5:20** [a]Literally *Master of Breakthroughs* **5:25** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Gibeon.* **6:2** [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate omit *by the Name;* many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *there.* **6:3** [a]Septuagint adds *with the ark.* **6:8** [a]Literally *Outburst Against Uzzah*

of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. 11The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

12Now it was told King David, saying, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that *belongs* to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. 13And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. 14Then David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* wearing a linen ephod. 15So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.

16Now as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. 17So they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 18And when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. 19Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece *of meat,* and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house.

20Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!"

WORSHIP
How should we worship God?
2 Samuel 6:21

21So David said to Michal, "*It was* before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will play *music* before the LORD. 22And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor."

23Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

7 Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, 2that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains."

3Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with you."

4But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, 5"Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? 6For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. 7Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?' "' 8Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. 9And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth. 10Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, 11since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house.[a]

7:11 [a]That is, a royal dynasty

12"When your days are fulfilled and you
rest with your fathers, I will set up your
seed after you, who will come from your
body, and I will establish his kingdom.
13He shall build a house for My name,
and I will establish the throne of his king-
dom forever. 14I will be his Father, and he
shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I
will chasten him with the rod of men and
with the blows of the sons of men. 15But
My mercy shall not depart from him, as I
took *it* from Saul, whom I removed from
before you. 16And your house and your
kingdom shall be established forever be-
fore you.[a] Your throne shall be established
forever."' "

OBEDIENCE
Who does God discipline?
2 Samuel 7:14

17According to all these words and ac-
cording to all this vision, so Nathan spoke
to David.

DAVID'S THANKSGIVING TO GOD

18Then King David went in and sat before
the LORD; and he said: "Who *am* I, O Lord
GOD? And what is my house, that You have
brought me this far? 19And yet this was a
small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; and
You have also spoken of Your servant's
house for a great while to come. *Is* this the
manner of man, O Lord GOD? 20Now what
more can David say to You? For You, Lord
GOD, know Your servant. 21For Your word's
sake, and according to Your own heart, You
have done all these great things, to make
Your servant know *them.* 22Therefore You
are great, O Lord GOD.[a] For *there is* none
like You, nor *is there any* God besides You,
according to all that we have heard with
our ears. 23And who *is* like Your people, like
Israel, the one nation on the earth whom
God went to redeem for Himself as a peo-
ple, to make for Himself a name—and to
do for Yourself great and awesome deeds
for Your land—before Your people whom
You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the
nations, and their gods? 24For You have
made Your people Israel Your very own
people forever; and You, LORD, have be-
come their God.

GOD
Is God unique?
2 Samuel 7:22

25"Now, O LORD God, the word which
You have spoken concerning Your servant
and concerning his house, establish *it* for-
ever and do as You have said. 26So let Your
name be magnified forever, saying, 'The
LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel.' And
let the house of Your servant David be es-
tablished before You. 27For You, O LORD
of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed *this*
to Your servant, saying, 'I will build you a
house.' Therefore Your servant has found it
in his heart to pray this prayer to You.
28"And now, O Lord GOD, You are God,
and Your words are true, and You have
promised this goodness to Your servant.
29Now therefore, let it please You to bless
the house of Your servant, that it may con-
tinue before You forever; for You, O Lord
GOD, have spoken *it,* and with Your bless-
ing let the house of Your servant be blessed
forever."

DAVID'S FURTHER CONQUESTS

8 After this it came to pass that David
attacked the Philistines and sub-
dued them. And David took Metheg
Ammah from the hand of the Philistines.
2Then he defeated Moab. Forcing them
down to the ground, he measured them off
with a line. With two lines he measured off
those to be put to death, and with one full
line those to be kept alive. So the Moabites
became David's servants, *and* brought
tribute.

2 Samuel 8:3
When David conquered Zobah in the northeast part of Israel, he extended his kingdom more than 150 miles north of Jerusalem.

3David also defeated Hadadezer the son
of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to re-
cover his territory at the River Euphrates.

7:16 [a]Septuagint reads *Me.* **7:22** [a]Targum and Syriac read *O LORD God.*

4David took from him one thousand *chariots,* seven hundred[a] horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Also David hamstrung all the chariot *horses*, except that he spared *enough* of them for one hundred chariots.

5When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians. 6Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, *and* brought tribute. So the LORD preserved David wherever he went. 7And David took the shields of gold that had belonged to the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8Also from Betah[a] and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, King David took a large amount of bronze.

9When Toi[a] king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer, 10then Toi sent Joram[a] his son to King David, to greet him and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him (for Hadadezer had been at war with Toi); and *Joram* brought with him articles of silver, articles of gold, and articles of bronze. 11King David also dedicated these to the LORD, along with the silver and gold that he had dedicated from all the nations which he had subdued—12from Syria,[a] from Moab, from the people of Ammon, from the Philistines, from Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13And David made *himself* a name when he returned from killing eighteen thousand Syrians[a] in the Valley of Salt. 14He also put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David wherever he went.

LEADERSHIP
What are the qualities of a good leader?
2 Samuel 8:15

DAVID'S ADMINISTRATION

15So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered judgment and justice to all his people. 16Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the army; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; 17Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar *were* the priests; Seraiah[a] *was* the scribe; 18Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief ministers.

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH

9 Now David said, "Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

2And *there was* a servant of the house of Saul whose name *was* Ziba. So when they had called him to David, the king said to him, "*Are* you Ziba?"

He said, "At your service!"

3Then the king said, "*Is* there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the kindness of God?"

And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan *who is* lame in *his* feet."

4So the king said to him, "Where *is* he?"

And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he *is* in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar."

5Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar.

6Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, "Mephibosheth?"

And he answered, "Here is your servant!"

7So David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually."

8Then he bowed himself, and said, "What *is* your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?"

9And the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given to your

8:4 [a]Or *seven thousand* (compare 1 Chronicles 18:4) **8:8** [a]Spelled *Tibhath* in 1 Chronicles 18:8 **8:9** [a]Spelled *Tou* in 1 Chronicles 18:9 **8:10** [a]Spelled *Hadoram* in 1 Chronicles 18:10 **8:12** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and some Hebrew manuscripts read *Edom.* **8:13** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and some Hebrew manuscripts read *Edomites* (compare 1 Chronicles 18:12). **8:17** [a]Spelled *Shavsha* in 1 Chronicles 18:16



PROFILE
MEPHIBOSHETH

Not long after David became king of Israel, he made inquiries about the family of Saul, the previous king. His good friend Jonathan, Saul's son, had died with his father in battle. The news came back that Saul's entire family had been killed with one exception: Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. A nurse hurrying to save the orphan had dropped him, and Mephibosheth had grown up lame.

David honored and protected Mephibosheth out of respect for Jonathan. He guaranteed Mephibosheth's family property and welcomed the young man to the royal table. Later, Mephibosheth was betrayed by his servant Ziba who convinced a fleeing David that Mephibosheth still held hopes of reclaiming the crown for his family. In his words of humble reconciliation, Mephibosheth offered as fine an example of honesty and gratitude as found anywhere in Scripture.

Lame as he was, Mephibosheth was dependent on others. Some, like Ziba, took advantage of him. Others, like David, respected him in spite of his limitations. Mephibosheth understood where gratitude was due. When he was accused, he did everything he could to make the matter right and acted with dignity and integrity.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

You may be frustrated by the limitations in your life. We all have them. They come in all sizes and shapes. Some are physical; others are emotional, educational, or social. It will take self-control not to lobby for fairness or demand your own way. As with Mephibosheth, limitations don't have to become excuses. In the very act of persisting in spite of your limitations, you will be an example to others. To those without limitation, you can be an inspiration; to those with limitations, you can offer hope. Your efforts will make a difference.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Mephibosheth's life in 2 Samuel 4; 9:1–13; 16:1–4; 19:24–30.

Mephibosheth suffered some real challenges, both physical and personal. But he did his best with what he had, and so he made a real difference. You can, too!

master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house. 10You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in *the harvest,* that your master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's son shall eat bread at my table always." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king has commanded his servant, so will your servant do."

"As for Mephibosheth," *said the king,* "he shall eat at my table[a] like one of the king's sons." 12Mephibosheth had a young son whose name *was* Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* servants of Mephibosheth. 13So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet.

THE AMMONITES AND SYRIANS DEFEATED

10 It happened after this that the king of the people of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned

9:11 [a]Septuagint reads *David's table.*

in his place. 2Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me."

So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the people of Ammon. 3And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Has David not *rather* sent his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?"

4Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away. 5When they told David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and *then* return."

6When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, the people of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of Maacah one thousand men, and from Ish-Tob twelve thousand men. 7Now when David heard *of it,* he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. 8Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate. And the Syrians of Zoba, Beth Rehob, Ish-Tob, and Maacah *were* by themselves in the field.

9When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best and put *them* in battle array against the Syrians. 10And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, that he might set *them* in battle array against the people of Ammon. 11Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. 12Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do *what is* good in His sight."

13So Joab and the people who *were* with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. 14When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai, and entered the city. So Joab returned from the people of Ammon and went to Jerusalem.

15When the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered together. 16Then Hadadezer[a] sent and brought out the Syrians who *were* beyond the River,[b] and they came to Helam. And Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army *went* before them. 17When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in battle array against David and fought with him. 18Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen of the Syrians, and struck Shobach the commander of their army, who died there. 19And when all the kings *who were* servants to Hadadezer[a] saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Syrians were afraid to help the people of Ammon anymore.

LUST
To what can sexual lust lead?
2 Samuel 11:1–4

DAVID, BATHSHEBA, AND URIAH

11 It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out *to battle,* that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

2Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman *was* very beautiful to behold. 3So David sent and inquired about the woman. And *someone* said, "*Is* this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" 4Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. 5And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, "I *am* with child."

10:16 [a]Hebrew *Hadarezer* [b]That is, the Euphrates **10:19** [a]Hebrew *Hadarezer*

2 Samuel 11:2

The typical home in ancient Israel was built with a flat roof surrounded by a low wall. The roof, which could be reached by an outside stairway, was used as everything from a sleeping area to a patio or deck.

6Then David sent to Joab, *saying,* "Send
me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah
to David. 7When Uriah had come to him,
David asked how Joab was doing, and how
the people were doing, and how the war
prospered. 8And David said to Uriah, "Go
down to your house and wash your feet." So
Uriah departed from the king's house, and
a gift *of food* from the king followed him.
9But Uriah slept at the door of the king's
house with all the servants of his lord, and
did not go down to his house. 10So when
they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go
down to his house," David said to Uriah,
"Did you not come from a journey? Why
did you not go down to your house?"
11And Uriah said to David, "The ark and
Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and
my lord Joab and the servants of my lord
are encamped in the open fields. Shall I
then go to my house to eat and drink, and
to lie with my wife? *As* you live, and *as* your
soul lives, I will not do this thing."
12Then David said to Uriah, "Wait here
today also, and tomorrow I will let you de-
part." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that
day and the next. 13Now when David called
him, he ate and drank before him; and he
made him drunk. And at evening he went
out to lie on his bed with the servants of his
lord, but he did not go down to his house.
14In the morning it happened that Da-
vid wrote a letter to Joab and sent *it* by
the hand of Uriah. 15And he wrote in the
letter, saying, "Set Uriah in the forefront
of the hottest battle, and retreat from him,
that he may be struck down and die." 16So
it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he
assigned Uriah to a place where he knew
there *were* valiant men. 17Then the men
of the city came out and fought with Joab.
And *some* of the people of the servants of
David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also.
18Then Joab sent and told David all the
things concerning the war, 19and charged
the messenger, saying, "When you have
finished telling the matters of the war to
the king, 20if it happens that the king's
wrath rises, and he says to you: 'Why did
you approach so near to the city when you
fought? Did you not know that they would
shoot from the wall? 21Who struck Abime-
lech the son of Jerubbesheth?[a] Was it not a
woman who cast a piece of a millstone on
him from the wall, so that he died in The-
bez? Why did you go near the wall?'—then
you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hit-
tite is dead also.'"

2 Samuel 11:21

The Hittites were former enemies of Israel who apparently decided to team up with David. Unlike most Hittites, who worshiped pagan gods, Uriah apparently worshiped the one true God. Uriah's Hebrew name means "Flame of God."

22So the messenger went, and came and
told David all that Joab had sent by him.
23And the messenger said to David, "Surely
the men prevailed against us and came out
to us in the field; then we drove them back
as far as the entrance of the gate. 24The ar-
chers shot from the wall at your servants;
and *some* of the king's servants are dead, and
your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also."
25Then David said to the messenger,
"Thus you shall say to Joab: 'Do not let this
thing displease you, for the sword devours
one as well as another. Strengthen your at-
tack against the city, and overthrow it.' So
encourage him."
26When the wife of Uriah heard that
Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned
for her husband. 27And when her mourn-
ing was over, David sent and brought her
to his house, and she became his wife and
bore him a son. But the thing that David
had done displeased the LORD.

NATHAN'S PARABLE AND DAVID'S CONFESSION

12 Then the LORD sent Nathan to
David. And he came to him, and
said to him: "There were two

11:21 [a]Same as *Jerubbaal* (Gideon), Judges 6:32ff

men in one city, one rich and the other poor. 2The rich *man* had exceedingly many flocks and herds. 3But the poor *man* had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. 4And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

5So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "*As* the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! 6And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

7Then Nathan said to David, "You *are* the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if *that had been* too little, I also would have given you much more! 9Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife *to be* your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. 10Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' 11Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. 12For you did *it* secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'"

SIN
Does sin have consequences?
2 Samuel 12:9–12

13So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. 14However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *who is* born to you shall surely die." 15Then Nathan departed to his house.

THE DEATH OF DAVID'S SON

And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill. 16David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. 17So the elders of his house arose *and went* to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them. 18Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, "Indeed, while the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!"

19When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?"

And they said, "He is dead."

20So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate. 21Then his servants said to him, "What *is* this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child *while he was* alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food."

22And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell *whether* the LORD[a] will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' 23But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

SOLOMON IS BORN

24Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he[a] called his name

12:22 [a]A few Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *God*. **12:24** [a]Following Kethib, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Qere, a few Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Targum read *she*.

Solomon. Now the LORD loved him, 25and He sent *word* by the hand of Nathan the prophet: So he[a] called his name Jedidiah,[b] because of the LORD.

> ***2 Samuel 12:25***
> The name Jedidiah means "Loved by the LORD." Nathan gave Solomon this name to indicate that God had forgiven David. Not only would Solomon live—unlike his older brother—but he would eventually become king of Israel.

RABBAH IS CAPTURED

26Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the people of Ammon, and took the royal city. 27And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, and I have taken the city's water *supply.* 28Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city and it be called after my name." 29So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah, fought against it, and took it. 30Then he took their king's crown from his head. Its weight *was* a talent of gold, with precious stones. And it was *set* on David's head. Also he brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance. 31And he brought out the people who *were* in it, and put *them to work* with saws and iron picks and iron axes, and made them cross over to the brick works. So he did to all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

AMNON AND TAMAR

13 After this Absalom the son of David had a lovely sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. 2Amnon was so distressed over his sister Tamar that he became sick; for she *was* a virgin. And it was improper for Amnon to do anything to her. 3But Amnon had a friend whose name *was* Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother. Now Jonadab *was* a very crafty man. 4And he said to him, "Why *are* you, the king's son, becoming thinner day after day? Will you not tell me?"

Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

5So Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me food, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see *it* and eat it from her hand.'" 6Then Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill; and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let Tamar my sister come and make a couple of cakes for me in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."

7And David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Now go to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him." 8So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was lying down. Then she took flour and kneaded *it,* made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. 9And she took the pan and placed *them* out before him, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon said, "Have everyone go out from me." And they all went out from him. 10Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* to Amnon her brother in the bedroom. 11Now when she had brought *them* to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister."

12But she answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing! 13And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you." 14However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her.

15Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her *was* greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Arise, be gone!"

16So she said to him, "No, indeed! This evil of sending me away *is* worse than the other that you did to me."

But he would not listen to her. 17Then he

12:25 [a]Qere, some Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Targum read *she.* [b]Literally *Beloved of the LORD*

called his servant who attended him, and said, "Here! Put this *woman* out, away from me, and bolt the door behind her." 18Now she had on a robe of many colors, for the king's virgin daughters wore such apparel. And his servant put her out and bolted the door behind her.

19Then Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore her robe of many colors that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head and went away crying bitterly. 20And Absalom her brother said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now hold your peace, my sister. He *is* your brother; do not take this thing to heart." So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

2 Samuel 13:19

In ancient times, a person's clothing told a lot about them. Apparently, the style, color, or design of Tamar's robe indicated that she was the daughter of the king and a virgin as well. After she was raped, she tore the robe and put ashes on her head to show her grief. This was the same thing people did to mourn the death of a loved one.

21But when King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. 22And Absalom spoke to his brother Amnon neither good nor bad. For Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

2 Samuel 13:25

Entertaining a king in ancient times was a pretty expensive job. Not only did the host have to feed and house the king himself; he had to take care of all the servants and officials who traveled with the king. King David did not want his son Absalom to have to pay for such a visit.

ABSALOM MURDERS AMNON

23And it came to pass, after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal Hazor, which *is* near Ephraim; so Absalom invited all the king's sons. 24Then Absalom came to the king and said, "Kindly note, your servant has sheepshearers; please, let the king and his servants go with your servant."

25But the king said to Absalom, "No, my son, let us not all go now, lest we be a burden to you." Then he urged him, but he would not go; and he blessed him.

26Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us."

And the king said to him, "Why should he go with you?" 27But Absalom urged him; so he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

28Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, "Watch now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon!' then kill him. Do not be afraid. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and valiant." 29So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and each one got on his mule and fled.

30And it came to pass, while they were on the way, that news came to David, saying, "Absalom has killed all the king's sons, and not one of them is left!" 31So the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the ground, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn. 32Then Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered and said, "Let not my lord suppose they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, for only Amnon is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar. 33Now therefore, let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead. For only Amnon is dead."

ABSALOM FLEES TO GESHUR

34Then Absalom fled. And the young man who was keeping watch lifted his eyes and looked, and there, many people were coming from the road on the hillside behind him.[a] 35And Jonadab said to the king, "Look, the king's sons are coming; as your servant said, so it is." 36So it was, as soon as he had finished speaking, that the king's

13:34 [a]Septuagint adds *And the watchman went and told the king, and said, "I see men from the way of Horonaim, from the regions of the mountains."*

sons indeed came, and they lifted up their voice and wept. Also the king and all his servants wept very bitterly.

37But Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day. 38So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years. 39And King David[a] longed to go to[b] Absalom. For he had been comforted concerning Amnon, because he was dead.

ABSALOM RETURNS TO JERUSALEM

14 So Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* concerned about Absalom. 2And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel; do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman who has been mourning a long time for the dead. 3Go to the king and speak to him in this manner." So Joab put the words in her mouth.

4And when the woman of Tekoa spoke[a] to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself, and said, "Help, O king!"

5Then the king said to her, "What troubles you?"

And she answered, "Indeed I *am* a widow, my husband is dead. 6Now your maidservant had two sons; and the two fought with each other in the field, and *there was* no one to part them, but the one struck the other and killed him. 7And now the whole family has risen up against your maidservant, and they said, 'Deliver him who struck his brother, that we may execute him for the life of his brother whom he killed; and we will destroy the heir also.' So they would extinguish my ember that is left, and leave to my husband *neither* name nor remnant on the earth."

8Then the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you."

9And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, "My lord, O king, *let* the iniquity *be* on me and on my father's house, and the king and his throne *be* guiltless."

10So the king said, "Whoever says *anything* to you, bring him to me, and he shall not touch you anymore."

11Then she said, "Please let the king remember the LORD your God, and do not permit the avenger of blood to destroy anymore, lest they destroy my son."

And he said, "*As* the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground."

12Therefore the woman said, "Please, let your maidservant speak *another* word to my lord the king."

And he said, "Say on."

13So the woman said: "Why then have you schemed such a thing against the people of God? For the king speaks this thing as one who is guilty, *in that* the king does not bring his banished one home again. 14For we will surely die and *become* like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away a life; but He devises means, so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him. 15Now therefore, I have come to speak of this thing to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. And your maidservant said, 'I will now speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his maidservant. 16For the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man *who would* destroy me and my son together from the inheritance of God.' 17Your maidservant said, 'The word of my lord the king will now be comforting; for as the angel of God, so *is* my lord the king in discerning good and evil. And may the LORD your God be with you.'"

18Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide from me anything that I ask you."

And the woman said, "Please, let my lord the king speak."

19So the king said, "*Is* the hand of Joab with you in all this?" And the woman answered and said, "*As* you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken. For your servant Joab commanded me, and he put all these words in the mouth of your maidservant.

13:39 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *the spirit of the king;* Targum reads *the soul of King David.* [b]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *ceased to pursue after.* **14:4** [a]Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *came.*

20To bring about this change of affairs your
servant Joab has done this thing; but my
lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of the
angel of God, to know everything that *is* in
the earth."
21And the king said to Joab, "All right, I
have granted this thing. Go therefore, bring
back the young man Absalom."
22Then Joab fell to the ground on his
face and bowed himself, and thanked the
king. And Joab said, "Today your servant
knows that I have found favor in your
sight, my lord, O king, in that the king
has fulfilled the request of his servant."
23So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and
brought Absalom to Jerusalem. 24And
the king said, "Let him return to his own
house, but do not let him see my face." So
Absalom returned to his own house, but
did not see the king's face.

DAVID FORGIVES ABSALOM

25Now in all Israel there was no one who
was praised as much as Absalom for his
good looks. From the sole of his foot to
the crown of his head there was no blem-
ish in him. 26And when he cut the hair of
his head—at the end of every year he cut
it because it was heavy on him—when
he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head
at two hundred shekels according to the
king's standard. 27To Absalom were born
three sons, and one daughter whose name
was Tamar. She was a woman of beautiful
appearance.
28And Absalom dwelt two full years in
Jerusalem, but did not see the king's face.
29Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to send
him to the king, but he would not come to
him. And when he sent again the second
time, he would not come. 30So he said to his
servants, "See, Joab's field is near mine, and
he has barley there; go and set it on fire."
And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.
31Then Joab arose and came to Absa-
lom's house, and said to him, "Why have
your servants set my field on fire?"
32And Absalom answered Joab, "Look,
I sent to you, saying, 'Come here, so that I
may send you to the king, to say, "Why have
I come from Geshur? *It would be* better for
me *to be* there still."' Now therefore, let me
see the king's face; but if there is iniquity in
me, let him execute me."
33So Joab went to the king and told him.
And when he had called for Absalom, he
came to the king and bowed himself on his
face to the ground before the king. Then
the king kissed Absalom.

ABSALOM'S TREASON

15 After this it happened that Ab-
salom provided himself with
chariots and horses, and fifty
men to run before him. 2Now Absalom
would rise early and stand beside the way
to the gate. *So* it was, whenever anyone
who had a lawsuit came to the king for a
decision, that Absalom would call to him
and say, "What city *are* you from?" And
he would say, "Your servant *is* from such
and such a tribe of Israel." 3Then Absa-
lom would say to him, "Look, your case *is*
good and right; but *there is* no deputy
of the king to hear you." 4Moreover Absalom
would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in
the land, and everyone who has any suit or
cause would come to me; then I would give
him justice." 5And *so* it was, whenever any-
one came near to bow down to him, that he
would put out his hand and take him and
kiss him. 6In this manner Absalom acted
toward all Israel who came to the king for
judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of
the men of Israel.
7Now it came to pass after forty[a] years
that Absalom said to the king, "Please, let
me go to Hebron and pay the vow which I
made to the LORD. 8For your servant took
a vow while I dwelt at Geshur in Syria, say-
ing, 'If the LORD indeed brings me back to
Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.'"
9And the king said to him, "Go in peace."
So he arose and went to Hebron.
10Then Absalom sent spies throughout
all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as
you hear the sound of the trumpet, then
you shall say, 'Absalom reigns in Hebron!'"
11And with Absalom went two hundred
men invited from Jerusalem, and they went
along innocently and did not know any-
thing. 12Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel
the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his
city—from Giloh—while he offered sacri-
fices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for
the people with Absalom continually in-
creased in number.

15:7 [a]Septuagint manuscripts, Syriac, and Josephus read *four*.

DAVID ESCAPES FROM JERUSALEM

13Now a messenger came to David, saying,
"The hearts of the men of Israel are with
Absalom."

14So David said to all his servants who
were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let
us flee, or we shall not escape from Absa-
lom. Make haste to depart, lest he over-
take us suddenly and bring disaster upon
us, and strike the city with the edge of the
sword."

15And the king's servants said to the
king, "We *are* your servants, *ready to do*
whatever my lord the king commands."
16Then the king went out with all his
household after him. But the king left ten
women, concubines, to keep the house.
17And the king went out with all the people
after him, and stopped at the outskirts.
18Then all his servants passed before him;
and all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites,
and all the Gittites, six hundred men who
had followed him from Gath, passed before
the king.

> **2 Samuel 15:18**
> Gath was one of the five capital cities of the Philistines. The six hundred soldiers mentioned here had served with David while he was living with the Philistines to avoid the murderous King Saul.

19Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite,
"Why are you also going with us? Return
and remain with the king. For you *are* a
foreigner and also an exile from your own
place. 20In fact, you came *only* yesterday.
Should I make you wander up and down
with us today, since I go I know not where?
Return, and take your brethren back.
Mercy and truth *be* with you."

21But Ittai answered the king and said,
"*As* the LORD lives, and *as* my lord the king
lives, surely in whatever place my lord the
king shall be, whether in death or life, even
there also your servant will be."

22So David said to Ittai, "Go, and cross
over." Then Ittai the Gittite and all his
men and all the little ones who *were* with
him crossed over. 23And all the country
wept with a loud voice, and all the people
crossed over. The king himself also crossed
over the Brook Kidron, and all the people
crossed over toward the way of the wilder-
ness.

24There was Zadok also, and all the Le-
vites with him, bearing the ark of the cov-
enant of God. And they set down the ark
of God, and Abiathar went up until all the
people had finished crossing over from the
city. 25Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry
the ark of God back into the city. If I find
favor in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring
me back and show me *both* it and His dwell-
ing place. 26But if He says thus: 'I have no
delight in you,' here I am, let Him do to me
as seems good to Him." 27The king also said
to Zadok the priest, "*Are* you *not* a seer? Re-
turn to the city in peace, and your two sons
with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan
the son of Abiathar. 28See, I will wait in the
plains of the wilderness until word comes
from you to inform me." 29Therefore Zadok
and Abiathar carried the ark of God back
to Jerusalem. And they remained there.

> **2 Samuel 15:24**
> The ark of the covenant contained the two flat stones on which God wrote the Ten Commandments. The ark was the centerpiece of Israel's worship of God. It had been captured once before in a war against the Philistines. The result was disaster for both the Philistines and the Israelites. David did not want to risk losing it again.

30So David went up by the Ascent of the
Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up;
and he had his head covered and went
barefoot. And all the people who *were*
with him covered their heads and went up,
weeping as they went up. 31Then *someone*
told David, saying, "Ahithophel *is* among
the conspirators with Absalom." And David
said, "O LORD, I pray, turn the counsel of
Ahithophel into foolishness!"

32Now it happened when David had
come to the top *of the mountain,* where
he worshiped God—there was Hushai the
Archite coming to meet him with his robe
torn and dust on his head. 33David said to
him, "If you go on with me, then you will
become a burden to me. 34But if you re-

turn to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; *as* I *was* your father's servant previously, so I *will* now also *be* your servant,' then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me. 35And *do* you not *have* Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? Therefore it will be *that* whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall tell to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. 36Indeed *they have* there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's *son,* and Jonathan, Abiathar's *son;* and by them you shall send me everything you hear."

37So Hushai, David's friend, went into the city. And Absalom came into Jerusalem.

MEPHIBOSHETH'S SERVANT

16 When David was a little past the top *of the mountain,* there was Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth, who met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them two hundred *loaves* of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred summer fruits, and a skin of wine. 2And the king said to Ziba, "What do you mean to do with these?"

So Ziba said, "The donkeys *are* for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who are faint in the wilderness to drink."

3Then the king said, "And where *is* your master's son?"

And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.'"

4So the king said to Ziba, "Here, all that *belongs* to Mephibosheth *is* yours."

And Ziba said, "I humbly bow before you, *that* I may find favor in your sight, my lord, O king!"

SHIMEI CURSES DAVID

5Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came. 6And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men *were* on his right hand and on his left. 7Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue! 8The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you *are caught* in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!"

9Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!"

10But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"

11And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now *may this* Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him. 12It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction,[a] and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day." 13And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust. 14Now the king and all the people who *were* with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there.

THE ADVICE OF AHITHOPHEL

15Meanwhile Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem; and Ahithophel *was* with him. 16And so it was, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, that Hushai said to Absalom, "*Long* live the king! *Long* live the king!"

17So Absalom said to Hushai, "*Is* this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?"

18And Hushai said to Absalom, "No, but whom the LORD and this people and all the men of Israel choose, his I will be, and with him I will remain. 19Furthermore, whom should I serve? *Should I* not *serve* in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, so will I be in your presence."

16:12 [a]Following Kethib, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Qere reads *my eyes;* Targum reads *tears of my eyes.*

20Then Absalom said to Ahithophel,
"Give advice as to what we should do."
21And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go
in to your father's concubines, whom he
has left to keep the house; and all Israel will
hear that you are abhorred by your father.
Then the hands of all who are with you
will be strong." 22So they pitched a tent for
Absalom on the top of the house, and Ab-
salom went in to his father's concubines in
the sight of all Israel.

2 Samuel 16:21

The women David left behind to take care of the palace (concubines) were more like servants than wives. Because they "belonged" to David, though, it was a tremendous insult for Absalom to sleep with them. It was also a way for Absalom to show that he intended to take over his father's throne.

23Now the advice of Ahithophel, which
he gave in those days, *was* as if one had in-
quired at the oracle of God. So *was* all the
advice of Ahithophel both with David and
with Absalom.

17 Moreover Ahithophel said to
Absalom, "Now let me choose
twelve thousand men, and I will
arise and pursue David tonight. 2I will come
upon him while he *is* weary and weak, and
make him afraid. And all the people who
are with him will flee, and I will strike only
the king. 3Then I will bring back all the
people to you. When all return except the
man whom you seek, all the people will be
at peace." 4And the saying pleased Absalom
and all the elders of Israel.

THE ADVICE OF HUSHAI

5Then Absalom said, "Now call Hushai the
Archite also, and let us hear what he says
too." 6And when Hushai came to Absalom,
Absalom spoke to him, saying, "Ahithophel
has spoken in this manner. Shall we do as
he says? If not, speak up."
7So Hushai said to Absalom: "The ad-
vice that Ahithophel has given *is* not good
at this time. 8For," said Hushai, "you know
your father and his men, that they *are*
mighty men, and they *are* enraged in their
minds, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the
field; and your father *is* a man of war, and
will not camp with the people. 9Surely by
now he is hidden in some pit, or in some
other place. And it will be, when some of
them are overthrown at the first, that who-
ever hears *it* will say, 'There is a slaughter
among the people who follow Absalom.'
10And even he *who is* valiant, whose heart
is like the heart of a lion, will melt com-
pletely. For all Israel knows that your father
is a mighty man, and *those* who *are* with
him *are* valiant men. 11Therefore I advise
that all Israel be fully gathered to you, from
Dan to Beersheba, like the sand that *is* by
the sea for multitude, and that you go to
battle in person. 12So we will come upon
him in some place where he may be found,
and we will fall on him as the dew falls on
the ground. And of him and all the men
who *are* with him there shall not be left so
much as one. 13Moreover, if he has with-
drawn into a city, then all Israel shall bring
ropes to that city; and we will pull it into
the river, until there is not one small stone
found there."
14So Absalom and all the men of Israel
said, "The advice of Hushai the Archite *is*
better than the advice of Ahithophel." For
the LORD had purposed to defeat the good
advice of Ahithophel, to the intent that the
LORD might bring disaster on Absalom.

HUSHAI WARNS DAVID TO ESCAPE

15Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abia-
thar the priests, "Thus and so Ahithophel
advised Absalom and the elders of Israel,
and thus and so I have advised. 16Now
therefore, send quickly and tell David, say-
ing, 'Do not spend this night in the plains
of the wilderness, but speedily cross over,
lest the king and all the people who *are*
with him be swallowed up.'" 17Now Jona-
than and Ahimaaz stayed at En Rogel, for
they dared not be seen coming into the
city; so a female servant would come and
tell them, and they would go and tell King
David. 18Nevertheless a lad saw them, and
told Absalom. But both of them went away
quickly and came to a man's house in Ba-
hurim, who had a well in his court; and
they went down into it. 19Then the woman
took and spread a covering over the well's
mouth, and spread ground grain on it;
and the thing was not known. 20And when

Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house, they said, "Where *are* Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

So the woman said to them, "They have gone over the water brook."

And when they had searched and could not find *them,* they returned to Jerusalem. 21Now it came to pass, after they had departed, that they came up out of the well and went and told King David, and said to David, "Arise and cross over the water quickly. For thus has Ahithophel advised against you." 22So David and all the people who *were* with him arose and crossed over the Jordan. By morning light not one of them was left who had not gone over the Jordan.

23Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father's tomb.

24Then David went to Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. 25And Absalom made Amasa captain of the army instead of Joab. This Amasa *was* the son of a man whose name *was* Jithra,[a] an Israelite,[b] who had gone in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. 26So Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.

27Now it happened, when David had come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the people of Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, 28brought beds and basins, earthen vessels and wheat, barley and flour, parched *grain* and beans, lentils and parched *seeds,* 29honey and curds, sheep and cheese of the herd, for David and the people who *were* with him to eat. For they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness."

ABSALOM'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

18 And David numbered the people who *were* with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. 2Then David sent out one third of the people under the hand of Joab, one third under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, "I also will surely go out with you myself."

3But the people answered, "You shall not go out! For if we flee away, they will not care about us; nor if half of us die, will they care about us. But *you are* worth ten thousand of us now. For you are now more help to us in the city."

4Then the king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. 5Now the king had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, "*Deal* gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains orders concerning Absalom.

6So the people went out into the field of battle against Israel. And the battle was in the woods of Ephraim. 7The people of Israel were overthrown there before the servants of David, and a great slaughter of twenty thousand took place there that day. 8For the battle there was scattered over the face of the whole countryside, and the woods devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9Then Absalom met the servants of David. Absalom rode on a mule. The mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth tree, and his head caught in the terebinth; so he was left hanging between heaven and earth. And the mule which *was* under him went on. 10Now a certain man saw *it* and told Joab, and said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree!"

11So Joab said to the man who told him, "You just saw *him!* And why did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have given you ten *shekels* of silver and a belt."

12But the man said to Joab, "Though I were to receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king's son. For in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Beware lest anyone *touch* the

17:25 [a]Spelled *Jether* in 1 Chronicles 2:17 and elsewhere [b]Following Masoretic Text, some manuscripts of the Septuagint, and Targum; some manuscripts of the Septuagint read *Ishmaelite* (compare 1 Chronicles 2:17); Vulgate reads *of Jezrael.*

young man Absalom!'[a] 13Otherwise I would have dealt falsely against my own life. For there is nothing hidden from the king, and you yourself would have set yourself against *me*."

14Then Joab said, "I cannot linger with you." And he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through Absalom's heart, while he was *still* alive in the midst of the terebinth tree. 15And ten young men who bore Joab's armor surrounded Absalom, and struck and killed him.

16So Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel. For Joab held back the people. 17And they took Absalom and cast him into a large pit in the woods, and laid a very large heap of stones over him. Then all Israel fled, everyone to his tent.

18Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up a pillar for himself, which *is* in the King's Valley. For he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." He called the pillar after his own name. And to this day it is called Absalom's Monument.

DAVID HEARS OF ABSALOM'S DEATH

19Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run now and take the news to the king, how the LORD has avenged him of his enemies."

20And Joab said to him, "You shall not take the news this day, for you shall take the news another day. But today you shall take no news, because the king's son is dead." 21Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran.

22And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite."

So Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, since you have no news ready?"

23"But whatever happens," *he said,* "let me run."

So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain, and outran the Cushite.

24Now David was sitting between the two gates. And the watchman went up to the roof over the gate, to the wall, lifted his eyes and looked, and there was a man, running alone. 25Then the watchman cried out and told the king. And the king said, "If he *is* alone, *there is* news in his mouth." And he came rapidly and drew near.

26Then the watchman saw *another* man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, "There is *another* man, running alone!"

And the king said, "He also brings news."

27So the watchman said, "I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok."

And the king said, "He *is* a good man, and comes with good news."

28So Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, "All is well!" Then he bowed down with his face to the earth before the king, and said, "Blessed *be* the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king!"

29The king said, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant and *me* your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what *it was about.*"

30And the king said, "Turn aside *and* stand here." So he turned aside and stood still.

31Just then the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, "There is good news, my lord the king! For the LORD has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you."

32And the king said to the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

So the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like *that* young man!"

DAVID'S MOURNING FOR ABSALOM

33Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: "O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!"

19 And Joab was told, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." 2So the victory that day was *turned* into mourning for all the people. For the people heard it said that day, "The king is grieved for his

18:12 [a]The ancient versions read *'Protect the young man Absalom for me!'*

son." 3And the people stole back into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. 4But the king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

5Then Joab came into the house to the king, and said, "Today you have disgraced all your servants who today have saved your life, the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives and the lives of your concubines, 6in that you love your enemies and hate your friends. For you have declared today that you regard neither princes nor servants; for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well. 7Now therefore, arise, go out and speak comfort to your servants. For I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, not one will stay with you this night. And that will be worse for you than all the evil that has befallen you from your youth until now." 8Then the king arose and sat in the gate. And they told all the people, saying, "There is the king, sitting in the gate." So all the people came before the king.

For everyone of Israel had fled to his tent.

COMFORT
What should we do when comfort is hard to give?
2 Samuel 19:7

DAVID RETURNS TO JERUSALEM

9Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king saved us from the hand of our enemies, he delivered us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled from the land because of Absalom. 10But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king?"

11So King David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, "Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the words of all Israel have come to the king, to his *very* house? 12You *are* my brethren, you *are* my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?' 13And say to Amasa, '*Are* you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if you are not commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab.'" 14So he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, just as *the heart of* one man, so that they sent *this word* to the king: "Return, you and all your servants!"

15Then the king returned and came to the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to escort the king across the Jordan. 16And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, who *was* from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David. 17*There were* a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over the Jordan before the king. 18Then a ferryboat went across to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good.

DAVID'S MERCY TO SHIMEI

Now Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king when he had crossed the Jordan. 19Then he said to the king, "Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or remember what wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should take *it* to heart. 20For I, your servant, know that I have sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."

21But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?"

22And David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should be adversaries to me today? Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I *am* king over Israel?" 23Therefore the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king swore to him.

DAVID AND MEPHIBOSHETH MEET

24Now Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. And he had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day

the king departed until the day he returned in peace. 25So it was, when he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"

26And he answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go to the king,' because your servant *is* lame. 27And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king, but my lord the king *is* like the angel of God. Therefore do *what is* good in your eyes. 28For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king. Yet you set your servant among those who eat at your own table. Therefore what right have I still to cry out anymore to the king?"

29So the king said to him, "Why do you speak anymore of your matters? I have said, 'You and Ziba divide the land.'"

30Then Mephibosheth said to the king, "Rather, let him take it all, inasmuch as my lord the king has come back in peace to his own house."

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO BARZILLAI

31And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and went across the Jordan with the king, to escort him across the Jordan. 32Now Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. And he had provided the king with supplies while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he *was* a very rich man. 33And the king said to Barzillai, "Come across with me, and I will provide for you while you are with me in Jerusalem."

FRIENDSHIP
How should we care for our friends?
2 Samuel 19:33

34But Barzillai said to the king, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? 35I *am* today eighty years old. Can I discern between the good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king? 36Your servant will go a little way across the Jordan with the king. And why should the king repay me *with* such a reward? 37Please let your servant turn back again, that I may die in my own city, near the grave of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham; let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him what seems good to you."

38And the king answered, "Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what seems good to you. Now whatever you request of me, I will do for you." 39Then all the people went over the Jordan. And when the king had crossed over, the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own place.

THE QUARREL ABOUT THE KING

40Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham[a] went on with him. And all the people of Judah escorted the king, and also half the people of Israel. 41Just then all the men of Israel came to the king, and said to the king, "Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen you away and brought the king, his household, and all David's men with him across the Jordan?"

42So all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king *is* a close relative of ours. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we ever eaten at the king's *expense?* Or has he given us any gift?"

43And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, "We have ten shares in the king; therefore we also have more *right* to David than you. Why then do you despise us—were we not the first to advise bringing back our king?"

Yet the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

THE REBELLION OF SHEBA

20 And there happened to be there a rebel,[a] whose name *was* Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet, and said:

"We have no share in David,
Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse;
Every man to his tents, O Israel!"

19:40 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Chimhan.*
20:1 [a]Literally *man of Belial*

2So every man of Israel deserted David,
and followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But
the men of Judah, from the Jordan as far
as Jerusalem, remained loyal to their king.

3Now David came to his house at Jerusa-
lem. And the king took the ten women, his
concubines whom he had left to keep the
house, and put them in seclusion and sup-
ported them, but did not go in to them. So
they were shut up to the day of their death,
living in widowhood.

4And the king said to Amasa, "Assemble
the men of Judah for me within three days,
and be present here yourself." 5So Amasa
went to assemble *the men of* Judah. But he
delayed longer than the set time which Da-
vid had appointed him. 6And David said to
Abishai, "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will
do us more harm than Absalom. Take your
lord's servants and pursue him, lest he find
for himself fortified cities, and escape us."
7So Joab's men, with the Cherethites, the
Pelethites, and all the mighty men, went
out after him. And they went out of Jeru-
salem to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.
8When they *were* at the large stone which *is*
in Gibeon, Amasa came before them. Now
Joab was dressed in battle armor; on it was
a belt *with* a sword fastened in its sheath at
his hips; and as he was going forward, it fell
out. 9Then Joab said to Amasa, "*Are* you in
health, my brother?" And Joab took Amasa
by the beard with his right hand to kiss
him. 10But Amasa did not notice the sword
that *was* in Joab's hand. And he struck him
with it in the stomach, and his entrails
poured out on the ground; and he did not
strike him again. Thus he died.

Then Joab and Abishai his brother pur-
sued Sheba the son of Bichri. 11Meanwhile
one of Joab's men stood near Amasa, and
said, "Whoever favors Joab and whoever
is for David—follow Joab!" 12But Amasa
wallowed in *his* blood in the middle of the
highway. And when the man saw that all
the people stood still, he moved Amasa
from the highway to the field and threw a
garment over him, when he saw that every-
one who came upon him halted. 13When
he was removed from the highway, all the
people went on after Joab to pursue Sheba
the son of Bichri.

14And he went through all the tribes of
Israel to Abel and Beth Maachah and all
the Berites. So they were gathered together
and also went after *Sheba*.[a] 15Then they
came and besieged him in Abel of Beth
Maachah; and they cast up a siege mound
against the city, and it stood by the ram-
part. And all the people who *were* with Joab
battered the wall to throw it down.

16Then a wise woman cried out from the
city, "Hear, hear! Please say to Joab, 'Come
nearby, that I may speak with you.'" 17When
he had come near to her, the woman said,
"*Are* you Joab?"

He answered, "I *am*."

Then she said to him, "Hear the words of
your maidservant."

And he answered, "I am listening."

18So she spoke, saying, "They used to talk
in former times, saying, 'They shall surely
seek *guidance* at Abel,' and so they would
end *disputes*. 19I *am among the* peaceable
and faithful in Israel. You seek to destroy a
city and a mother in Israel. Why would you
swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?"

20And Joab answered and said, "Far be
it, far be it from me, that I should swallow
up or destroy! 21That *is* not so. But a man
from the mountains of Ephraim, Sheba the
son of Bichri by name, has raised his hand
against the king, against David. Deliver
him only, and I will depart from the city."

So the woman said to Joab, "Watch, his
head will be thrown to you over the wall."
22Then the woman in her wisdom went to
all the people. And they cut off the head of
Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw *it* out to
Joab. Then he blew a trumpet, and they with-
drew from the city, every man to his tent. So
Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.

DAVID'S GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

23And Joab *was* over all the army of Israel;
Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the
Cherethites and the Pelethites; 24Adoram
was in charge of revenue; Jehoshaphat
the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; 25Sheva
was scribe; Zadok and Abiathar *were* the
priests; 26and Ira the Jairite was a chief min-
ister under David.

DAVID AVENGES THE GIBEONITES

21 Now there was a famine in the
days of David for three years, year
after year; and David inquired of

20:14 [a]Literally *him*

the LORD. And the LORD answered, "*It is* because of Saul and *his* bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites." 2So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; the children of Israel had sworn protection to them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.

3Therefore David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement, that you may bless the inheritance of the LORD?"

4And the Gibeonites said to him, "We will have no silver or gold from Saul or from his house, nor shall you kill any man in Israel for us."

So he said, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."

5Then they answered the king, "As for the man who consumed us and plotted against us, *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the territories of Israel, 6let seven men of his descendants be delivered to us, and we will hang them before the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, *whom* the LORD chose."

And the king said, "I will give *them*."

7But the king spared Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the LORD's oath that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. 8So the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, and the five sons of Michal[a] the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite; 9and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them on the hill before the LORD. So they fell, *all* seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first *days,* in the beginning of barley harvest.

10Now Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until the late rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night.

11And David was told what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. 12Then David went and took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son, from the men of Jabesh Gilead who had stolen them from the street of Beth Shan,[a] where the Philistines had hung them up, after the Philistines had struck down Saul in Gilboa. 13So he brought up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from there; and they gathered the bones of those who had been hanged. 14They buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the tomb of Kish his father. So they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God heeded the prayer for the land.

PHILISTINE GIANTS DESTROYED

15When the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David and his servants with him went down and fought against the Philistines; and David grew faint. 16Then Ishbi-Benob, who *was* one of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose bronze spear *was* three hundred *shekels,* who was bearing a new *sword,* thought he could kill David. 17But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel."

18Now it happened afterward that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob. Then Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Saph,[a] who *was* one of the sons of the giant. 19Again there was war at Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-Oregim[a] the Bethlehemite killed *the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam.

20Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of *great* stature, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also was born to the giant. 21So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea,[a] David's brother, killed him.

22These four were born to the giant in

21:8 [a]Or *Merab* (compare 1 Samuel 18:19 and 25:44; 2 Samuel 3:14 and 6:23) **21:12** [a]Spelled *Beth Shean* in Joshua 17:11 and elsewhere **21:18** [a]Spelled *Sippai* in 1 Chronicles 20:4 **21:19** [a]Spelled *Jair* in 1 Chronicles 20:5 **21:21** [a]Spelled *Shammah* in 1 Samuel 16:9 and elsewhere

Gath, and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

SALVATION
Who will deliver us?
2 Samuel 22:2

PRAISE FOR GOD'S DELIVERANCE

22 Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. 2And he said:[a]

"The LORD *is* my rock and my fortress
and my deliverer;
3The God of my strength, in whom I
will trust;
My shield and the horn of my
salvation,
My stronghold and my refuge;
My Savior, You save me from violence.

WORSHIP
Who is worthy of praise?
2 Samuel 22:4

4I will call upon the LORD, *who is*
worthy to be praised;
So shall I be saved from my enemies.

5"When the waves of death
surrounded me,
The floods of ungodliness made me
afraid.
6The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me;
The snares of death confronted me.

HOPE
Why can we be hopeful?
2 Samuel 22:7

7In my distress I called upon the LORD,
And cried out to my God;
He heard my voice from His temple,
And my cry *entered* His ears.

8"Then the earth shook and trembled;
The foundations of heaven[a] quaked
and were shaken,
Because He was angry.
9Smoke went up from His nostrils,
And devouring fire from His mouth;
Coals were kindled by it.
10He bowed the heavens also, and came
down
With darkness under His feet.
11He rode upon a cherub, and flew;
And He was seen[a] upon the wings of
the wind.
12He made darkness canopies around
Him,
Dark waters *and* thick clouds of the
skies.
13From the brightness before Him
Coals of fire were kindled.

14"The LORD thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered His voice.
15He sent out arrows and scattered
them;
Lightning bolts, and He vanquished
them.
16Then the channels of the sea were
seen,
The foundations of the world were
uncovered,
At the rebuke of the LORD,
At the blast of the breath of His
nostrils.

17"He sent from above, He took me,
He drew me out of many waters.
18He delivered me from my strong
enemy,
From those who hated me;
For they were too strong for me.
19They confronted me in the day of my
calamity,
But the LORD was my support.
20He also brought me out into a broad
place;
He delivered me because He delighted
in me.

21"The LORD rewarded me according to
my righteousness;

22:2 [a]Compare Psalm 18 **22:8** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Targum; Syriac and Vulgate read *hills* (compare Psalm 18:7). **22:11** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Septuagint; many Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Vulgate read *He flew* (compare Psalm 18:10); Targum reads *He spoke with power*.

According to the cleanness of my hands
He has recompensed me.
22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
23 For all His judgments *were* before me;
And *as for* His statutes, I did not depart from them.
24 I was also blameless before Him,
And I kept myself from my iniquity.
25 Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness,
According to my cleanness in His eyes.[a]

26 "With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful;
With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless;
27 With the pure You will show Yourself pure;
And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.
28 You will save the humble people;
But Your eyes *are* on the haughty, *that* You may bring *them* down.

BIBLE
Is the Bible trustworthy?
2 Samuel 22:29–31

29 "For You *are* my lamp, O LORD;
The LORD shall enlighten my darkness.
30 For by You I can run against a troop;
By my God I can leap over a wall.
31 *As for* God, His way *is* perfect;
The word of the LORD *is* proven;
He *is* a shield to all who trust in Him.

32 "For who *is* God, except the LORD?
And who *is* a rock, except our God?
33 God *is* my strength *and* power,[a]
And He makes my[b] way perfect.
34 He makes my[a] feet like the *feet* of deer,
And sets me on my high places.
35 He teaches my hands to make war,
So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

36 "You have also given me the shield of Your salvation;
Your gentleness has made me great.
37 You enlarged my path under me;
So my feet did not slip.

38 "I have pursued my enemies and destroyed them;
Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed.
39 And I have destroyed them and wounded them,
So that they could not rise;
They have fallen under my feet.
40 For You have armed me with strength for the battle;
You have subdued under me those who rose against me.
41 You have also given me the necks of my enemies,
So that I destroyed those who hated me.
42 They looked, but *there was* none to save;
Even to the LORD, but He did not answer them.
43 Then I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth;
I trod them like dirt in the streets,
And I spread them out.

44 "You have also delivered me from the strivings of my people;
You have kept me as the head of the nations.
A people I have not known shall serve me.
45 The foreigners submit to me;
As soon as they hear, they obey me.
46 The foreigners fade away,
And come frightened[a] from their hideouts.

22:25 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *the cleanness of my hands in His sight* (compare Psalm 18:24); Targum reads *my cleanness before His word.* **22:33** [a]Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *It is God who arms me with strength* (compare Psalm 18:32); Targum reads *It is God who sustains me with strength.* [b]Following Qere, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate (compare Psalm 18:32); Kethib reads *His.* **22:34** [a]Following Qere, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate (compare Psalm 18:33); Kethib reads *His.* **22:46** [a]Following Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate (compare Psalm 18:45); Masoretic Text reads *gird themselves.*

SALVATION
Why should we praise God?
2 Samuel 22:47, 48

47"'The LORD lives!
Blessed *be* my Rock!
Let God be exalted,
The Rock of my salvation!
48*It is* God who avenges me,
And subdues the peoples under me;
49He delivers me from my enemies.
You also lift me up above those who rise against me;
You have delivered me from the violent man.
50Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles,
And sing praises to Your name.

51"*He is* the tower of salvation to His king,
And shows mercy to His anointed,
To David and his descendants forevermore."

DAVID'S LAST WORDS

23 Now these *are* the last words of David.

Thus says David the son of Jesse;
Thus says the man raised up on high,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel:

2"'The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me,
And His word *was* on my tongue.
3The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spoke to me:
'He who rules over men *must be* just,
Ruling in the fear of God.
4And *he shall be* like the light of the morning *when* the sun rises,
A morning without clouds,
Like the tender grass *springing* out of the earth,
By clear shining after rain.'

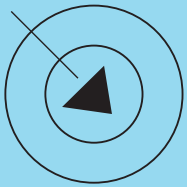
5"Although my house *is* not so with God,
Yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all *things* and secure.
For *this is* all my salvation and all *my* desire;
Will He not make *it* increase?
6But *the sons* of rebellion *shall* all *be* as thorns thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken with hands.
7But the man *who* touches them
Must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear,
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in *their* place."

DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN

8These *are* the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-Basshebeth[a] the Tachmonite, chief among the captains.[b] He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time. 9And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo,[a] the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines *who* were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. 10He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder. 11And after him *was* Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. So the people fled from the Philistines. 12But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.

13Then three of the thirty chief men went down at harvest time and came to David at the cave of Adullam. And the troop of Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. 14David *was* then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then *in* Bethlehem. 15And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which *is* by the gate!" 16So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that *was* by the gate, and took it and brought *it* to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured

23:8 [a]Literally *One Who Sits in the Seat* (compare 1 Chronicles 11:11) [b]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *the three.* **23:9** [a]Spelled *Dodai* in 1 Chronicles 27:4



PROMISE

God promises to never break His promises.

"Although my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For this is all my salvation and all my desire; will He not make it increase?" (2 Sam. 23:5).

Nothing can sting more than broken promises. They tear you up and rip your heart out. Friends who tell your deepest secrets; being stood up by the girl you finally ask out; watching your parents fight through a divorce—promises were made, promises were broken, and heartache follows. When someone breaks a promise, it feels like a punch in the gut—all the wind gets knocked out of you and all your energy is drained.

Because we've felt this pain so many times, we may assume God could treat us the same way. We might think that He could back out at any turn. We may expect Him to say He didn't really mean it—we just misunderstood Him. Not a chance. He promises never to break His promise. He'll always keep your secrets, always be there when you need Him, and always do exactly what He says He will do. You can stake your heart on it.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Numbers 23:19; Joshua 23:14; 1 Kings 8:56

it out to the LORD. 17And he said, "Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this! Is *this not* the blood of the men who went in *jeopardy of* their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it.

ANGELS

Who carries out God's judgment?

2 Samuel 24:16, 17

These things were done by the three mighty men.

18Now Abishai the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of *another* three.[a] He lifted his spear against three hundred *men,* killed *them,* and won a name among *these* three. 19Was he not the most honored of three? Therefore he became their captain. However, he did not attain to the *first* three.

20Benaiah *was* the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. 21And he killed an Egyptian, a spectacular man. The Egyptian *had* a spear in his hand; so he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. 22These *things* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men. 23He was more honored than the thirty, but he did not attain to the *first* three. And David appointed him over his guard.

24Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, 25Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite, 26Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, 27Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, 28Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, 29Heleb the son of Baanah (the Netophathite), Ittai the son of Ribai from Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, 30Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai from the brooks of Gaash, 31Abi-Albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, 32Eliahba the Shaalbonite (of the sons of Jashen), Jonathan, 33Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite, 34Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite,

23:18 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *thirty;* Targum reads *the mighty men.*

Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,
35Hezrai[a] the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite,
36Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the
Gadite, 37Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the
Beerothite (armorbearer of Joab the son of
Zeruiah), 38Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite,
39*and* Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all.

DAVID'S CENSUS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

24 Again the anger of the LORD
was aroused against Israel, and
He moved David against them
to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."
2So the king said to Joab the com-
mander of the army who *was* with him,
"Now go throughout all the tribes of Israel,
from Dan to Beersheba, and count the
people, that I may know the number of the
people."
3And Joab said to the king, "Now may
the LORD your God add to the people a
hundred times more than there are, and
may the eyes of my lord the king see *it.*
But why does my lord the king desire this
thing?" 4Nevertheless the king's word pre-
vailed against Joab and against the cap-
tains of the army. Therefore Joab and the
captains of the army went out from the
presence of the king to count the people
of Israel.
5And they crossed over the Jordan and
camped in Aroer, on the right side of the
town which *is* in the midst of the ravine of
Gad, and toward Jazer. 6Then they came
to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim Hod-
shi; they came to Dan Jaan and around to
Sidon; 7and they came to the stronghold
of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites
and the Canaanites. Then they went out
to South Judah *as far as* Beersheba. 8So
when they had gone through all the land,
they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine
months and twenty days. 9Then Joab gave
the sum of the number of the people to the
king. And there were in Israel eight hun-
dred thousand valiant men who drew the
sword, and the men of Judah were five hun-
dred thousand men.

THE JUDGMENT ON DAVID'S SIN

10And David's heart condemned him after
he had numbered the people. So David said
to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what
I have done; but now, I pray, O LORD, take
away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have
done very foolishly."
11Now when David arose in the morning,
the word of the LORD came to the prophet
Gad, David's seer, saying, 12"Go and tell Da-
vid, 'Thus says the LORD: "I offer you three
things; choose one of them for yourself, that
I may do *it* to you."' " 13So Gad came to Da-
vid and told him; and he said to him, "Shall
seven[a] years of famine come to you in your
land? Or shall you flee three months before
your enemies, while they pursue you? Or
shall there be three days' plague in your
land? Now consider and see what answer I
should take back to Him who sent me."
14And David said to Gad, "I am in great
distress. Please let us fall into the hand of
the LORD, for His mercies *are* great; but do
not let me fall into the hand of man."
15So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel
from the morning till the appointed time.
From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand
men of the people died. 16And when the an-
gel[a] stretched out His hand over Jerusalem
to destroy it, the LORD relented from the
destruction, and said to the angel who was
destroying the people, "It is enough; now
restrain your hand." And the angel of the
LORD was by the threshing floor of Arau-
nah[b] the Jebusite.
17Then David spoke to the LORD when
he saw the angel who was striking the peo-
ple, and said, "Surely I have sinned, and I
have done wickedly; but these sheep, what
have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be
against me and against my father's house."

THE ALTAR ON THE THRESHING FLOOR

18And Gad came that day to David and said
to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD
on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jeb-
usite." 19So David, according to the word
of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.
20Now Araunah looked, and saw the king
and his servants coming toward him. So
Araunah went out and bowed before the
king with his face to the ground.

23:35 [a]Spelled *Hezro* in 1 Chronicles 11:37
24:13 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *three* (compare 1 Chronicles 21:12). **24:16** [a]Or *Angel*
[b]Spelled *Ornan* in 1 Chronicles 21:15

21Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord
the king come to his servant?"

And David said, "To buy the threshing
floor from you, to build an altar to the
LORD, that the plague may be withdrawn
from the people."

22Now Araunah said to David, "Let my
lord the king take and offer up whatever
seems good to him. Look, *here are* oxen for
burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements
and the yokes of the oxen for wood. 23All
these, O king, Araunah has given to the
king."

And Araunah said to the king, "May the
LORD your God accept you."

24Then the king said to Araunah, "No,
but I will surely buy *it* from you for a price;
nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD
my God with that which costs me nothing."
So David bought the threshing floor and
the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. 25And
David built there an altar to the LORD, and
offered burnt offerings and peace offer-
ings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for
the land, and the plague was withdrawn
from Israel.

1 Kings

DATE OF WRITING: 590–570 B.C.
AUTHOR: UNCERTAIN, ALTHOUGH THE PROPHET JEREMIAH HAS BEEN SUGGESTED
THEME: LESSONS TO LEARN FROM THE DIVIDING OF THE KINGDOM
PURPOSE: IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR LEADERS TO BE FULLY COMMITTED TO THE LORD.

OUTLINE

1:1–53 ..... Solomon Becomes King
2:1–12 ..... David's Final Words and His Death
2:13–46 ..... Solomon Takes Control of the Kingdom
3:1—4:34 ..... Solomon's Wisdom and His Officials
5:1—8:66 ..... Building and Dedication of the Jerusalem Temple
9:1—10:29 ..... Other Events During Solomon's Rule
11:1–43 ..... Solomon's Unfaithfulness, Enemies, and Death
12:1–24 ..... The Northern Tribes of Israel Rebel Against King Rehoboam
12:25–33 ..... King Jeroboam of Israel Makes Two Gold Statues of Calves
13:1—14:20 ..... Prophets Condemn Jeroboam
14:21—16:34 ..... Kings of Judah and Israel
17:1—19:21 ..... Elijah the Prophet
20:1—22:40 ..... King Ahab and Queen Jezebel
22:41–53 ..... King Jehoshaphat of Judah and King Ahaziah of Israel

KEY VERSE:

Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant" (1 Kings 11:11).

THEN ///

If reading 1 and 2 Samuel is like watching a couple of home videos, then reading 1 Kings is like finding the sequel. In fact, 1 Kings picks up right where 2 Samuel leaves off.

In the first half of 1 Kings, David's son Solomon takes over the throne, and boy what a throne he made of it. King Solomon was like a superstar in Israel: as rich as a rock star, as glamorous as a movie star, and as smart as a Wall Street millionaire. He could network and schmooze with the best.

The last half of 1 Kings tells the other side of the story. After Solomon's reign, the kingdom started falling to pieces. What was a united kingdom became two separate kingdoms with their own kings and their own *big* mistakes.

NOW ///

We can look at the Golden Age of Israel under the first part of Solomon's reign and wonder how they managed to fall as far as they did, even splitting into two spiritually weak kingdoms. God blessed them tremendously but one-by-one they totally forgot about God, starting with their leaders. We may not have to look very hard to find a similar pattern in our lives.

Often, when things are going well, we tend to forget about our commitment to God. Taking specific time to talk with God and study His Word becomes less of a priority. Hearing and obeying the Spirit of God throughout our everyday lives becomes more of an afterthought. This will always lead to a spiritual downfall in our lives.

But it doesn't have to be this way. We can learn the lesson of 1 Kings. We can determine that we *will* keep our focus on God, regardless of our circumstances.

REALITY CHECK ///

Israel never enjoyed as much wealth or prestige as when King Solomon ruled. But Solomon forgot where his wisdom and riches came from. He eventually became disillusioned with "having it all" and failed to keep God in first place in his life. (See the Book of Ecclesiastes.) He even worshiped false gods before his life was over. His country suffered for it. He is still known throughout the world as the person who had it all and found out that, without God, it's not good enough.

That fact is just as true today. Every bit of fame, power, or money that the world has to give can never fulfill our deepest longings and desires or our need for purpose and meaning. Only God offers ultimate fulfillment.

ADONIJAH PRESUMES TO BE KING

1 Now King David was old, advanced
in years; and they put covers on him,
but he could not get warm. 2Therefore his servants said to him, "Let a young woman, a virgin, be sought for our lord the king, and let her stand before the king, and let her care for him; and let her lie in your bosom, that our lord the king may be warm." 3So they sought for a lovely young woman throughout all the territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. 4The young woman *was* very lovely; and she cared for the king, and served him; but the king did not know her.

5Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king"; and he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. 6(And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, "Why have you done so?" He *was* also very good-looking. *His mother* had borne him after Absalom.) 7Then he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they followed and helped Adonijah. 8But Zadok the priest, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and the mighty men who *belonged* to David were not with Adonijah.

9And Adonijah sacrificed sheep and oxen and fattened cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which *is* by En Rogel; he also invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, the king's servants. 10But he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the mighty men, or Solomon his brother.

11So Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, "Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king, and David our lord does not know *it?* 12Come, please, let me now give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. 13Go immediately to King David and say to him, 'Did you not, my lord, O king, swear to your maidservant, saying, "Assuredly your son Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?' 14Then, while you are still talking there with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words."

15So Bathsheba went into the chamber to the king. (Now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was serving the king.) 16And Bathsheba bowed and did homage to the king. Then the king said, "What is your wish?"

17Then she said to him, "My lord, you swore by the LORD your God to your maidservant, *saying,* 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.' 18So now, look! Adonijah has become king; and now, my lord the king, you do not know about *it.* 19He has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king, Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander of the army; but Solomon your servant he has not invited. 20And as for you, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel *are* on you, that you should tell them who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. 21Otherwise it will happen, when my lord the king rests with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be counted as offenders."

22And just then, while she was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. 23So they told the king, saying, "Here is Nathan the prophet." And when he came in before the king, he bowed down before the king with his face to the ground. 24And Nathan said, "My lord, O king, have you said, 'Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne'? 25For he has gone down today, and has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king's sons, and the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest; and look! They are eating and drinking before him; and they say, '*Long* live King Adonijah!' 26But he has not invited me—me your servant—nor Zadok the priest, nor Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, nor your servant Solomon. 27Has this thing been done by my lord the king, and you have not told your servant who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

DAVID PROCLAIMS SOLOMON KING

28Then King David answered and said, "Call Bathsheba to me." So she came into the king's presence and stood before the king. 29And the king took an oath and said, "*As* the LORD lives, who has redeemed my

life from every distress, 30just as I swore to you by the LORD God of Israel, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' so I certainly will do this day."

31Then Bathsheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and paid homage to the king, and said, "Let my lord King David live forever!"

32And King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." So they came before the king. 33The king also said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. 34There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, '*Long* live King Solomon!' 35Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah."

36Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king and said, "Amen! May the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*. 37As the LORD has been with my lord the king, even so may He be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David."

38So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule, and took him to Gihon. 39Then Zadok the priest took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the horn, and all the people said, "*Long* live King Solomon!" 40And all the people went up after him; and the people played the flutes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth *seemed to* split with their sound.

41Now Adonijah and all the guests who *were* with him heard *it* as they finished eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the horn, he said, "Why *is* the city in such a noisy uproar?" 42While he was still speaking, there came Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest. And Adonijah said to him, "Come in, for you *are* a prominent man, and bring good news."

43Then Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, "No! Our lord King David has made Solomon king. 44The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites; and they have made him ride on the king's mule. 45So Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon; and they have gone up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar. This *is* the noise that you have heard. 46Also Solomon sits on the throne of the kingdom. 47And moreover the king's servants have gone to bless our lord King David, saying, 'May God make the name of Solomon better than your name, and may He make his throne greater than your throne.' Then the king bowed himself on the bed. 48Also the king said thus, 'Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who has given *one* to sit on my throne this day, while my eyes see *it*!' "

49So all the guests who were with Adonijah were afraid, and arose, and each one went his way.

50Now Adonijah was afraid of Solomon; so he arose, and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. 51And it was told Solomon, saying, "Indeed Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.' "

52Then Solomon said, "If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die." 53So King Solomon sent them to bring him down from the altar. And he came and fell down before King Solomon; and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house."

DAVID'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

2 Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: 2"I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. 3And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; 4that the LORD may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and

with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

5"Moreover you know also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, *and* what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed. And he shed the blood of war in peacetime, and put the blood of war on his belt that *was* around his waist, and on his sandals that *were* on his feet. 6Therefore do according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to the grave in peace.

1 Kings 2:5

It didn't matter to Joab that Abner had killed his brother in self-defense. Joab wanted vengeance, so he murdered Abner in cold blood. Years later, Joab continued his murderous ways by killing Amasa, the man David had chosen to replace Joab as commander of the royal army.

7"But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table, for so they came to me when I fled from Absalom your brother.

KINDNESS

What should we do to those who have been kind to us?

1 Kings 2:7

8"And see, *you have* with you Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite from Bahurim, who cursed me with a malicious curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.' 9Now therefore, do not hold him guiltless, for you *are* a wise man and know what you ought to do to him; but bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood."

DEATH OF DAVID

10So David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. 11The period that David reigned over Israel *was* forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 12Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.

SOLOMON EXECUTES ADONIJAH

13Now Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. So she said, "Do you come peaceably?"

And he said, "Peaceably." 14Moreover he said, "I have something *to say* to you."

And she said, "Say it."

15Then he said, "You know that the kingdom was mine, and all Israel had set their expectations on me, that I should reign. However, the kingdom has been turned over, and has become my brother's; for it was his from the LORD. 16Now I ask one petition of you; do not deny me."

And she said to him, "Say it."

17Then he said, "Please speak to King Solomon, for he will not refuse you, that he may give me Abishag the Shunammite as wife."

1 Kings 2:17–22

Abishag served as a nurse and a companion to David in his old age. Part of her responsibility was to help David stay warm at night. She slept with David, but did not have a physical relationship with him. Even so, she was considered to be one of David's concubines. Adonijah's request to marry Abishag was a way of claiming what had been David's. Solomon recognized Adonijah's plan to eventually claim something else of David's: the throne of Israel.

18So Bathsheba said, "Very well, I will speak for you to the king."

19Bathsheba therefore went to King Solomon, to speak to him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her and bowed down to her, and sat down on his throne and had a throne set for the king's mother; so she sat at his right hand. 20Then she said, "I desire one small petition of you; do not refuse me."

And the king said to her, "Ask it, my mother, for I will not refuse you."

21So she said, "Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as wife."

22And King Solomon answered and said to his mother, "Now why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also—for he *is* my older brother—for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah." 23Then King Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, "May God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life! 24Now therefore, *as* the LORD lives, who has confirmed me and set me on the throne of David my father, and who has established a house[a] for me, as He promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today!"

25So King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he struck him down, and he died.

ABIATHAR EXILED, JOAB EXECUTED

26And to Abiathar the priest the king said, "Go to Anathoth, to your own fields, for you *are* deserving of death; but I will not put you to death at this time, because you carried the ark of the Lord GOD before my father David, and because you were afflicted every time my father was afflicted." 27So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, that he might fulfill the word of the LORD which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh.

28Then news came to Joab, for Joab had defected to Adonijah, though he had not defected to Absalom. So Joab fled to the tabernacle of the LORD, and took hold of the horns of the altar. 29And King Solomon was told, "Joab has fled to the tabernacle of the LORD; there *he is,* by the altar." Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, "Go, strike him down." 30So Benaiah went to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said to him, "Thus says the king, 'Come out!' "

And he said, "No, but I will die here." And Benaiah brought back word to the king, saying, "Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me."

31Then the king said to him, "Do as he has said, and strike him down and bury him, that you may take away from me and from the house of my father the innocent blood which Joab shed. 32So the LORD will return his blood on his head, because he struck down two men more righteous and better than he, and killed them with the sword—Abner the son of Ner, the commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, the commander of the army of Judah—though my father David did not know *it.* 33Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab and upon the head of his descendants forever. But upon David and his descendants, upon his house and his throne, there shall be peace forever from the LORD."

34So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up and struck and killed him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. 35The king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his place over the army, and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar.

SHIMEI EXECUTED

36Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, "Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and do not go out from there anywhere. 37For it shall be, on the day you go out and cross the Brook Kidron, know for certain you shall surely die; your blood shall be on your own head."

38And Shimei said to the king, "The saying *is* good. As my lord the king has said, so your servant will do." So Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

39Now it happened at the end of three years, that two slaves of Shimei ran away to Achish the son of Maachah, king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, "Look, your slaves *are* in Gath!" 40So Shimei arose, saddled his donkey, and went to Achish at Gath to seek his slaves. And Shimei went and brought his slaves from Gath. 41And Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had come back. 42Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, "Did I not make you swear by the LORD, and warn you, saying, 'Know for certain that on the day you go out and travel anywhere, you shall surely die'? And you said to me, 'The word I have heard *is* good.' 43Why then have you not kept the oath of the LORD and the commandment that I gave you?" 44The king said moreover to Shimei, "You know, as your

2:24 [a]That is, a royal dynasty

heart acknowledges, all the wickedness that you did to my father David; therefore the LORD will return your wickedness on your own head. 45But King Solomon *shall be* blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD forever."

46So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he went out and struck him down, and he died. Thus the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

MARRIAGE
What are some dangers of marrying outside the faith?
1 Kings 3:1–3

SOLOMON REQUESTS WISDOM

3 Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall all around Jerusalem. 2Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days. 3And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.

1 Kings 3:4
Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices because that's where the bronze altar and tabernacle (tent) of meeting were. These sacred items, which had been made during the time of Moses, were an important part of the Israelites' worship. Located about six miles northwest of Jerusalem, Gibeon (now known as El-Jib) had been the site of several bloody battles, including Joshua's victory over the Amorites and a deadly contest between the soldiers of David and Ishbosheth, Saul's son.

4Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that *was* the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

6And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. 7Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I *am* a little child; I do not know *how* to go out or come in. 8And Your servant *is* in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. 9Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

10The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, 12behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. 13And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. 14So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."

15Then Solomon awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

SOLOMON'S WISE JUDGMENT

16Now two women *who were* harlots came to the king, and stood before him. 17And one woman said, "O my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth while she *was* in the house. 18Then it happened, the third day after I had given



PROFILE
SOLOMON

Solomon turned out to be an example of almost everything he preached for and against! He should have listened better to himself. His wisest act was to humbly ask God for wisdom; his most foolish act was to live as if he were exempt from the very truths he taught others. For example, he published many proverbs on marriage, but violated them himself.

In his unusual autobiography, Ecclesiastes, Solomon gives indications that he realized what a mess he had made out of his life. The book reveals a man who had the unusual circumstance of having the resources and opportunity to have and to try anything. So he did. Years later Jesus said this about lives like Solomon's: "What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Matt. 16:26). Solomon reported that such a man ends up chasing the wind.

Solomon certainly made a difference in history. He built a great temple for God in Jerusalem. He enlarged the borders of the kingdom of Israel. He applied wisdom to a system of public works and foreign diplomacy. The treasury of his kingdom overflowed with riches. From a worldly point of view, Solomon was an outstanding success. But his internal life decayed away as he failed to faithfully follow his own advice: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5, 6).

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

The Bible includes many examples of people who started out well but finished poorly. You can probably think of some examples in our own times. Those who make the best kind of difference are those who don't give up once they begin to live for God.

We don't know how long the race called real life will be, but we will fail and fall if we expect it to be a short sprint. Life is more like a marathon. Will you get tired, give up, and sit on the sidelines? Or will you keep on trying until you win the race?

? WANT TO KNOW MORE?

In order to get a perspective on Solomon, you should read not only the history of his life and times in 2 Samuel 12:24—1 Kings 11:43, but also his own writings in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

Solomon was a wise man who ultimately saw the error of his ways. His wisdom combined with his honest reflection helped him make a real difference. You can, too!

birth, that this woman also gave birth. And we *were* together; no one *was* with us in the house, except the two of us in the house. 19And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him. 20So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side, while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. 21And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne."

22Then the other woman said, "No! But the living one *is* my son, and the dead one *is* your son."

And the first woman said, "No! But the dead one *is* your son, and the living one *is* my son."

Thus they spoke before the king.

23And the king said, "The one says, 'This *is* my son, who lives, and your son *is* the

dead one'; and the other says, 'No! But your son *is* the dead one, and my son *is* the living one.'" [24]Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king. [25]And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other."

[26]Then the woman whose son *was* living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!"

But the other said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, *but* divide *him*."

[27]So the king answered and said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she *is* his mother."

[28]And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God *was* in him to administer justice.

SOLOMON'S ADMINISTRATION

4 So King Solomon was king over all Israel. [2]And these *were* his officials: Azariah the son of Zadok, the priest; [3]Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder; [4]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, over the army; Zadok and Abiathar, the priests; [5]Azariah the son of Nathan, over the officers; Zabud the son of Nathan, a priest *and* the king's friend; [6]Ahishar, over the household; and Adoniram the son of Abda, over the labor force.

[7]And Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each one made provision for one month of the year. [8]These *are* their names: Ben-Hur,[a] in the mountains of Ephraim; [9]Ben-Deker,[a] in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon Beth Hanan; [10]Ben-Hesed,[a] in Arubboth; to him *belonged* Sochoh and all the land of Hepher; [11]Ben-Abinadab,[a] *in* all the regions of Dor; he had Taphath the daughter of Solomon as wife; [12]Baana the son of Ahilud, *in* Taanach, Megiddo, and all Beth Shean, which *is* beside Zaretan below Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meholah, as far as the other side of Jokneam; [13]Ben-Geber,[a] in Ramoth Gilead; to him *belonged* the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, in Gilead; to him *also belonged* the region of Argob in Bashan—sixty large cities with walls and bronze gate-bars; [14]Ahinadab the son of Iddo, *in* Mahanaim; [15]Ahimaaz, in Naphtali; he also took Basemath the daughter of Solomon as wife; [16]Baanah the son of Hushai, in Asher and Aloth; [17]Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar; [18]Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin; [19]Geber the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, *in* the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan. *He was* the only governor who *was* in the land.

PROSPERITY AND WISDOM OF SOLOMON'S REIGN

[20]Judah and Israel *were* as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. [21]So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River[a] *to* the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. *They* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

[22]Now Solomon's provision for one day was thirty kors of fine flour, sixty kors of meal, [23]ten fatted oxen, twenty oxen from the pastures, and one hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl.

[24]For he had dominion over all *the region* on this side of the River[a] from Tiphsah even to Gaza, namely over all the kings on this side of the River; and he had peace on every side all around him. [25]And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

[26]Solomon had forty[a] thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. [27]And these governors, each man in his month, provided food for King Solomon and for all who came to King Solomon's table. There was no lack in their supply. [28]They also brought barley and straw to the proper place, for the horses and steeds, each man according to his charge.

4:8 [a]Literally *Son of Hur* **4:9** [a]Literally *Son of Deker* **4:10** [a]Literally *Son of Hesed* **4:11** [a]Literally *Son of Abinadab* **4:13** [a]Literally *Son of Geber* **4:21** [a]That is, the Euphrates **4:24** [a]That is, the Euphrates **4:26** [a]Following Masoretic Text and most other authorities; some manuscripts of the Septuagint read *four* (compare 2 Chronicles 9:25).

29And God gave Solomon wisdom and
exceedingly great understanding, and
largeness of heart like the sand on the
seashore. 30Thus Solomon's wisdom ex-
celled the wisdom of all the men of the
East and all the wisdom of Egypt. 31For he
was wiser than all men—than Ethan the
Ezrahite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda,
the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all
the surrounding nations. 32He spoke three
thousand proverbs, and his songs were
one thousand and five. 33Also he spoke of
trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even
to the hyssop that springs out of the wall;
he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creep-
ing things, and of fish. 34And men of all na-
tions, from all the kings of the earth who
had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the
wisdom of Solomon.

SOLOMON PREPARES TO BUILD THE TEMPLE

5 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his ser-
vants to Solomon, because he heard
that they had anointed him king in
place of his father, for Hiram had always
loved David. 2Then Solomon sent to Hiram,
saying:

3You know how my father David could
not build a house for the name of the
LORD his God because of the wars
which were fought against him on
every side, until the LORD put *his foes*[a]
under the soles of his feet.
4But now the LORD my God has given
me rest on every side; *there is* neither
adversary nor evil occurrence.
5And behold, I propose to build a house
for the name of the LORD my God, as
the LORD spoke to my father David,
saying, "Your son, whom I will set on
your throne in your place, he shall
build the house for My name."
6Now therefore, command that they cut
down cedars for me from Lebanon;
and my servants will be with your
servants, and I will pay you wages for
your servants according to whatever
you say. For you know *there is* none
among us who has skill to cut timber
like the Sidonians.

7So it was, when Hiram heard the words
of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly and said,

Blessed *be* the LORD this day, for He
has given David a wise son over this
great people!

8Then Hiram sent to Solomon, saying:

I have considered *the message* which
you sent me, *and* I will do all you
desire concerning the cedar and
cypress logs.
9My servants shall bring *them* down
from Lebanon to the sea; I will float
them in rafts by sea to the place
you indicate to me, and will have
them broken apart there; then you
can take *them* away. And you shall
fulfill my desire by giving food for my
household.

10Then Hiram gave Solomon cedar and
cypress logs *according to* all his desire.
11And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thou-
sand kors of wheat *as* food for his house-
hold, and twenty[a] kors of pressed oil. Thus
Solomon gave to Hiram year by year.
12So the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as
He had promised him; and there was peace
between Hiram and Solomon, and the two
of them made a treaty together.

1 Kings 5:13

Even though Solomon treated his workers well, they were still slaves. Following in his father's footsteps, Solomon made slaves of foreigners and the people he captured in war.

FAMILY

What does God think about giving all our time to work?

1 Kings 5:13, 14

13Then King Solomon raised up a labor
force out of all Israel; and the labor force
was thirty thousand men. 14And he sent
them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month
in shifts: they were one month in Lebanon
and two months at home; Adoniram *was*

5:3 [a]Literally *them* **5:11** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *twenty thousand*.

in charge of the labor force. 15Solomon had seventy thousand who carried burdens, and eighty thousand who quarried *stone* in the mountains, 16besides three thousand three hundred[a] from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies, who supervised the people who labored in the work. 17And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, *and* hewn stones, to lay the foundation of the temple.[a] 18So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gebalites quarried *them;* and they prepared timber and stones to build the temple.

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

6 And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth[a] year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which *is* the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. 2Now the house which King Solomon built for the LORD, its length *was* sixty cubits, its width twenty, and its height thirty cubits. 3The vestibule in front of the sanctuary[a] of the house *was* twenty cubits long across the width of the house, *and* the width of *the vestibule*[b] *extended* ten cubits from the front of the house. 4And he made for the house windows with beveled frames.

5Against the wall of the temple he built chambers all around, *against* the walls of the temple, all around the sanctuary and the inner sanctuary.[a] Thus he made side chambers all around it. 6The lowest chamber *was* five cubits wide, the middle *was* six cubits wide, and the third *was* seven cubits wide; for he made narrow ledges around the outside of the temple, so that *the support beams* would not be fastened into the walls of the temple. 7And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel *or* any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built. 8The doorway for the middle story[a] *was* on the right side of the temple. They went up by stairs to the middle *story,* and from the middle to the third.

9So he built the temple and finished it, and he paneled the temple with beams and boards of cedar. 10And he built side chambers against the entire temple, each five cubits high; they were attached to the temple with cedar beams.

11Then the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying: 12"*Concerning* this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David. 13And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel."

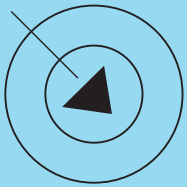
14So Solomon built the temple and finished it. 15And he built the inside walls of the temple with cedar boards; from the floor of the temple to the ceiling he paneled the inside with wood; and he covered the floor of the temple with planks of cypress. 16Then he built the twenty-cubit room at the rear of the temple, from floor to ceiling, with cedar boards; he built *it* inside as the inner sanctuary, as the Most Holy *Place.* 17And in front of it the temple sanctuary was forty cubits *long.* 18The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with ornamental buds and open flowers. All *was* cedar; there was no stone *to be* seen.

1 Kings 6:16

The floor plan of Solomon's temple was identical to the one God gave Moses for the tabernacle. The only difference was that the temple was twice the size of the tabernacle. The Most Holy Place was designed to be a perfect cube, equal in length, width, and height.

19And he prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple, to set the ark of the

5:16 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *three thousand six hundred.* **5:17** [a]Literally *house,* and so frequently throughout this book **6:1** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *fortieth.* **6:3** [a]Hebrew *heykal;* here the main room of the temple, elsewhere called the holy place (compare Exodus 26:33 and Ezekiel 41:1) [b]Literally *it* **6:5** [a]Hebrew *debir;* here the inner room of the temple, elsewhere called the Most Holy Place (compare verse 16) **6:8** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *upper story;* Targum reads *ground story.*



PROMISE

God promises to never forsake you.

"Concerning this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel" (1 Kin. 6:12, 13).

Do you remember the fears of your childhood? Monsters in the closet. Thunder in the night. Being left alone. That just might be the biggest fear. Simply not being able to locate mom can cause a child to go running through the house screaming, "Mommmmm!" Fearing that she has suddenly vanished, the little one may begin to check everywhere, look in every room. Her little heart races and her terrified imagination runs wild. She wonders if everyone is gone and she's been left totally alone—deserted in a big, scary world to fend for herself. She may fear she'll have to learn to cook and clean and earn money. Just as tears begin to fall, she hears a voice from the garage, "What is it, honey?" "Nothing, Mom," the child answers with pretend calm, "I just couldn't find you." "Well, I'm right here," mom reassures.

And God is also "right here." He will never desert you or leave you. Even when you're an adult and feel afraid, rest assured that God is as close as the air you breathe.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Exodus 33:14; Deuteronomy 31:8; Psalm 37:28; Ezekiel 11:16, 17

covenant of the LORD there. 20The inner sanctuary *was* twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high. He overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar. 21So Solomon overlaid the inside of the temple with pure gold. He stretched gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, and overlaid it with gold. 22The whole temple he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the temple; also he overlaid with gold the entire altar that *was* by the inner sanctuary.

23Inside the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim *of* olive wood, *each* ten cubits high. 24One wing of the cherub *was* five cubits, and the other wing of the cherub five cubits: ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. 25And the other cherub *was* ten cubits; both cherubim *were* of the same size and shape. 26The height of one cherub *was* ten cubits, and so *was* the other cherub. 27Then he set the cherubim inside the inner room;[a] and they stretched out the wings of the cherubim so that the wing of the one touched *one* wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall. And their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. 28Also he overlaid the cherubim with gold.

29Then he carved all the walls of the temple all around, both the inner and outer *sanctuaries,* with carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. 30And the floor of the temple he overlaid with gold, both the inner and outer *sanctuaries.*

31For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors *of* olive wood; the lintel *and* doorposts *were* one-fifth *of the wall.* 32The two doors *were of* olive wood; and he carved on them figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid *them* with gold; and he spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees. 33So for the door of the sanctuary he also made doorposts *of* olive wood, one-fourth *of the wall.* 34And the two doors *were of* cypress wood; two panels *comprised* one folding door, and two panels *comprised* the other folding door. 35Then he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers *on them,* and overlaid *them* with gold applied evenly on the carved work.

6:27 [a]Literally *house*

36And he built the inner court with three
rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar
beams.

1 Kings 6:37

Here's a brief history of the temple in Jerusalem: Solomon began work on the first temple around 967 B.C. and completed it seven years later. The Babylonians came along in 586 B.C. and destroyed the building completely. The Jewish people built a second temple, but it was no longer standing when Jesus was born. The temple that existed during Jesus' day had been built by Herod.

37In the fourth year the foundation of the
house of the LORD was laid, in the month
of Ziv. 38And in the eleventh year, in the
month of Bul, which is the eighth month,
the house was finished in all its details and
according to all its plans. So he was seven
years in building it.

SOLOMON'S OTHER BUILDINGS

7 But Solomon took thirteen years to
build his own house; so he finished
all his house.

2He also built the House of the Forest
of Lebanon; its length *was* one hundred
cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height
thirty cubits, with four rows of cedar pil-
lars, and cedar beams on the pillars. 3And
it was paneled with cedar above the beams
that *were* on forty-five pillars, fifteen *to*
a row. 4*There were* windows *with beveled*
frames in three rows, and window *was* op-
posite window *in* three tiers. 5And all the
doorways and doorposts *had* rectangular
frames; and window *was* opposite window
in three tiers.

6He also made the Hall of Pillars: its length
was fifty cubits, and its width thirty cubits;
and in front of them *was* a portico with pil-
lars, and a canopy *was* in front of them.

7Then he made a hall for the throne, the
Hall of Judgment, where he might judge;
and *it was* paneled with cedar from floor to
ceiling.[a]

8And the house where he dwelt *had*
another court inside the hall, of like work-
manship. Solomon also made a house like
this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he
had taken *as wife.*

9All these *were of* costly stones cut to
size, trimmed with saws, inside and out,
from the foundation to the eaves, and also
on the outside to the great court. 10The
foundation *was of* costly stones, large
stones, some ten cubits and some eight cu-
bits. 11And above *were* costly stones, hewn
to size, and cedar wood. 12The great court
was enclosed with three rows of hewn
stones and a row of cedar beams. So were
the inner court of the house of the LORD
and the vestibule of the temple.

HIRAM THE CRAFTSMAN

13Now King Solomon sent and brought
Huram[a] from Tyre. 14He *was* the son of a
widow from the tribe of Naphtali, and his
father *was* a man of Tyre, a bronze worker;
he was filled with wisdom and understand-
ing and skill in working with all kinds of
bronze work. So he came to King Solomon
and did all his work.

THE BRONZE PILLARS FOR THE TEMPLE

15And he cast two pillars of bronze, each
one eighteen cubits high, and a line of
twelve cubits measured the circumfer-
ence of each. 16Then he made two capitals
of cast bronze, to set on the tops of the
pillars. The height of one capital *was* five
cubits, and the height of the other capital
was five cubits. 17*He made* a lattice net-
work, with wreaths of chainwork, for the
capitals which *were* on top of the pillars:
seven chains for one capital and seven for
the other capital. 18So he made the pillars,
and two rows of pomegranates above the
network all around to cover the capitals
that *were* on top; and thus he did for the
other capital.

19The capitals which *were* on top of the
pillars in the hall *were* in the shape of lil-
ies, four cubits. 20The capitals on the two
pillars also *had pomegranates* above, by
the convex surface which *was* next to the
network; and there *were* two hundred such
pomegranates in rows on each of the capi-
tals all around.

7:7 [a]Literally *floor,* that is, of the upper level
7:13 [a]Hebrew *Hiram* (compare 2 Chronicles 2:13, 14)

21 Then he set up the pillars by the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on
the right and called its name Jachin, and
he set up the pillar on the left and called its
name Boaz. 22 The tops of the pillars were in
the shape of lilies. So the work of the pillars
was finished.

THE SEA AND THE OXEN

23 And he made the Sea of cast bronze, ten
cubits from one brim to the other; *it was*
completely round. Its height *was* five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its
circumference.
24 Below its brim *were* ornamental buds
encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, all
the way around the Sea. The ornamental
buds *were* cast in two rows when it was
cast. 25 It stood on twelve oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward
the west, three looking toward the south,
and three looking toward the east; the Sea
was set upon them, and all their back parts
pointed inward. 26 It *was* a handbreadth
thick; and its brim was shaped like the
brim of a cup, *like* a lily blossom. It contained two thousand[a] baths.

THE CARTS AND THE LAVERS

27 He also made ten carts of bronze; four
cubits *was* the length of each cart, four cubits its width, and three cubits its height.
28 And this *was* the design of the carts: They
had panels, and the panels *were* between
frames; 29 on the panels that *were* between
the frames *were* lions, oxen, and cherubim.
And on the frames *was* a pedestal on top.
Below the lions and oxen *were* wreaths of
plaited work. 30 Every cart had four bronze
wheels and axles of bronze, and its four
feet had supports. Under the laver *were*
supports of cast *bronze* beside each wreath.
31 Its opening inside the crown at the top
was one cubit in diameter; and the opening
was round, shaped *like* a pedestal, one and
a half cubits in outside diameter; and also
on the opening *were* engravings, but the
panels were square, not round. 32 Under the
panels *were* the four wheels, and the axles
of the wheels *were joined* to the cart. The
height of a wheel *was* one and a half cubits.
33 The workmanship of the wheels *was* like
the workmanship of a chariot wheel; their
axle pins, their rims, their spokes, and their
hubs *were* all of cast *bronze*. 34 And *there*
were four supports at the four corners of
each cart; its supports *were* part of the cart
itself. 35 On the top of the cart, at the height
of half a cubit, *it was* perfectly round. And
on the top of the cart, its flanges and its
panels *were* of the same casting. 36 On the
plates of its flanges and on its panels he
engraved cherubim, lions, and palm trees,
wherever there was a clear space on each,
with wreaths all around. 37 Thus he made
the ten carts. All of them were of the same
mold, one measure, *and* one shape.
38 Then he made ten lavers of bronze;
each laver contained forty baths, *and* each
laver *was* four cubits. On each of the ten
carts *was* a laver. 39 And he put five carts on
the right side of the house, and five on the
left side of the house. He set the Sea on the
right side of the house, toward the southeast.

FURNISHINGS OF THE TEMPLE

40 Huram[a] made the lavers and the shovels
and the bowls. So Huram finished doing
all the work that he was to do for King
Solomon *for* the house of the LORD: 41 the
two pillars, the *two* bowl-shaped capitals
that *were* on top of the two pillars; the two
networks covering the two bowl-shaped
capitals which *were* on top of the pillars;
42 four hundred pomegranates for the two
networks (two rows of pomegranates
for each network, to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals that *were* on top of the
pillars); 43 the ten carts, and ten lavers on
the carts; 44 one Sea, and twelve oxen under the Sea; 45 the pots, the shovels, and the
bowls.

All these articles which Huram[a] made
for King Solomon *for* the house of the
LORD *were of* burnished bronze. 46 In the
plain of Jordan the king had them cast in
clay molds, between Succoth and Zaretan. 47 And Solomon did not weigh all the
articles, because *there were* so many; the
weight of the bronze was not determined.
48 Thus Solomon had all the furnishings
made for the house of the LORD: the altar
of gold, and the table of gold on which *was*

7:26 [a]Or *three thousand* (compare 2 Chronicles 4:5) **7:40** [a]Hebrew *Hiram* (compare 2 Chronicles 2:13, 14) **7:45** [a]Hebrew *Hiram* (compare 2 Chronicles 2:13, 14)

the showbread; [49]the lampstands of pure gold, five on the right *side* and five on the left in front of the inner sanctuary, with the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold; [50]the basins, the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, *both* for the doors of the inner room (the Most Holy *Place*) *and* for the doors of the main hall of the temple.

[51]So all the work that King Solomon had done for the house of the LORD was finished; and Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated: the silver and the gold and the furnishings. He put them in the treasuries of the house of the LORD.

THE ARK BROUGHT INTO THE TEMPLE

8 Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which *is* Zion. [2]Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with King Solomon at the feast in the month of Ethanim, which *is* the seventh month. [3]So all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. [4]Then they brought up the ark of the LORD, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that *were* in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. [5]Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, *were* with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. [6]Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy *Place,* under the wings of the cherubim. [7]For the cherubim spread *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. [8]The poles extended so that the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy *place,* in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. [9]Nothing *was* in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

[10]And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy *place,* that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, [11]so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

[12]Then Solomon spoke:

"The LORD said He would dwell in the
dark cloud.
[13]I have surely built You an exalted
house,
And a place for You to dwell in forever."

SOLOMON'S SPEECH AT COMPLETION OF THE WORK

[14]Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. [15]And he said: "Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled *it,* saying, [16]'Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel *in which* to build a house, that My name might be there; but I chose David to be over My people Israel.' [17]Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple[a] for the name of the LORD God of Israel. [18]But the LORD said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. [19]Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.' [20]So the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. [21]And there I have made a place for the ark, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt."

SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION

[22]Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly

8:17 [a]Literally *house*, and so in verses 18–20

of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven; 23and he said: "LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God in heaven above or on earth below like You, who keep *Your* covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. 24You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled *it* with Your hand, as *it is* this day. 25Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk before Me as you have walked before Me.' 26And now I pray, O God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David my father.

27"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! 28Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: 29that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, 'My name shall be there,' that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. 30And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive.

GOD
How big is God?
1 Kings 8:27

31"When anyone sins against his neighbor, and is forced to take an oath, and comes *and* takes an oath before Your altar in this temple, 32then hear in heaven, and act, and judge Your servants, condemning the wicked, bringing his way on his head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.

33"When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and when they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this temple, 34then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their fathers.

35"When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, 36then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance.

37"When there is famine in the land, pestilence *or* blight *or* mildew, locusts *or* grasshoppers; when their enemy besieges them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness *there is;* 38whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, *or* by all Your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple: 39then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men), 40that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.

41"Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who *is* not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name's sake 42(for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, 43hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as *do* Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.

44"When Your people go out to battle against their enemy, wherever You send them, and when they pray to the LORD toward the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, 45then hear in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

46"When they sin against You (for *there is* no one who does not sin), and You be-

1 Kings 8:46

In 586 B.C., the Israelites rejected Solomon's warnings and turned their backs on God to openly worship idols. As punishment, the Lord allowed the Babylonians to invade northern Israel, destroy the temple, and haul the people away as prisoners. For seventy years the people of Israel were held captive in Babylon.

come angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; 47*yet* when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness'; 48and *when* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: 49then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, 50and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You; and grant them compassion before those who took them captive, that they may have compassion on them 51(for they *are* Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of the iron furnace), 52that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them whenever they call to You. 53For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth *to be* Your inheritance, as You spoke by Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD."

SOLOMON BLESSES THE ASSEMBLY

54And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. 55Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying: 56"Blessed *be* the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses. 57May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, 58that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers. 59And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require, 60that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD *is* God; *there is* no other. 61Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day."

SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE

62Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. 63And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. 64On the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that *was* in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar that *was* before the LORD *was* too small to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

THANKFULNESS

What should we do when God is good to us?

1 Kings 8:66

65At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven

days and seven *more* days—fourteen days.
66On the eighth day he sent the people
away; and they blessed the king, and went
to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all
the good that the LORD had done for His
servant David, and for Israel His people.

PRAYER
Does God hear our prayers?
1 Kings 9:3–5

GOD'S SECOND APPEARANCE TO SOLOMON

9 And it came to pass, when Solomon
had finished building the house of
the LORD and the king's house, and
all Solomon's desire which he wanted to
do, 2that the LORD appeared to Solomon
the second time, as He had appeared to
him at Gibeon. 3And the LORD said to
him: "I have heard your prayer and your
supplication that you have made before
Me; I have consecrated this house which
you have built to put My name there
forever, and My eyes and My heart will
be there perpetually. 4Now if you walk
before Me as your father David walked,
in integrity of heart and in uprightness,
to do according to all that I have com-
manded you, *and* if you keep My statutes
and My judgments, 5then I will establish
the throne of your kingdom over Israel
forever, as I promised David your father,
saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man
on the throne of Israel.' 6*But* if you or
your sons at all turn from following Me,
and do not keep My commandments *and*
My statutes which I have set before you,
but go and serve other gods and worship
them, 7then I will cut off Israel from the
land which I have given them; and this
house which I have consecrated for My
name I will cast out of My sight. Israel
will be a proverb and a byword among
all peoples. 8And *as for* this house, *which*
is exalted, everyone who passes by it will
be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why
has the LORD done thus to this land and
to this house?' 9Then they will answer,
'Because they forsook the LORD their
God, who brought their fathers out of the
land of Egypt, and have embraced other
gods, and worshiped them and served
them; therefore the LORD has brought all
this calamity on them.'"

SOLOMON AND HIRAM EXCHANGE GIFTS

10Now it happened at the end of twenty
years, when Solomon had built the two
houses, the house of the LORD and the
king's house 11(Hiram the king of Tyre had
supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress
and gold, as much as he desired), *that* King
Solomon then gave Hiram twenty cities
in the land of Galilee. 12Then Hiram went
from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon
had given him, but they did not please him.
13So he said, "What *kind of* cities *are* these
which you have given me, my brother?"
And he called them the land of Cabul,[a] as
they are to this day. 14Then Hiram sent the
king one hundred and twenty talents of
gold.

SOLOMON'S ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

15And this *is* the reason for the labor force
which King Solomon raised: to build
the house of the LORD, his own house,
the Millo,[a] the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor,
Megiddo, and Gezer. 16(Pharaoh king of
Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer and
burned it with fire, had killed the Canaan-
ites who dwelt in the city, and had given
it *as* a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's
wife.) 17And Solomon built Gezer, Lower
Beth Horon, 18Baalath, and Tadmor in the
wilderness, in the land *of Judah,* 19all the
storage cities that Solomon had, cities for
his chariots and cities for his cavalry, and
whatever Solomon desired to build in Jeru-
salem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his
dominion.

20All the people *who were* left of the
Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and
Jebusites, who *were* not of the children of
Israel— 21that is, their descendants who
were left in the land after them, whom
the children of Israel had not been able to
destroy completely—from these Solomon
raised forced labor, as it is to this day. 22But
of the children of Israel Solomon made no
forced laborers, because they *were* men of
war and his servants: his officers, his cap-

9:13 [a]Literally *Good for Nothing* **9:15** [a]Literally *The Landfill*

tains, commanders of his chariots, and his cavalry.

23Others *were* chiefs of the officials who *were* over Solomon's work: five hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people who did the work.

24But Pharaoh's daughter came up from the City of David to her house which *Solomon*[a] had built for her. Then he built the Millo.

25Now three times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he had built for the LORD, and he burned incense with them *on the altar* that *was* before the LORD. So he finished the temple.

26King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion Geber, which *is* near Elath[a] on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. 27Then Hiram sent his servants with the fleet, seamen who knew the sea, to work with the servants of Solomon. 28And they went to Ophir, and acquired four hundred and twenty talents of gold from there, and brought *it* to King Solomon.

1 Kings 10:1

Sheba was known as an international trading center. When countries needed valuable items, such as perfumes and incense, they turned to Sheba.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S PRAISE OF SOLOMON

10 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. 2She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. 3So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain *it* to her. 4And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, 5the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her. 6Then she said to the king: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. 7However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. 8Happy *are* your men and happy *are* these your servants, who stand continually before you *and* hear your wisdom! 9Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."

10Then she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great quantity, and precious stones. There never again came such abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. 11Also, the ships of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought great quantities of almug[a] wood and precious stones from Ophir. 12And the king made steps of the almug wood for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, also harps and stringed instruments for singers. There never again came such almug wood, nor has the like been seen to this day.

13Now King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, besides what Solomon had given her according to the royal generosity. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

SOLOMON'S GREAT WEALTH

14The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, 15besides *that* from the traveling merchants, from the income of traders, from all the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country.

16And King Solomon made two hundred large shields *of* hammered gold; six hundred *shekels* of gold went into each shield. 17He also *made* three hundred shields *of* hammered gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

9:24 [a]Literally *he* (compare 2 Chronicles 8:11)
9:26 [a]Hebrew *Eloth* (compare 2 Kings 14:22)
10:11 [a]Or *algum* (compare 2 Chronicles 9:10, 11)

18Moreover the king made a great throne
of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold.
19The throne had six steps, and the top of
the throne *was* round at the back; *there*
were armrests on either side of the place
of the seat, and two lions stood beside the
armrests. 20Twelve lions stood there, one
on each side of the six steps; nothing like
this had been made for any *other* kingdom.
21All King Solomon's drinking vessels
were gold, and all the vessels of the House
of the Forest of Lebanon *were* pure gold.
Not *one was* silver, for this was accounted
as nothing in the days of Solomon. 22For
the king had merchant ships[a] at sea with the
fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the
merchant ships came bringing gold, silver,
ivory, apes, and monkeys.[b] 23So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth
in riches and wisdom.
24Now all the earth sought the presence
of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God
had put in his heart. 25Each man brought
his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at
a set rate year by year.
26And Solomon gathered chariots and
horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed[a] in the chariot
cities and with the king at Jerusalem. 27The
king made silver *as common* in Jerusalem
as stones, and he made cedar trees as
abundant as the sycamores which *are* in
the lowland.
28Also Solomon had horses imported
from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the *current*
price. 29Now a chariot that was imported
from Egypt cost six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse one hundred and fifty; and
thus, through their agents,[a] they exported
them to all the kings of the Hittites and the
kings of Syria.

SOLOMON'S HEART TURNS FROM THE LORD

11 But King Solomon loved many
foreign women, as well as the
daughter of Pharaoh: women
of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, *and* Hittites— 2from the nations
of whom the LORD had said to the children
of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with
them, nor they with you. Surely they will
turn away your hearts after their gods."
Solomon clung to these in love. 3And he
had seven hundred wives, princesses, and
three hundred concubines; and his wives
turned away his heart. 4For it was so, when
Solomon was old, that his wives turned his
heart after other gods; and his heart was
not loyal to the LORD his God, as *was* the
heart of his father David. 5For Solomon
went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the
Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6Solomon did evil
in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully
follow the LORD, as *did* his father David.
7Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill
that *is* east of Jerusalem, and for Molech
the abomination of the people of Ammon.
8And he did likewise for all his foreign
wives, who burned incense and sacrificed
to their gods.

MARRIAGE
Can a spouse lead you away from God?
1 Kings 11:1–4

9So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from
the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared
to him twice, 10and had commanded him
concerning this thing, that he should not
go after other gods; but he did not keep
what the LORD had commanded. 11Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because
you have done this, and have not kept
My covenant and My statutes, which I
have commanded you, I will surely tear
the kingdom away from you and give it to
your servant. 12Nevertheless I will not do
it in your days, for the sake of your father
David; I will tear it out of the hand of your
son. 13However I will not tear away the
whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to
your son for the sake of My servant David,
and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have
chosen."

10:22 [a]Literally *ships of Tarshish,* deep-sea vessels [b]Or *peacocks* **10:26** [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate (compare 2 Chronicles 9:25); Masoretic Text reads *led.* **10:29** [a]Literally *by their hands*

ADVERSARIES OF SOLOMON

14Now the LORD raised up an adversary
against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he
was a descendant of the king in Edom.
15For it happened, when David was in
Edom, and Joab the commander of the
army had gone up to bury the slain, after
he had killed every male in Edom 16(be-
cause for six months Joab remained there
with all Israel, until he had cut down every
male in Edom), 17that Hadad fled to go to
Egypt, he and certain Edomites of his fa-
ther's servants with him. Hadad *was* still
a little child. 18Then they arose from Mid-
ian and came to Paran; and they took men
with them from Paran and came to Egypt,
to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a
house, apportioned food for him, and gave
him land. 19And Hadad found great favor in
the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him
as wife the sister of his own wife, that is,
the sister of Queen Tahpenes. 20Then the
sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his
son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's
house. And Genubath was in Pharaoh's
household among the sons of Pharaoh.

21So when Hadad heard in Egypt that
David rested with his fathers, and that Joab
the commander of the army was dead, Ha-
dad said to Pharaoh, "Let me depart, that I
may go to my own country."

22Then Pharaoh said to him, "But what
have you lacked with me, that suddenly
you seek to go to your own country?"

So he answered, "Nothing, but do let me
go anyway."

1 Kings 11:24, 25

Damascus just happens to be one of the oldest cities in the world. The city has existed continuously for over 4,000 years. In Arabic, the city is called "The Place." It's easy to understand why Damascus has been so popular for so long: three major caravan routes pass right through it. The city, which also happens to be the capital of Syria, is located northeast of the Sea of Galilee, about 135 miles from Jerusalem.

23And God raised up *another* adversary
against him, Rezon the son of Eliadah, who
had fled from his lord, Hadadezer king of
Zobah. 24So he gathered men to him and
became captain over a band *of raiders,*
when David killed those *of Zobah.* And they
went to Damascus and dwelt there, and
reigned in Damascus. 25He was an adver-
sary of Israel all the days of Solomon (be-
sides the trouble that Hadad *caused*); and
he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

JEROBOAM'S REBELLION

26Then Solomon's servant, Jeroboam the
son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zereda,
whose mother's name *was* Zeruah, a
widow, also rebelled against the king.

27And this *is* what caused him to rebel
against the king: Solomon had built the
Millo *and* repaired the damages to the City
of David his father. 28The man Jeroboam
was a mighty man of valor; and Solomon,
seeing that the young man was industri-
ous, made him the officer over all the labor
force of the house of Joseph.

29Now it happened at that time, when
Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the
prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on
the way; and he had clothed himself with a
new garment, and the two *were* alone in the
field. 30Then Ahijah took hold of the new
garment that *was* on him, and tore it *into*
twelve pieces. 31And he said to Jeroboam,
"Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says
the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will
tear the kingdom out of the hand of Sol-
omon and will give ten tribes to you 32(but
he shall have one tribe for the sake of My
servant David, and for the sake of Jerusa-
lem, the city which I have chosen out of all
the tribes of Israel), 33because they have[a]
forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the
goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the
god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of
the people of Ammon, and have not walked
in My ways to do *what is* right in My eyes
and *keep* My statutes and My judgments,
as *did* his father David. 34However I will not
take the whole kingdom out of his hand,
because I have made him ruler all the days
of his life for the sake of My servant David,
whom I chose because he kept My com-
mandments and My statutes. 35But I will
take the kingdom out of his son's hand and

11:33 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *he has.*

give it to you—ten tribes. 36And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there. 37So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. 38Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do *what is* right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. 39And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.'"

40Solomon therefore sought to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

DEATH OF SOLOMON

41Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? 42And the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel *was* forty years. 43Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

THE REVOLT AGAINST REHOBOAM

12 And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. 2So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard *it* (he was still in Egypt, for he had fled from the presence of King Solomon and had been dwelling in Egypt), 3that they sent and called him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, 4"Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you."

5So he said to them, "Depart *for* three days, then come back to me." And the people departed.

6Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, "How do you advise *me* to answer these people?"

7And they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever."

8But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. 9And he said to them, "What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us'?"

10Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter on us'—thus you shall say to them: 'My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's waist! 11And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!'"[a]

12So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had directed, saying, "Come back to me the third day." 13Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; 14and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!"[a] 15So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn *of events* was from the LORD, that He might fulfill His word, which the LORD had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying:

"What share have we in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
To your tents, O Israel!
Now, see to your own house, O David!"

So Israel departed to their tents. 17But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.

12:11 [a]Literally *scorpions* **12:14** [a]Literally *scorpions*

18Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who *was* in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. 19So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

20Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

21And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen *men* who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. 22But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 23"Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, 24'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me."'" Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned back, according to the word of the LORD.

JEROBOAM'S GOLD CALVES

25Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel. 26And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: 27If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah."

28Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" 29And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30Now this thing became a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan. 31He made shrines[a] on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.

32Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that *was* in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. 33So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

THE MESSAGE OF THE MAN OF GOD

13 And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. 2Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.'" 3And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This *is* the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out."

4So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, "Arrest him!" Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself. 5The altar also was split apart, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. 6Then the king answered and said to the man of God, "Please entreat the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me."

So the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as before. 7Then the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward."

12:31 [a]Literally *a house*

8But the man of God said to the king, "If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place. 9For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.'" 10So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel.

DEATH OF THE MAN OF GOD

11Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. 12And their father said to them, "Which way did he go?" For his sons had seen[a] which way the man of God went who came from Judah. 13Then he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it, 14and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, "*Are* you the man of God who came from Judah?"

And he said, "I *am*."

15Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat bread."

16And he said, "I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place. 17For I have been told by the word of the LORD, 'You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.'"

18He said to him, "I too *am* a prophet as you *are*, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.'" (He was lying to him.)

19So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water.

20Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back; 21and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you, 22but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which *the LORD* said to you, "Eat no bread and drink no water," your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.'"

23So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. 24When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse. 25And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

26Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard *it,* he said, "It *is* the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the LORD. Therefore the LORD has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to him." 27And he spoke to his sons, saying, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled *it.* 28Then he went and found his corpse thrown on the road, and the donkey and the lion standing by the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey. 29And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him. 30Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb; and they mourned over him, *saying,* "Alas, my brother!" 31So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, "When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God *is* buried; lay my bones beside his bones. 32For the saying which he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the shrines[a] on the high places which *are* in the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass."

33After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places. 34And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy *it* from the face of the earth.

13:12 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *showed him.* **13:32** [a]Literally *houses*

JUDGMENT ON THE HOUSE OF JEROBOAM

14 At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. 2And Jeroboam said to his wife, "Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet *is* there, who told me that *I would be* king over this people. 3Also take with you ten loaves, *some* cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child." 4And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age.

5Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, "Here is the wife of Jeroboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he *is* sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend *to be* another *woman.*"

6And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend *to be* another *person?* For I *have been* sent to you *with* bad *news.* 7Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, 8and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and *yet* you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only *what was* right in My eyes; 9but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back— 10therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. 11The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!"' 12Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. 13And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

14"Moreover the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam; this is the day. What? Even now! 15For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River,[a] because they have made their wooden images,[b] provoking the LORD to anger. 16And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin."

1 Kings 14:15

The Israelites had adopted the Sidonian goddess, Ashtoreth, as their own deity. The places where people worshiped Ashtoreth were marked with wooden poles, which may have had symbols carved on them.

17Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed, and came to Tirzah. When she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. 18And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet.

DEATH OF JEROBOAM

19Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 20The period that Jeroboam reigned *was* twenty-two years. So he rested with his fathers. Then Nadab his son reigned in his place.

REHOBOAM REIGNS IN JUDAH

21And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam *was* forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all

14:15 [a]That is, the Euphrates [b]Hebrew *Asherim,* Canaanite deities

the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother's name *was* Naamah, an Ammonitess. 22Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. 23For they also built for themselves high places, *sacred* pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. 24And there were also perverted persons[a] in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

CULT
Should we worship anything or anyone besides God?
1 Kings 14:21–28

25It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam *that* Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. 26And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made. 27Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed *them* to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house. 28And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards carried them, then brought them back into the guardroom.

29Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 30And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all *their* days. 31So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. His mother's name *was* Naamah, an Ammonitess. Then Abijam[a] his son reigned in his place.

ABIJAM REIGNS IN JUDAH

15 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. 2He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom. 3And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. 4Nevertheless for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, by setting up his son after him and by establishing Jerusalem; 5because David did *what was* right in the eyes of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. 6And there was war between Rehoboam[a] and Jeroboam all the days of his life. 7Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.

8So Abijam rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place.

ASA REIGNS IN JUDAH

9In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king over Judah. 10And he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother's name *was* Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom. 11Asa did *what was* right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* his father David. 12And he banished the perverted persons[a] from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. 13Also he removed Maachah his grandmother from *being* queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah.[a] And Asa cut down her obscene image and burned *it* by the Brook Kidron. 14But the high places were not removed. Nevertheless Asa's heart was loyal to the LORD all his days. 15He also brought into the house of the LORD the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils.

16Now there was war between Asa and

14:24 [a]Hebrew *qadesh,* that is, one practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals **14:31** [a]Spelled *Abijah* in 2 Chronicles 12:16ff **15:6** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *Abijam.* **15:12** [a]Hebrew *qedeshim,* that is, those practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals **15:13** [a]A Canaanite goddess

Baasha king of Israel all their days. 17And Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 18Then Asa took all the silver and gold *that was* left in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the treasuries of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants. And King Asa sent them to Ben-Hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, 19"*Let there be* a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you a present of silver and gold. Come and break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me."

20So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. He attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maachah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. 21Now it happened, when Baasha heard *it,* that he stopped building Ramah, and remained in Tirzah.

22Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none *was* exempted. And they took away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.

23The rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, all that he did, and the cities which he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. 24So Asa rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place.

NADAB REIGNS IN ISRAEL

25Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. 26And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin.

27Then Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. And Baasha killed him at Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. 29And it was so, when he became king, *that* he killed all the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite, 30because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and by which he had made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he had provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

31Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 32And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

BAASHA REIGNS IN ISRAEL

33In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah, and *reigned* twenty-four years. 34He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin.

16 Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying: 2"Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made My people Israel sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins, 3surely I will take away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 4The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields."

5Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, what he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 6So Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. Then Elah his son reigned in his place.

7And also the word of the LORD came by the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha and his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD in provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed them.

ELAH REIGNS IN ISRAEL

8In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king



LIFE APP

Evil / 1 Kings 16:30

When you think of the word "evil" you might picture scenes from a horror movie or think about things that scare you. An evil thing is something bad or wicked. You may have heard the phrase "pure evil." That phrase refers to something that is completely wicked or morally rotten. But evil is certainly never "pure." God is the source of all good and pure things. Satan is the source of all evil. Evil is destructive and hateful in any form.

Satan is God's enemy; he hates God and wants to destroy anything God loves. God loves us, so Satan wants to ruin our lives and will try his best to destroy us. To do that, he tries to make us believe lies about ourselves, about God, and about life. Satan takes all God's truth and pollutes it with his lies. Then he tries to make us believe his distorted version of reality.

With all the hype and attention Hollywood has brought to satanic possession, you might find yourself fearful that Satan will try to take over and cause you to live an outrageously sinful life. Although possession does happen, it is not the way Satan normally deals with people, so don't get hung up there. Satan's usual tactics can be summed up in one word: lies. He continually tries to make us believe things that just aren't true. He tries to make us doubt God's love. Most of all, he tries to keep us from ever coming to Jesus and worshiping God. So don't be fearful of being possessed, but be cautious of the little thoughts that come into your head that might make you doubt the truth of God's Word. A good way to tell whether those thoughts are actually Satan's lies is to pay attention to the effect they have on you. If they cause you to doubt God or question His love, then don't listen. It's most likely Satan trying to ruin your life.

The best definition of evil is whatever Satan does. He is totally and completely, absolute evil.

over Israel, *and reigned* two years in Tirzah.
9Now his servant Zimri, commander of
half *his* chariots, conspired against him as
he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in
the house of Arza, steward of *his* house in
Tirzah. 10And Zimri went in and struck him
and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of
Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place.

11Then it came to pass, when he began
to reign, as soon as he was seated on his
throne, *that* he killed all the household of
Baasha; he did not leave him one male,
neither of his relatives nor of his friends.
12Thus Zimri destroyed all the household
of Baasha, according to the word of the
LORD, which He spoke against Baasha by
Jehu the prophet, 13for all the sins of Baa-
sha and the sins of Elah his son, by which
they had sinned and by which they had
made Israel sin, in provoking the LORD
God of Israel to anger with their idols.

14Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all
that he did, *are* they not written in the book
of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

ZIMRI REIGNS IN ISRAEL

15In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of
Judah, Zimri had reigned in Tirzah seven
days. And the people *were* encamped
against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the
Philistines. 16Now the people *who were*
encamped heard it said, "Zimri has con-
spired and also has killed the king." So all
Israel made Omri, the commander of the
army, king over Israel that day in the camp.
17Then Omri and all Israel with him went
up from Gibbethon, and they besieged
Tirzah. 18And it happened, when Zimri saw
that the city was taken, that he went into
the citadel of the king's house and burned
the king's house down upon himself with
fire, and died, 19because of the sins which
he had committed in doing evil in the
sight of the LORD, in walking in the way
of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he had
committed to make Israel sin.

20Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and
the treason he committed, *are* they not
written in the book of the chronicles of the
kings of Israel?

OMRI REIGNS IN ISRAEL

21Then the people of Israel were divided
into two parts: half of the people followed
Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king,
and half followed Omri. 22But the people
who followed Omri prevailed over the peo-
ple who followed Tibni the son of Ginath.
So Tibni died and Omri reigned. 23In the
thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri
became king over Israel, *and reigned*
twelve years. Six years he reigned in Tirzah.
24And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer
for two talents of silver; then he built on
the hill, and called the name of the city
which he built, Samaria, after the name of
Shemer, owner of the hill. 25Omri did evil in
the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all
who *were* before him. 26For he walked in all
the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and
in his sin by which he had made Israel sin,
provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger
with their idols.

1 Kings 16:24

Omri, who turned out to be a power-
ful, successful, but evil king, set up
his capital city in Samaria, thirty-five
miles north of Jerusalem. Of the
twelve tribes of Israel, Omri ruled ten.
His kingdom was known as Israel or
Samaria. The other two tribes were
ruled by David's descendants. Their
kingdom was called Judah.

27Now the rest of the acts of Omri which
he did, and the might that he showed, *are*
they not written in the book of the chroni-
cles of the kings of Israel?

28So Omri rested with his fathers and
was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son
reigned in his place.

AHAB REIGNS IN ISRAEL

29In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of
Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king
over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri
reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two
years. 30Now Ahab the son of Omri did
evil in the sight of the LORD, more than
all who *were* before him. 31And it came to
pass, as though it had been a trivial thing
for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the
son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel
the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Si-
donians; and he went and served Baal and
worshiped him. 32Then he set up an altar

for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 33And Ahab made a wooden image.[a] Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. 34In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest *son* Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.[a]

ELIJAH PROCLAIMS A DROUGHT

17 And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "*As* the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."

2Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 3"Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. 4And it will be *that* you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."

5So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. 6The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. 7And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW

8Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 9"Arise, go to Zarephath, which *belongs* to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." 10So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow *was* there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." 11And as she was going to get *it*, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

12So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I *am* gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

13And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go *and* do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring *it* to me; and afterward make *some* for yourself and your son. 14For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.'"

OBEDIENCE
Does God reward obedience?
1 Kings 17:13–16

15So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for *many* days. 16The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.

ELIJAH REVIVES THE WIDOW'S SON

17Now it happened after these things *that* the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. 18So she said to Elijah, "What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?"

19And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. 20Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?" 21And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." 22Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.

23And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!"

24Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you *are* a man of God,

16:33 [a]Hebrew *Asherah*, a Canaanite goddess
16:34 [a]Compare Joshua 6:26

and that the word of the LORD in your mouth *is* the truth."

ELIJAH'S MESSAGE TO AHAB

18 And it came to pass *after* many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth."

2So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and *there was* a severe famine in Samaria. 3And Ahab had called Obadiah, who *was* in charge of *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly. 4For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) 5And Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock." 6So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

7Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "*Is* that you, my lord Elijah?"

8And he answered him, "*It is* I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah *is here.*' "

9So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? 10*As* the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, '*He is* not *here,*' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. 11And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah *is here*"'! 12And it shall come to pass, *as soon as* I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. 13Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid one hundred men of the LORD's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? 14And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah *is here.*" ' He will kill me!"

15Then Elijah said, "*As* the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today."

16So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

17Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "*Is that* you, O troubler of Israel?"

18And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house *have,* in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. 19Now therefore, send *and* gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah,[a] who eat at Jezebel's table."

ELIJAH'S MOUNT CARMEL VICTORY

20So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. 21And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD *is* God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. 22Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. 23Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it;* and I will prepare the other bull, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it.* 24Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God."

So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

25Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare *it* first, for you *are* many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it.*"

26So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared *it,* and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, hear us!" But *there was* no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.

27And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he

18:19 [a]A Canaanite goddess



PROFILE
ELISHA

As far as Elisha knew, his job that day was to take his father's twelve yoke of oxen and plow the family fields. He was busy. Then the old prophet Elijah walked by and tossed his mantle (God's call and enabling) over Elisha's shoulders. Life was never the same again.

Elijah was following God's direction. God told Elijah to pass on the office of prophet to Elisha; but Elisha had to respond. He struggled. He ran after Elijah and asked for time to say a proper good-bye to his parents. Elijah's answer made it clear that this wasn't about following an old prophet but about following God's call. So Elisha sacrificed his oxen, used the yoke for firewood, shared the barbecue with the plowing crew, and placed the invisible yoke of service to God on his own shoulders.

As Elijah's helper, Elisha watched a man of God in action. And he learned well. Just before God took Elijah up to heaven, Elisha had the opportunity to make a request. He asked for a double helping of the Spirit of God, which had been in Elijah. He didn't just want to be like his mentor; he wanted to be even more available to God than his mentor had been. For more than fifty years, Elisha demonstrated in various ways what a difference a person can make when motivated and filled by the Spirit of God.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

There's a lot we don't know about Elisha's story. Did he walk away from important responsibilities? He was one-twelfth of the workforce that day. His parents had a lot of help in the field. Perhaps they heard all the commotion and joined the party. The point is that when God's call required Elisha to walk away from all that was familiar to him, he did.

God's call in your life may not require you to move somewhere else. But it will change the focus of your life. It may not change what you do, but it will definitely affect why you do it. Use Elisha's experience to visualize this prayer: *Lord, help me know Your call when the mantle falls on my shoulders. Help me follow You.*

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Elisha's life in 1 Kings 19:16—2 Kings 13:20.

Elisha was a man who gave his whole life to serving God. He made a real difference. You can, too!

is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, *or* perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." 28So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. 29And when midday was past, they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice. But *there was* no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

30Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. 31And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel shall be your name."[a] 32Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. 33And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid *it* on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots

18:31 [a]Genesis 32:28

with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." [34]Then he said, "Do *it* a second time," and they did *it* a second time; and he said, "Do *it* a third time," and they did *it* a third time. [35]So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

[36]And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You *are* God in Israel and I *am* Your servant, and *that* I have done all these things at Your word. [37]Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You *are* the LORD God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back *to You* again."

[38]Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench. [39]Now when all the people saw *it,* they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He *is* God! The LORD, He *is* God!"

[40]And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.

THE DROUGHT ENDS

[41]Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for *there is* the sound of abundance of rain." [42]So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, [43]and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea."

So he went up and looked, and said, "*There is* nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again."

[44]Then it came to pass the seventh *time,* that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare *your chariot,* and go down before the rain stops you.'"

[45]Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. [46]Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

ELIJAH ESCAPES FROM JEZEBEL

19 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. [2]Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do *to me,* and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." [3]And when he saw *that,* he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which *belongs* to Judah, and left his servant there.

[4]But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I *am* no better than my fathers!"

[5]Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel[a] touched him, and said to him, "Arise *and* eat." [6]Then he looked, and there by his head *was* a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. [7]And the angel[a] of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise *and* eat, because the journey *is* too great for you." [8]So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

[9]And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

[10]So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

GOD'S REVELATION TO ELIJAH

[11]Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake; [12]and after the

19:5 [a]Or *Angel* **19:7** [a]Or *Angel*



LIFE APP

Isolation / 1 Kings 19:9, 10

Have you ever felt like just hiding out in some cave somewhere and checking out on life? So many things can happen that just seem totally hopeless and it can be tempting to just refuse to deal with them. Too many times, people choose to run from problems. Running will never solve anything. All running away will ever do is isolate you from the world and the only company you'll have is the very reason you ran—your problem will still be with you.

But problems aren't the only things that can isolate us from others. Have you seen the commercials on television about the young woman who thinks her parents don't have a life? She is sitting at home concerned about her parent's social life. What she doesn't realize is her parents are off having a good time with friends while she spends her time reading about other people's lives on her computer. She actually seems to think reading the posts of her virtual, cyberspace "friends" is "really living." How sad is that?

Not only is most of the world sitting their lives away in front of a computer screen; they are also forgetting how to actually be *with* people. Just sit for a while in a room full of people your age and see how many of them are actually talking to the others around them (obviously, somewhere other than school). Instead of talking, they are texting and "chirping" on their favorite electronic gadget. You might sit for an hour without hearing a word spoken. They are isolated in a room full of people.

Isolation will end up robbing you of real life. Life is about relationships—the real ones, not virtual ones. Real life can't be lived without other people. If you think about it, what meaning would anything in life have if you had no one to share it with you? Virtual relationships are fine for what they are, but don't mistake them for real life. Don't isolate yourself in cyberspace. Get out in the world and start living!

earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

13So it was, when Elijah heard *it,* that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice *came* to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

14And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

15Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael *as* king over Syria. 16Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi *as* king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint *as* prophet in your place. 17It shall be *that* whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. 18Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

ELISHA FOLLOWS ELIJAH

19So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke *of oxen* before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. 20And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow you."

And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?"

21So *Elisha* turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

AHAB DEFEATS THE SYRIANS

20 Now Ben-Hadad the king of Syria gathered all his forces together; thirty-two kings *were* with him, with horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria, and made war against it. 2Then he sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, and said to him, "Thus says Ben-Hadad: 3'Your silver and your gold *are* mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine.'"

4And the king of Israel answered and said, "My lord, O king, just as you say, I and all that I have *are* yours."

5Then the messengers came back and said, "Thus speaks Ben-Hadad, saying, 'Indeed I have sent to you, saying, "You shall deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children"; 6but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants. And it shall be, *that* whatever is pleasant in your eyes, they will put *it* in their hands and take *it.*'"

7So the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Notice, please, and see how this *man* seeks trouble, for he sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold; and I did not deny him."

8And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent."

9Therefore he said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, "Tell my lord the king, 'All that you sent for to your servant the first time I will do, but this thing I cannot do.'"

And the messengers departed and brought back word to him.

10Then Ben-Hadad sent to him and said, "The gods do so to me, and more also, if enough dust is left of Samaria for a handful for each of the people who follow me."

11So the king of Israel answered and said, "Tell *him,* 'Let not the one who puts on *his armor* boast like the one who takes *it off.*'"

12And it happened when *Ben-Hadad* heard this message, as he and the kings *were* drinking at the command post, that he said to his servants, "Get ready." And they got ready to attack the city.

13Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.'"

14So Ahab said, "By whom?"

And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'By the young leaders of the provinces.'"

Then he said, "Who will set the battle in order?"

And he answered, "You."

15Then he mustered the young leaders of the provinces, and there were two

hundred and thirty-two; and after them he mustered all the people, all the children of Israel—seven thousand.

16So they went out at noon. Meanwhile Ben-Hadad and the thirty-two kings helping him were getting drunk at the command post. 17The young leaders of the provinces went out first. And Ben-Hadad sent out *a patrol,* and they told him, saying, "Men are coming out of Samaria!" 18So he said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; and if they have come out for war, take them alive."

19Then these young leaders of the provinces went out of the city with the army which followed them. 20And each one killed his man; so the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them; and Ben-Hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the cavalry. 21Then the king of Israel went out and attacked the horses and chariots, and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter.

22And the prophet came to the king of Israel and said to him, "Go, strengthen yourself; take note, and see what you should do, for in the spring of the year the king of Syria will come up against you."

1 Kings 20:23

The Canaanites believed that each of their false gods controlled one specific area of the physical world. Ben-Hadad's officials believed Israel's God controlled the hills, so they figured if they moved the fight to flat land the Israelites would be helpless. No wonder their plan failed miserably!

THE SYRIANS AGAIN DEFEATED

23Then the servants of the king of Syria said to him, "Their gods *are* gods of the hills. Therefore they were stronger than we; but if we fight against them in the plain, surely we will be stronger than they. 24So do this thing: Dismiss the kings, each from his position, and put captains in their places; 25and you shall muster an army like the army that you have lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot. Then we will fight against them in the plain; surely we will be stronger than they."

And he listened to their voice and did so. 26So it was, in the spring of the year, that Ben-Hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. 27And the children of Israel were mustered and given provisions, and they went against them. Now the children of Israel encamped before them like two little flocks of goats, while the Syrians filled the countryside.

28Then a man of God came and spoke to the king of Israel, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because the Syrians have said, "The LORD *is* God of the hills, but He *is* not God of the valleys," therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.'" 29And they encamped opposite each other for seven days. So it was that on the seventh day the battle was joined; and the children of Israel killed one hundred thousand foot soldiers *of* the Syrians in one day. 30But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; then a wall fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men *who were* left.

And Ben-Hadad fled and went into the city, into an inner chamber.

AHAB'S TREATY WITH BEN-HADAD

31Then his servants said to him, "Look now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel *are* merciful kings. Please, let us put sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads, and go out to the king of Israel; perhaps he will spare your life." 32So they wore sackcloth around their waists and *put* ropes around their heads, and came to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-Hadad says, 'Please let me live.'"

And he said, "*Is* he still alive? He *is* my brother."

33Now the men were watching closely to see whether *any sign of mercy would come* from him; and they quickly grasped *at this word* and said, "Your brother Ben-Hadad."

So he said, "Go, bring him." Then Ben-Hadad came out to him; and he had him come up into the chariot.

34So *Ben-Hadad* said to him, "The cities which my father took from your father I will restore; and you may set up marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria."

Then *Ahab said,* "I will send you away with this treaty." So he made a treaty with him and sent him away.

AHAB CONDEMNED

35Now a certain man of the sons of the
prophets said to his neighbor by the word
of the LORD, "Strike me, please." And the
man refused to strike him. 36Then he said
to him, "Because you have not obeyed the
voice of the LORD, surely, as soon as you de-
part from me, a lion shall kill you." And as
soon as he left him, a lion found him and
killed him.

37And he found another man, and
said, "Strike me, please." So the man
struck him, inflicting a wound. 38Then
the prophet departed and waited for the
king by the road, and disguised himself
with a bandage over his eyes. 39Now as
the king passed by, he cried out to the
king and said, "Your servant went out into
the midst of the battle; and there, a man
came over and brought a man to me, and
said, 'Guard this man; if by any means he
is missing, your life shall be for his life, or
else you shall pay a talent of silver.' 40While
your servant was busy here and there, he
was gone."

Then the king of Israel said to him, "So
shall your judgment *be;* you yourself have
decided *it.*"

41And he hastened to take the bandage
away from his eyes; and the king of Israel
recognized him as one of the prophets.
42Then he said to him, "Thus says the
LORD: 'Because you have let slip out of *your*
hand a man whom I appointed to utter de-
struction, therefore your life shall go for his
life, and your people for his people.'"

43So the king of Israel went to his house
sullen and displeased, and came to Sa-
maria.

NABOTH IS MURDERED FOR HIS VINEYARD

21 And it came to pass after these
things *that* Naboth the Jezre-
elite had a vineyard which *was*
in Jezreel, next to the palace of Ahab king
of Samaria. 2So Ahab spoke to Naboth,
saying, "Give me your vineyard, that I may
have it for a vegetable garden, because it
is near, next to my house; and for it I will
give you a vineyard better than it. *Or,* if it
seems good to you, I will give you its worth
in money."

3But Naboth said to Ahab, "The LORD
forbid that I should give the inheritance of
my fathers to you!"

4So Ahab went into his house sullen
and displeased because of the word which
Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him;
for he had said, "I will not give you the in-
heritance of my fathers." And he lay down
on his bed, and turned away his face, and
would eat no food. 5But Jezebel his wife
came to him, and said to him, "Why is your
spirit so sullen that you eat no food?"

6He said to her, "Because I spoke to Na-
both the Jezreelite, and said to him, 'Give
me your vineyard for money; or else, if it
pleases you, I will give you *another* vine-
yard for it.' And he answered, 'I will not give
you my vineyard.'"

7Then Jezebel his wife said to him, "You
now exercise authority over Israel! Arise,
eat food, and let your heart be cheerful; I
will give you the vineyard of Naboth the
Jezreelite."

8And she wrote letters in Ahab's name,
sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the
letters to the elders and the nobles who
were dwelling in the city with Naboth. 9She
wrote in the letters, saying,

> Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth with
> high honor among the people; 10and
> seat two men, scoundrels, before him
> to bear witness against him, saying,
> "You have blasphemed God and the
> king." *Then* take him out, and stone
> him, that he may die.

11So the men of his city, the elders and
nobles who were inhabitants of his city,
did as Jezebel had sent to them, as it *was*
written in the letters which she had sent
to them. 12They proclaimed a fast, and
seated Naboth with high honor among the
people. 13And two men, scoundrels, came
in and sat before him; and the scoundrels
witnessed against him, against Naboth, in
the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth
has blasphemed God and the king!" Then
they took him outside the city and stoned
him with stones, so that he died. 14Then
they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has
been stoned and is dead."

15And it came to pass, when Jezebel
heard that Naboth had been stoned and
was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise,
take possession of the vineyard of Naboth

the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead." 16So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

THE LORD CONDEMNS AHAB

17Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18"Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who *lives* in Samaria. There *he is,* in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it. 19You shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "Have you murdered and also taken possession?"' And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours."'"

20So Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?"

And he answered, "I have found *you,* because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD: 21'Behold, I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your posterity, and will cut off from Ahab every male in Israel, both bond and free. 22I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to anger, and made Israel sin.' 23And concerning Jezebel the LORD also spoke, saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall[a] of Jezreel.' 24The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field."

25But there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up. 26And he behaved very abominably in following idols, according to all *that* the Amorites had done, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

27So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning.

28And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29"See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house."

MICAIAH WARNS AHAB

22 Now three years passed without war between Syria and Israel. 2Then it came to pass, in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went down to *visit* the king of Israel.

3And the king of Israel said to his servants, "Do you know that Ramoth in Gilead *is* ours, but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?" 4So he said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight at Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "I *am* as you *are,* my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 5Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the LORD today."

6Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to fight, or shall I refrain?"

So they said, "Go up, for the Lord will deliver *it* into the hand of the king."

7And Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?"[a]

8So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "*There is* still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil."

And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!"

9Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imlah quickly!"

10The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, having put on *their* robes, sat each on his throne, at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. 11Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" 12And all the prophets prophesied so, say-

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21:23 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Septuagint; some Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *plot of ground* (compare 2 Kings 9:36). **22:7** [a]Or *him*

ing, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the king's hand."

13Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Please, let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement."

14And Micaiah said, "*As* the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak."

15Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?"

And he answered him, "Go and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the hand of the king!"

16So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

17Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.'"

18And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

19Then *Micaiah* said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. 20And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. 21Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.' 22The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade *him,* and also prevail. Go out and do so.' 23Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

24Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?"

25And Micaiah said, "Indeed, you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!"

26So the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; 27and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this *fellow* in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I come in peace."'"

28But Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!"

AHAB DIES IN BATTLE

29So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. 30And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

31Now the king of Syria had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel." 32So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "Surely it *is* the king of Israel!" Therefore they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat cried out. 33And it happened, when the captains of the chariots saw that it *was* not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. 34Now a *certain* man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded."

35The battle increased that day; and the king was propped up in his chariot, facing the Syrians, and died at evening. The blood ran out from the wound onto the floor of the chariot. 36Then, as the sun was going down, a shout went throughout the army, saying, "Every man to his city, and every man to his own country!"

37So the king died, and was brought to Samaria. And they buried the king in Samaria. 38Then *someone* washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood while the harlots bathed,[a]

22:38 [a]Syriac and Targum read *they washed his armor.*

according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken.

39Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, the ivory house which he built and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 40So Ahab rested with his fathers. Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

JEHOSHAPHAT REIGNS IN JUDAH

41Jehoshaphat the son of Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. 42Jehoshaphat *was* thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 43And he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing *what was* right in the eyes of the LORD. Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, *for* the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. 44Also Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

45Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, the might that he showed, and how he made war, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 46And the rest of the perverted persons,[a] who remained in the days of his father Asa, he banished from the land. 47*There was* then no king in Edom, only a deputy of the king.

48Jehoshaphat made merchant ships[a] to go to Ophir for gold; but they never sailed, for the ships were wrecked at Ezion Geber. 49Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships." But Jehoshaphat would not.

50And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place.

AHAZIAH REIGNS IN ISRAEL

51Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. 52He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; 53for he served Baal and worshiped him, and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, according to all that his father had done.

22:46 [a]Hebrew *qadesh,* that is, one practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals
22:48 [a]Or *ships of Tarshish*

2 Kings

DATE OF WRITING: 590–550 B.C.
AUTHOR: UNCERTAIN, ALTHOUGH THE PROPHET JEREMIAH HAS BEEN SUGGESTED
THEME: LESSONS TO LEARN FROM THE RUIN OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH
PURPOSE: NO NATION MARKED BY MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DECAY CAN SURVIVE.

OUTLINE

1:1–18 ..... Elijah the Prophet Condemns King Ahaziah of Israel
2:1—8:15 ..... Elisha the Prophet
8:16—16:20 ..... Kings of Judah and Israel
17:1–41 ..... King Hoshea of Israel and the Defeat of the Northern Kingdom
18:1—20:21 ..... King Hezekiah of Judah and the Assyrian Invasion
21:1–26 ..... Two Evil Kings of Judah: Manasseh and Amon
22:1—23:30 ..... The Rule of King Josiah and *The Book of God's Law*
23:31—24:20 ..... The Last Kings of Judah
25:1–21 ..... Jerusalem Is Destroyed, and the People Are Taken to Babylon
25:22–30 ..... Gedaliah Is Made Ruler, and King Jehoiachin Is Released from Prison

KEY VERSE:

And the LORD said, "I will also remove Judah from My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, 'My name shall be there'" (2 Kings 23:27).

THEN ///

Second Kings is the story of the divided kingdoms of the Hebrews: Israel and Judah. Each kingdom had its own kings and its own priests and its own prophets. But one thing they had in common: their governments went from bad to worse with only a few exceptions. The people continued to disregard God even though He sent prophets again and again to set them straight.

Through the years, each kingdom became a weakling, spiritually and morally. After years of disobedience and struggle, they became sitting ducks for the larger nations around them. Assyria, a nation known for its cruelty in warfare, eventually attacked Israel. Babylon, a rich and strong nation to the south, attacked Judah. The Hebrew people were carried away from their countries to be slaves and prisoners in a foreign place.

The Hebrew people continued to lose their land because they wouldn't listen to God. They wouldn't listen to Him about how to govern their land or how to treat each other. They wouldn't listen to Him about *how* to worship and *who* to worship. We would do well to pay attention to their story so we can learn from their mistakes.

NOW ///

Wasn't it obvious? Wasn't it obvious to the Hebrews that they needed to take God seriously? Don't you wonder sometimes what got in their way when they should have been listening to God and obeying Him?

It's easy to wonder at these people who seemed to avoid the obvious: do what God says and things will go better for you! But the truth is, we do the same thing today. God told these people, "Worship only Me; I am the true God." He tells us, "Worship only Me. Don't trust anything else to get you through this life."

Yet they, and we, go our own way and worship and trust in other things to guide us and to rescue us from the difficult parts of life. Our world is not so different from theirs, is it?

REALITY CHECK ///

Readers of 2 Kings have been known to get a little confused about the different kingdoms that Israel split into. You know how some movies skip back and forth between two story lines? Well, that's what 2 Kings does between kingdoms. So here's the scoop.

Israel divided into two kingdoms (get ready; this is gonna be tough): the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. (Okay, not sooo tough.) What makes it confusing is that the northern kingdom was still called Israel. The southern kingdom was called Judah. Israel was bigger than Judah.

So when you're reading along and a new king is introduced, just remember to notice which kingdom he was in so you don't get mixed up. Knowing what was happening in each kingdom will help you better identify and learn from each of their stories.

GOD JUDGES AHAZIAH

Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.

2Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria, and was injured; so he sent messengers and said to them, "Go, inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury." 3But the angel[a] of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, '*Is it* because *there is* no God in Israel *that* you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' 4Now therefore, thus says the LORD: 'You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" So Elijah departed.

2 Kings 1:1, 2

The idol Baal was a god of many names. The people of Ekron, a Philistine city, called him Baal-Zebub, which means "Lord of Flies." Whatever his name, this pagan god was a stumbling block for the Israelites from the time they first arrived in Canaan. For some reason, they just couldn't stop worshiping him.

5And when the messengers returned to him, he said to them, "Why have you come back?"

6So they said to him, "A man came up to meet us, and said to us, 'Go, return to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Thus says the LORD: '*Is it* because *there is* no God in Israel *that* you are sending to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" '"

7Then he said to them, "What kind of man *was it* who came up to meet you and told you these words?"

8So they answered him, "A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist."

And he said, "It *is* Elijah the Tishbite."

9Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So he went up to him; and there he was, sitting on the top of a hill. And he spoke to him: "Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down!'"

10So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, "If I *am* a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. 11Then he sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty men.

And he answered and said to him: "Man of God, thus has the king said, 'Come down quickly!'"

12So Elijah answered and said to them, "If I *am* a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

13Again, he sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and pleaded with him, and said to him: "Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. 14Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight."

15And the angel[a] of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he arose and went down with him to the king. 16Then he said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, *is it* because *there is* no God in Israel to inquire of His word? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'"

17So *Ahaziah* died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. Because he had no son, Jehoram[a] became king in his place, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

18Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

ELIJAH ASCENDS TO HEAVEN

2 And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. 2Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel."

1:3 [a]Or *Angel* **1:15** [a]Or *Angel* **1:17** [a]The son of Ahab king of Israel (compare 3:1)

But Elisha said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel.

3Now the sons of the prophets who *were* at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?"

And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!"

4Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho."

But he said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho.

5Now the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?"

So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!"

6Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan."

But he said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on. 7And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing *them* at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. 8Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled *it* up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

9And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?"

Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."

10So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. *Nevertheless,* if you see me *when I am* taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be *so.*" 11Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

12And Elisha saw *it,* and he cried out, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. 13He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. 14Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.

15Now when the sons of the prophets who *were* from Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him. 16Then they said to him, "Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley."

And he said, "You shall not send anyone."

17But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, "Send *them!*" Therefore they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. 18And when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go'?"

ELISHA PERFORMS MIRACLES

19Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Please notice, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water *is* bad, and the ground barren."

20And he said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought *it* to him. 21Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.'" 22So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

2 Kings 2:23

In ancient Israel, baldness was considered shameful. The fact that certain pagans shaved their heads as part of their religion may have had something to do with the stigma. Unlike his mentor, Elijah, who was a very hairy man, Elisha was bald.

23Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked

him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!"

24So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the LORD. And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths.

25Then he went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

MOAB REBELS AGAINST ISRAEL

3 Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. 2And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like his father and mother; for he put away the *sacred* pillar of Baal that his father had made. 3Nevertheless he persisted in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them.

2 Kings 3:1

Israel was split into two kingdoms after King Solomon's reign. The southern part of the country was called Judah; the northern part kept the name Israel. Jerusalem was the capital of Judah; Samaria was the capital of Israel. David's descendants ruled Judah; a variety of kings ruled Israel.

4Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheep-breeder, and he regularly paid the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams. 5But it happened, when Ahab died, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

6So King Jehoram went out of Samaria at that time and mustered all Israel. 7Then he went and sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, saying, "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?"

And he said, "I will go up; I *am* as you *are,* my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 8Then he said, "Which way shall we go up?"

And he answered, "By way of the Wilderness of Edom."

9So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and they marched on that roundabout route seven days; and there was no water for the army, nor for the animals that followed them. 10And the king of Israel said, "Alas! For the LORD has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab."

11But Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD by him?"

So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, "Elisha the son of Shaphat *is* here, who poured water on the hands of Elijah."

12And Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the LORD is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

13Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What have I to do with you? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother."

But the king of Israel said to him, "No, for the LORD has called these three kings *together* to deliver them into the hand of Moab."

14And Elisha said, "*As* the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you, nor see you. 15But now bring me a musician."

Then it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. 16And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Make this valley full of ditches.' 17For thus says the LORD: 'You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink.' 18And this is a simple matter in the sight of the LORD; He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand. 19Also you shall attack every fortified city and every choice city, and shall cut down every good tree, and stop up every spring of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones."

20Now it happened in the morning, when the grain offering was offered, that suddenly water came by way of Edom, and the land was filled with water.

21And when all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were able to bear arms and

older were gathered; and they stood at the border. 22Then they rose up early in the morning, and the sun was shining on the water; and the Moabites saw the water on the other side *as* red as blood. 23And they said, "This is blood; the kings have surely struck swords and have killed one another; now therefore, Moab, to the spoil!"

24So when they came to the camp of Israel, Israel rose up and attacked the Moabites, so that they fled before them; and they entered *their* land, killing the Moabites. 25Then they destroyed the cities, and each man threw a stone on every good piece of land and filled it; and they stopped up all the springs of water and cut down all the good trees. But they left the stones of Kir Haraseth *intact.* However the slingers surrounded and attacked it.

2 Kings 3:27

In ancient times, idol worshipers believed sacrificing children was the way to win favor with gods. Mesha obviously believed in that idea. The Moabite king was so desperate to prevent his troops from being defeated that he killed his own son as an offering to Chemosh, the chief god of his people.

26And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not. 27Then he took his eldest son who would have reigned in his place, and offered him *as* a burnt offering upon the wall; and there was great indignation against Israel. So they departed from him and returned to *their own* land.

FAITH

What's a good example of faith?

2 Kings 4:1–7

ELISHA AND THE WIDOW'S OIL

4 A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves."

2So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil."

3Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few. 4And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones."

5So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured *it* out. 6Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel."

And he said to her, "*There is* not another vessel." So the oil ceased. 7Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you *and* your sons live on the rest."

ELISHA RAISES THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON

8Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there *was* a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food. 9And she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this *is* a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly. 10Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there."

11And it happened one day that he came there, and he turned in to the upper room and lay down there. 12Then he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite woman." When he had called her, she stood before him. 13And he said to him, "Say now to her, 'Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What *can I* do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?' "

She answered, "I dwell among my own people."

14So he said, "What then *is* to be done for her?"

And Gehazi answered, "Actually, she has no son, and her husband is old."

15So he said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the doorway. 16Then he said, "About this time next year you shall embrace a son."

And she said, "No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!"

17But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her.

18And the child grew. Now it happened one day that he went out to his father, to the reapers. 19And he said to his father, "My head, my head!"

So he said to a servant, "Carry him to his mother." 20When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and *then* died. 21And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut *the door* upon him, and went out. 22Then she called to her husband, and said, "Please send me one of the young men and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and come back."

23So he said, "Why are you going to him today? *It is* neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath."

And she said, "*It is* well." 24Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, "Drive, and go forward; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you." 25And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, "Look, the Shunammite woman! 26Please run now to meet her, and say to her, 'Is *it* well with you? *Is it* well with your husband? *Is it* well with the child?'"

And she answered, "*It is* well." 27Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, "Let her alone; for her soul *is* in deep distress, and the LORD has hidden *it* from me, and has not told me."

28So she said, "Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me'?"

29Then he said to Gehazi, "Get yourself ready, and take my staff in your hand, and be on your way. If you meet anyone, do not greet him; and if anyone greets you, do not answer him; but lay my staff on the face of the child."

30And the mother of the child said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you." So he arose and followed her. 31Now Gehazi went on ahead of them, and laid the staff on the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice nor hearing. Therefore he went back to meet him, and told him, saying, "The child has not awakened."

32When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed. 33He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. 34And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child, and the flesh of the child became warm. 35He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. 36And he called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite woman." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Pick up your son." 37So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; then she picked up her son and went out.

2 Kings 4:39

Wild gourds were common in the Mediterranean region. Eating them, though, was a risky endeavor. Some were potentially fatal if eaten in large quantities.

ELISHA PURIFIES THE POT OF STEW

38And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and *there was* a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him; and he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets." 39So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced *them* into the pot of stew, though they did not know *what they were.* 40Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, "Man of

God, *there is* death in the pot!" And they could not eat *it.*

41So he said, "Then bring some flour." And he put *it* into the pot, and said, "Serve *it* to the people, that they may eat." And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

ELISHA FEEDS ONE HUNDRED MEN

42Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, "Give *it* to the people, that they may eat."

43But his servant said, "What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?"

He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have *some* left over.'" 44So he set *it* before them; and they ate and had *some* left over, according to the word of the LORD.

NAAMAN'S LEPROSY HEALED

5 Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, *but* a leper. 2And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. 3Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master *were* with the prophet who *is* in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy." 4And *Naaman* went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus said the girl who *is* from the land of Israel."

5Then the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand *shekels* of gold, and ten changes of clothing. 6Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said,

> Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy.

7And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "*Am* I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me."

8So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

9Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house. 10And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and *you shall* be clean."

11But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out *to me,* and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.' 12*Are* not the Abanah[a] and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. 13And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, *if* the prophet had told you *to do* something great, would you not have done *it?* How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" 14So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

15And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, "Indeed, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant."

GOD
Who else is like God?
2 Kings 5:15

16But he said, "*As* the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing." And he urged him to take *it,* but he refused.

5:12 [a]Following Kethib, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Qere, Syriac, and Targum read *Amanah.*



PROFILE
NAAMAN'S WIFE'S SERVANT GIRL

Some heroes in God's great story make a difference while remaining anonymous. Their nameless roles highlight God's work. Though we may not know their names, God always knows who they are. Naaman was a Syrian soldier during the ministry of Elisha the prophet. He contracted a horrible skin disease. His wife's servant was a young Jewish girl who had been kidnapped during a Syrian raid on Israel.

The only things we know about this young woman are that both her faith and her compassion were genuine. Instead of resenting her situation, she offered hope of healing to Naaman by suggesting he consult with God's prophet. Her timing was perfect. Naaman was desperate enough to try almost anything. His pride had to be crushed, but his decision to seek help from God eventually led to his healing.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

That young girl represents many of God's servants. They are, in this life, unnamed and often overlooked. Their stories hint that God always has a lot more going on in this world than any one of us can see. But God sees it all. No act of kindness or gesture of faith goes unnoticed. The God who keeps track of sparrows won't miss even the briefest suggestions or words of wisdom offered by His followers; and those moments when a true believer gives another person a reason to consider God will not go unnoticed. In the end, we will find out that many more people made a bigger difference than we ever dreamed.

When you live to serve God, you will often find yourself as an anonymous participant in His plans. If you insist on recognition, you will probably experience frustration. However, if you choose to serve with your attention fixed on your divine Master, when you first meet Jesus face to face you can anticipate hearing the words, "Well done, good servant" (Luke 19:17). What a difference that will make!

? WANT TO KNOW MORE?

This young girl's story is told in 2 Kings 5:1–27.

Naaman's wife's servant was a girl in a less-than-ideal situation. She chose faith and compassion over despair and bitterness. Because she did, she was able to make a real difference. You can, too!

17 So Naaman said, "Then, if not, please
let your servant be given two mule-loads
of earth; for your servant will no longer
offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to
other gods, but to the LORD. 18 Yet in this
thing may the LORD pardon your servant:
when my master goes into the temple of
Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on
my hand, and I bow down in the temple of
Rimmon—when I bow down in the temple
of Rimmon, may the LORD please pardon
your servant in this thing."
19 Then he said to him, "Go in peace." So
he departed from him a short distance.

GEHAZI'S GREED

20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man
of God, said, "Look, my master has spared
Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving
from his hands what he brought; but *as*
the LORD lives, I will run after him and take
something from him." 21 So Gehazi pursued
Naaman. When Naaman saw *him* running
after him, he got down from the chariot to
meet him, and said, "*Is* all well?"
22 And he said, "All *is* well. My master
has sent me, saying, 'Indeed, just now two
young men of the sons of the prophets

have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.'"

23So Naaman said, "Please, take two talents." And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and handed *them* to two of his servants; and they carried *them* on ahead of him. 24When he came to the citadel, he took *them* from their hand, and stored *them* away in the house; then he let the men go, and they departed. 25Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where *did you go,* Gehazi?"

And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere."

26Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go *with you* when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? *Is it* time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? 27Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever." And he went out from his presence leprous, *as white* as snow.

THE FLOATING AX HEAD

6 And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. 2Please, let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there, and let us make there a place where we may dwell."

So he answered, "Go."

3Then one said, "Please consent to go with your servants."

And he answered, "I will go." 4So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. 5But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron *ax head* fell into the water; and he cried out and said, "Alas, master! For it was borrowed."

6So the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw *it* in there; and he made the iron float. 7Therefore he said, "Pick *it* up for yourself." So he reached out his hand and took it.

THE BLINDED SYRIANS CAPTURED

8Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, "My camp *will be* in such and such a place." 9And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there." 10Then the king of Israel sent *someone* to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice.

11Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me which of us *is* for the king of Israel?"

12And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who *is* in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom."

13So he said, "Go and see where he *is,* that I may send and get him."

And it was told him, saying, "Surely *he is* in Dothan."

14Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. 15And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

16So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who *are* with us *are* more than those who *are* with them." 17And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 18So when *the Syrians* came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

19Now Elisha said to them, "This *is* not the way, nor *is* this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." But he led them to Samaria.

20So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, "LORD, open the eyes of these *men,* that they may see." And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and there *they were,* inside Samaria!

21Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My father, shall I kill *them?* Shall I kill *them?*"

22But he answered, "You shall not kill

them. Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." 23Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So the bands of Syrian *raiders* came no more into the land of Israel.

SYRIA BESIEGES SAMARIA IN FAMINE

24And it happened after this that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. 25And there was a great famine in Samaria; and indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was *sold* for eighty *shekels* of silver, and one-fourth of a kab of dove droppings for five *shekels* of silver.

26Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!"

27And he said, "If the LORD does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?" 28Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you?"

And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' 29So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son."

> ***2 Kings 6:30***
> Sackcloth was a lot like burlap, rough and uncomfortable. In ancient Israel, the cloth was usually made of goat's hair. It was also usually dark in color. A person would wear sackcloth during times of extreme grief and sorrow.

30Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his clothes; and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath *he had* sackcloth on his body. 31Then he said, "God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!"

32But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And *the king* sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, "Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent someone to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. *Is* not the sound of his master's feet behind him?" 33And while he was still talking with them, there was the messenger, coming down to him; and then *the king* said, "Surely this calamity *is* from the LORD; why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

7 Then Elisha said, "Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the LORD: 'Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour *shall be sold* for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.'"

2So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, "Look, *if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?"

And he said, "In fact, you shall see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it."

THE SYRIANS FLEE

3Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die? 4If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die." 5And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one *was* there. 6For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!" 7Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives. 8And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid *them;* then

they came back and entered another tent, and carried *some* from there *also,* and went and hid *it.*

9Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day *is* a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household." 10So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, saying, "We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one *was* there, not a human sound—only horses and donkeys tied, and the tents intact." 11And the gatekeepers called out, and they told *it* to the king's household inside.

12So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, "Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *are* hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.'"

13And one of his servants answered and said, "Please, let several *men* take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city. Look, they *may either become* like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; or indeed, *I say,* they *may become* like all the multitude of Israel left from those who are consumed; so let us send them and see." 14Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, "Go and see." 15And they went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all the road *was* full of garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the king. 16Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a seah of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.

17Now the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. 18So it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, "Two seahs of barley for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, shall be *sold* tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria."

19Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, "Now look, *if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?"

And he had said, "In fact, you shall see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." 20And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died.

THE KING RESTORES THE SHUNAMMITE'S LAND

8 Then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can; for the LORD has called for a famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for seven years." 2So the woman arose and did according to the saying of the man of God, and she went with her household and dwelt in the land of the Philistines seven years.

3It came to pass, at the end of seven years, that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land. 4Then the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, "Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done." 5Now it happened, as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life, that there was the woman whose son he had restored to life, appealing to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son whom Elisha restored to life." 6And when the king asked the woman, she told him.

So the king appointed a certain officer for her, saying, "Restore all that *was* hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now."

DEATH OF BEN-HADAD

7Then Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-Hadad king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, "The man of God has come here." 8And the king said to Hazael, "Take a present in your hand, and go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?'" 9So Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him, of every good thing of Damascus, forty camel-loads;

and he came and stood before him, and said, "Your son Ben-Hadad king of Syria has sent me to you, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?'"

10And Elisha said to him, "Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover.' However the LORD has shown me that he will really die." 11Then he set his countenance in a stare until he was ashamed; and the man of God wept. 12And Hazael said, "Why is my lord weeping?"

He answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: Their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword; and you will dash their children, and rip open their women with child."

13So Hazael said, "But what *is* your servant—a dog, that he should do this gross thing?"

And Elisha answered, "The LORD has shown me that you *will become* king over Syria."

14Then he departed from Elisha, and came to his master, who said to him, "What did Elisha say to you?" And he answered, "He told me you would surely recover." 15But it happened on the next day that he took a thick cloth and dipped *it* in water, and spread *it* over his face so that he died; and Hazael reigned in his place.

JEHORAM REIGNS IN JUDAH

16Now in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat *having been* king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign as king of Judah. 17He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 18And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 19Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah, for the sake of His servant David, as He promised him to give a lamp to him *and* his sons forever.

20In his days Edom revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves. 21So Joram[a] went to Zair, and all his chariots with him. Then he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots; and the troops fled to their tents. 22Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. And Libnah revolted at that time.

23Now the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 24So Joram rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

AHAZIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

25In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign. 26Ahaziah *was* twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri, king of Israel. 27And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab, for he *was* the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.

28Now he went with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. 29Then King Joram went back to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

JEHU ANOINTED KING OF ISRAEL

9 And Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said to him, "Get yourself ready, take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead. 2Now when you arrive at that place, look there for Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in and make him rise up from among his associates, and take him to an inner room. 3Then take the flask of oil, and pour *it* on his head, and say, 'Thus says the LORD: "I have anointed you king over Israel."' Then open the door and flee, and do not delay."

4So the young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. 5And when he arrived, there *were* the captains of the army sitting; and he said, "I have a message for you, Commander."

8:21 [a]Spelled *Jehoram* in verse 16

Jehu said, "For which *one* of us?"

And he said, "For you, Commander."
6Then he arose and went into the house. And he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I have anointed you king over the people of the LORD, over Israel. 7You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. 8For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free. 9So I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah. 10The dogs shall eat Jezebel on the plot *of ground* at Jezreel, and *there shall be* none to bury *her.*'" And he opened the door and fled.

11Then Jehu came out to the servants of his master, and *one* said to him, "*Is* all well? Why did this madman come to you?"

And he said to them, "You know the man and his babble."

12And they said, "A lie! Tell us now."

So he said, "Thus and thus he spoke to me, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "I have anointed you king over Israel."'"

13Then each man hastened to take his garment and put *it* under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!"

JORAM OF ISRAEL KILLED

14So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had been defending Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, against Hazael king of Syria. 15But King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, "If you are so minded, let no one leave *or* escape from the city to go and tell *it* in Jezreel." 16So Jehu rode in a chariot and went to Jezreel, for Joram was laid up there; and Ahaziah king of Judah had come down to see Joram.

17Now a watchman stood on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the company of Jehu as he came, and said, "I see a company of men."

And Joram said, "Get a horseman and send him to meet them, and let him say, '*Is it* peace?'"

18So the horseman went to meet him, and said, "Thus says the king: '*Is it* peace?'"

And Jehu said, "What have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me."

So the watchman reported, saying, "The messenger went to them, but is not coming back."

19Then he sent out a second horseman who came to them, and said, "Thus says the king: '*Is it* peace?'"

And Jehu answered, "What have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me."

20So the watchman reported, saying, "He went up to them and is not coming back; and the driving *is* like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he drives furiously!"

21Then Joram said, "Make ready." And his chariot was made ready. Then Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot; and they went out to meet Jehu, and met him on the property of Naboth the Jezreelite. 22Now it happened, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, "*Is it* peace, Jehu?"

So he answered, "What peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft *are so* many?"

23Then Joram turned around and fled, and said to Ahaziah, "Treachery, Ahaziah!"
24Now Jehu drew his bow with full strength and shot Jehoram between his arms; and the arrow came out at his heart, and he sank down in his chariot. 25Then *Jehu* said to Bidkar his captain, "Pick *him* up, *and* throw him into the tract of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember, when you and I were riding together behind Ahab his father, that the LORD laid this burden upon him: 26'Surely I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons,' says the LORD, 'and I will repay you in this plot,' says the LORD. Now therefore, take *and* throw him on the plot *of ground,* according to the word of the LORD."

AHAZIAH OF JUDAH KILLED

27But when Ahaziah king of Judah saw *this,* he fled by the road to Beth Haggan.[a] So Jehu pursued him, and said, "Shoot him also in the chariot." *And they shot him* at the Ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. Then he fled to Megiddo, and died there. 28And

9:27 [a]Literally *The Garden House*

his servants carried him in the chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb with his fathers in the City of David. 29In the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab, Ahaziah had become king over Judah.

JEZEBEL'S VIOLENT DEATH

30Now when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it;* and she put paint on her eyes and adorned her head, and looked through a window. 31Then, as Jehu entered at the gate, she said, "*Is it* peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?"

32And he looked up at the window, and said, "Who *is* on my side? Who?" So two *or* three eunuchs looked out at him. 33Then he said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down, and *some* of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses; and he trampled her underfoot. 34And when he had gone in, he ate and drank. Then he said, "Go now, see to this accursed *woman,* and bury her, for she was a king's daughter." 35So they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of *her* hands. 36Therefore they came back and told him. And he said, "This *is* the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'On the plot *of ground* at Jezreel dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel;[a] 37and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as refuse on the surface of the field, in the plot at Jezreel, so that they shall not say, "Here *lies* Jezebel."'"

> ***2 Kings 9:34–37***
> The Israelites considered it a tragedy not to be buried properly. Jehu didn't want to insult a member of the royal family—even someone as wicked as Jezebel—by not burying her body. But before he could prepare a grave, Jezebel's body was eaten by dogs. The Israelites considered dogs to be filthy scavengers so the way Jezebel died was particularly gruesome.

AHAB'S SEVENTY SONS KILLED

10 Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote and sent letters to Samaria, to the rulers of Jezreel,[a] to the elders, and to those who reared Ahab's *sons,* saying:

> 2Now as soon as this letter comes to you, since your master's sons *are* with you, and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city also, and weapons,
> 3choose the best qualified of your master's sons, set *him* on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house.

4But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, "Look, two kings could not stand up to him; how then can we stand?" 5And he who *was* in charge of the house, and he who *was* in charge of the city, the elders also, and those who reared *the sons,* sent to Jehu, saying, "We *are* your servants, we will do all you tell us; but we will not make anyone king. Do *what is* good in your sight." 6Then he wrote a second letter to them, saying:

> If you *are* for me and will obey my voice, take the heads of the men, your master's sons, and come to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow.

Now the king's sons, seventy persons, *were* with the great men of the city, *who* were rearing them. 7So it was, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons and slaughtered seventy persons, put their heads in baskets and sent *them* to him at Jezreel.

8Then a messenger came and told him, saying, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons."

And he said, "Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until morning."

9So it was, in the morning, that he went out and stood, and said to all the people, "You *are* righteous. Indeed I conspired against my master and killed him; but who killed all these? 10Know now that nothing shall fall to the earth of the word of the LORD which the LORD spoke concerning the house of Ahab; for the LORD has done what He spoke by His servant Elijah." 11So Jehu killed all who remained of the house

9:36 [a]1 Kings 21:23 **10:1** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Targum; Septuagint reads *Samaria;* Vulgate reads *city.*

of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men and his close acquaintances and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

AHAZIAH'S FORTY-TWO BROTHERS KILLED

12And he arose and departed and went to Samaria. On the way, at Beth Eked[a] of the Shepherds, 13Jehu met with the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, "Who *are* you?"

So they answered, "We *are* the brothers of Ahaziah; we have come down to greet the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother."

14And he said, "Take them alive!" So they took them alive, and killed them at the well of Beth Eked, forty-two men; and he left none of them.

THE REST OF AHAB'S FAMILY KILLED

15Now when he departed from there, he met Jehonadab the son of Rechab, *coming* to meet him; and he greeted him and said to him, "Is your heart right, as my heart *is* toward your heart?"

And Jehonadab answered, "It is."

Jehu said, "If it is, give *me* your hand." So he gave *him* his hand, and he took him up to him into the chariot. 16Then he said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD." So they had him ride in his chariot. 17And when he came to Samaria, he killed all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to Elijah.

WORSHIPERS OF BAAL KILLED

18Then Jehu gathered all the people together, and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little, Jehu will serve him much. 19Now therefore, call to me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests. Let no one be missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal. Whoever is missing shall not live." But Jehu acted deceptively, with the intent of destroying the worshipers of Baal. 20And Jehu said, "Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal." So they proclaimed *it.* 21Then Jehu sent throughout all Israel; and all the worshipers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. So they came into the temple[a] of Baal, and the temple of Baal was full from one end to the other. 22And he said to the one in charge of the wardrobe, "Bring out vestments for all the worshipers of Baal." So he brought out vestments for them. 23Then Jehu and Jehonadab the son of Rechab went into the temple of Baal, and said to the worshipers of Baal, "Search and see that no servants of the LORD are here with you, but only the worshipers of Baal." 24So they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had appointed for himself eighty men on the outside, and had said, "*If* any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escapes, *whoever lets him escape, it shall be* his life for the life of the other."

25Now it happened, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, "Go in *and* kill them; let no one come out!" And they killed them with the edge of the sword; then the guards and the officers threw *them* out, and went into the inner room of the temple of Baal. 26And they brought the *sacred* pillars out of the temple of Baal and burned them. 27Then they broke down the *sacred* pillar of Baal, and tore down the temple of Baal and made it a refuse dump to this day. 28Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel.

29However Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin, *that is,* from the golden calves that *were* at Bethel and Dan. 30And the LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in doing *what is* right in My sight, *and* have done to the house of Ahab all that *was* in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth *generation.*" 31But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin.

DEATH OF JEHU

32In those days the LORD began to cut off *parts* of Israel; and Hazael conquered them in all the territory of Israel 33from the Jordan eastward: all the land of Gilead—Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh—from Aroer, which *is* by the River Arnon, including Gilead and Bashan.

10:12 [a]Or *The Shearing House* **10:21** [a]Literally *house,* and so elsewhere in this chapter

34Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, all
that he did, and all his might, *are* they not
written in the book of the chronicles of the
kings of Israel? 35So Jehu rested with his
fathers, and they buried him in Samaria.
Then Jehoahaz his son reigned in his place.
36And the period that Jehu reigned over Is-
rael in Samaria *was* twenty-eight years.

ATHALIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

11 When Athaliah the mother of
Ahaziah saw that her son was
dead, she arose and destroyed
all the royal heirs. 2But Jehosheba, the
daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah,
took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole
him away from among the king's sons
who were being murdered; and they hid
him and his nurse in the bedroom, from
Athaliah, so that he was not killed. 3So he
was hidden with her in the house of the
LORD for six years, while Athaliah reigned
over the land.

ABUSE
Should we protect those in physical danger?
2 Kings 11:1–3

JOASH CROWNED KING OF JUDAH

4In the seventh year Jehoiada sent and
brought the captains of hundreds—of the
bodyguards and the escorts—and brought
them into the house of the LORD to him.
And he made a covenant with them and
took an oath from them in the house of
the LORD, and showed them the king's
son. 5Then he commanded them, saying,
"This *is* what you shall do: One-third of you
who come on duty on the Sabbath shall
be keeping watch over the king's house,
6one-third *shall be* at the gate of Sur, and
one-third at the gate behind the escorts.
You shall keep the watch of the house, lest
it be broken down. 7The two contingents
of you who go off duty on the Sabbath
shall keep the watch of the house of the
LORD for the king. 8But you shall surround
the king on all sides, every man with his
weapons in his hand; and whoever comes
within range, let him be put to death. You
are to be with the king as he goes out and
as he comes in."

9So the captains of the hundreds did
according to all that Jehoiada the priest
commanded. Each of them took his men
who were to be on duty on the Sabbath,
with those who were going off duty on the
Sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.
10And the priest gave the captains of hun-
dreds the spears and shields which *had be-
longed* to King David, that were in the tem-
ple of the LORD. 11Then the escorts stood,
every man with his weapons in his hand, all
around the king, from the right side of the
temple to the left side of the temple, by the
altar and the house. 12And he brought out
the king's son, put the crown on him, and
gave him the Testimony;[a] they made him
king and anointed him, and they clapped
their hands and said, "Long live the king!"

DEATH OF ATHALIAH

13Now when Athaliah heard the noise of
the escorts *and* the people, she came to the
people *in* the temple of the LORD. 14When
she looked, there was the king standing by
a pillar according to custom; and the lead-
ers and the trumpeters were by the king.
All the people of the land were rejoicing
and blowing trumpets. So Athaliah tore her
clothes and cried out, "Treason! Treason!"

15And Jehoiada the priest commanded
the captains of the hundreds, the officers of
the army, and said to them, "Take her out-
side under guard, and slay with the sword
whoever follows her." For the priest had
said, "Do not let her be killed in the house
of the LORD." 16So they seized her; and she
went by way of the horses' entrance *into*
the king's house, and there she was killed.

17Then Jehoiada made a covenant be-
tween the LORD, the king, and the people,
that they should be the LORD's people,
and *also* between the king and the peo-
ple. 18And all the people of the land went to
the temple of Baal, and tore it down. They
thoroughly broke in pieces its altars and
images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal
before the altars. And the priest appointed
officers over the house of the LORD.
19Then he took the captains of hundreds,
the bodyguards, the escorts, and all the

11:12 [a]That is, the Law (compare Exodus 25:16, 21 and Deuteronomy 31:9)

people of the land; and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, and went by way of the gate of the escorts to the king's house. Then he sat on the throne of the kings. 20So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword *in* the king's house. 21Jehoash *was* seven years old when he became king.

JEHOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

12 In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash[a] became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beersheba. 2Jehoash did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. 3But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

GIVING
Is monetary giving a matter of personal choice or obedience?
2 Kings 12:4, 5

4And Jehoash said to the priests, "All the money of the dedicated gifts that are brought into the house of the LORD—each man's census money, each man's assessment money[a]—*and* all the money that a man purposes in his heart to bring into the house of the LORD, 5let the priests take *it* themselves, each from his constituency; and let them repair the damages of the temple, wherever any dilapidation is found."

2 Kings 12:4
Once a year, every Israelite over the age of twenty donated a certain amount of money to be used for the temple. Other people gave gold and silver as gifts to show how much they appreciated what the Lord had done for them. These gifts and other valuables were stored in the temple.

6Now it was so, by the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, *that* the priests had not repaired the damages of the temple. 7So King Jehoash called Jehoiada the priest and the *other* priests, and said to them, "Why have you not repaired the damages of the temple? Now therefore, do not take *more* money from your constituency, but deliver it for repairing the damages of the temple." 8And the priests agreed that they would neither receive *more* money from the people, nor repair the damages of the temple.

9Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of the LORD; and the priests who kept the door put there all the money brought into the house of the LORD. 10So it was, whenever they saw that *there was* much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up and put it in bags, and counted the money that was found in the house of the LORD. 11Then they gave the money, which had been apportioned, into the hands of those who did the work, who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they paid it out to the carpenters and builders who worked on the house of the LORD, 12and to masons and stonecutters, and for buying timber and hewn stone, to repair the damage of the house of the LORD, and for all that was paid out to repair the temple. 13However there were not made for the house of the LORD basins of silver, trimmers, sprinkling-bowls, trumpets, any articles of gold or articles of silver, from the money brought into the house of the LORD. 14But they gave that to the workmen, and they repaired the house of the LORD with it. 15Moreover they did not require an account from the men into whose hand they delivered the money to be paid to workmen, for they dealt faithfully. 16The money from the trespass offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the LORD. It belonged to the priests.

HAZAEL THREATENS JERUSALEM

17Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it; then Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. 18And Jehoash king of Judah took all the sacred things that his fathers, Jehoshaphat and

12:1 [a]Spelled *Joash* in 11:2ff **12:4** [a]Compare Leviticus 27:2ff

Jehoram and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred things, and all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and in the king's house, and sent *them* to Hazael king of Syria. Then he went away from Jerusalem.

DEATH OF JOASH

19Now the rest of the acts of Joash,[a] and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

20And his servants arose and formed a conspiracy, and killed Joash in the house of the Millo,[a] which goes down to Silla. 21For Jozachar[a] the son of Shimeath and Jehozabad the son of Shomer,[b] his servants, struck him. So he died, and they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

JEHOAHAZ REIGNS IN ISRAEL

13 In the twenty-third year of Joash[a] the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* seventeen years. 2And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. He did not depart from them.

3Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-Hadad the son of Hazael, all *their* days. 4So Jehoahaz pleaded with the LORD, and the LORD listened to him; for He saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. 5Then the LORD gave Israel a deliverer, so that they escaped from under the hand of the Syrians; and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents as before. 6Nevertheless they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin, *but* walked in them; and the wooden image[a] also remained in Samaria. 7For He left of the army of Jehoahaz only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers; for the king of Syria had destroyed them and made them like the dust at threshing.

8Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, all that he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 9So Jehoahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then Joash his son reigned in his place.

JEHOASH REIGNS IN ISRAEL

10In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash[a] the son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* sixteen years. 11And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, *but* walked in them.

12Now the rest of the acts of Joash, all that he did, and his might with which he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 13So Joash rested with his fathers. Then Jeroboam sat on his throne. And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

DEATH OF ELISHA

14Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!"

15And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and some arrows." So he took himself a bow and some arrows. 16Then he said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." So he put his hand *on it,* and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. 17And he said, "Open the east window"; and he opened *it.* Then Elisha said, "Shoot"; and he shot. And he said, "The arrow of the LORD's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed *them.*" 18Then he said, "Take the arrows"; so he took *them.* And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground"; so he struck three times, and stopped. 19And the man of God was angry with him, and said, "You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had

12:19 [a]Spelled *Jehoash* in 12:1ff **12:20** [a]Literally *The Landfill* **12:21** [a]Called *Zabad* in 2 Chronicles 24:26 [b]Called *Shimrith* in 2 Chronicles 24:26 **13:1** [a]Spelled *Jehoash* in 12:1ff **13:6** [a]Hebrew *Asherah,* a Canaanite goddess **13:10** [a]Spelled *Joash* in verse 9

destroyed *it!* But now you will strike Syria *only* three times."

20Then Elisha died, and they buried him. And the *raiding* bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year. 21So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band *of raiders;* and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.

ISRAEL RECAPTURES CITIES FROM SYRIA

22And Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. 23But the LORD was gracious to them, had compassion on them, and regarded them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence.

24Now Hazael king of Syria died. Then Ben-Hadad his son reigned in his place. 25And Jehoash[a] the son of Jehoahaz recaptured from the hand of Ben-Hadad, the son of Hazael, the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times Joash defeated him and recaptured the cities of Israel.

AMAZIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

14 In the second year of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, became king. 2He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. 3And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like his father David; he did everything as his father Joash had done. 4However the high places were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

5Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established in his hand, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. 6But the children of the murderers he did not execute, according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, in which the LORD commanded, saying, "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall be put to death for his own sin."[a]

7He killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and took Sela by war, and called its name Joktheel to this day.

8Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash[a] the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us face one another *in battle.*" 9And Jehoash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as wife'; and a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. 10You have indeed defeated Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Glory *in that,* and stay at home; for why should you meddle with trouble so that you fall—you and Judah with you?"

> ***2 Kings 14:9***
> The cedar trees of Lebanon might be compared to the redwood trees of California. Some cedars grow up to one hundred feet tall, with trunks forty-five feet in diameter. Jehoash insulted Amaziah by comparing the king of Judah's power and influence to a thistle and comparing his own power and influence to a cedar tree.

11But Amaziah would not heed. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went out; so he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at Beth Shemesh, which *belongs* to Judah. 12And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. 13Then Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, at Beth Shemesh; and he went to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate—four hundred cubits. 14And he took all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

15Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash

13:25 [a]Spelled *Joash* in verses 12–14, 25
14:6 [a]Deuteronomy 24:16 **14:8** [a]Spelled *Joash* in 13:12ff and 2 Chronicles 25:17ff

which he did—his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah—*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 16So Jehoash rested with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. Then Jeroboam his son reigned in his place.

17Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. 18Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 19And they formed a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. 20Then they brought him on horses, and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the City of David.

21And all the people of Judah took Azariah,[a] who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. 22He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers.

JEROBOAM II REIGNS IN ISRAEL

23In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, became king in Samaria, *and reigned* forty-one years. 24And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 25He restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who *was* from Gath Hepher. 26For the LORD saw *that* the affliction of Israel *was* very bitter; and whether bond or free, there was no helper for Israel. 27And the LORD did not say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

28Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did—his might, how he made war, and how he recaptured for Israel, from Damascus and Hamath, *what had belonged* to Judah—*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 29So Jeroboam rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. Then Zechariah his son reigned in his place.

AZARIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, became king. 2He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jecholiah of Jerusalem. 3And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done, 4except that the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. 5Then the LORD struck the king, so that he was a leper until the day of his death; so he dwelt in an isolated house. And Jotham the king's son *was* over the *royal* house, judging the people of the land.

LEADERSHIP
Does God hold leaders accountable for how they lead?
2 Kings 15:2–5

6Now the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 7So Azariah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

ZECHARIAH REIGNS IN ISRAEL

8In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria six months. 9And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 10Then Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and struck and killed him in front of the people; and he reigned in his place.

11Now the rest of the acts of Zechariah, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

12This *was* the word of the LORD which He spoke to Jehu, saying, "Your sons shall

14:21 [a]Called *Uzziah* in 2 Chronicles 26:1ff, Isaiah 6:1, and elsewhere

sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth *generation*."[a] And so it was.

SHALLUM REIGNS IN ISRAEL

13Shallum the son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah[a] king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. 14For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, came to Samaria, and struck Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria and killed him; and he reigned in his place.

15Now the rest of the acts of Shallum, and the conspiracy which he led, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 16Then from Tirzah, Menahem attacked Tiphsah, all who *were* there, and its territory. Because they did not surrender, therefore he attacked *it.* All the women there who were with child he ripped open.

MENAHEM REIGNS IN ISRAEL

17In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem the son of Gadi became king over Israel, *and reigned* ten years in Samaria. 18And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 19Pul[a] king of Assyria came against the land; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to strengthen the kingdom under his control. 20And Menahem exacted the money from Israel, from all the very wealthy, from each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and did not stay there in the land.

21Now the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 22So Menahem rested with his fathers. Then Pekahiah his son reigned in his place.

PEKAHIAH REIGNS IN ISRAEL

23In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* two years. 24And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 25Then Pekah the son of Remaliah, an officer of his, conspired against him and killed him in Samaria, in the citadel of the king's house, along with Argob and Arieh; and with him were fifty men of Gilead. He killed him and reigned in his place.

26Now the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

PEKAH REIGNS IN ISRAEL

27In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah the son of Remaliah became king over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* twenty years. 28And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 29In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria. 30Then Hoshea the son of Elah led a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and struck and killed him; so he reigned in his place in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

31Now the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

JOTHAM REIGNS IN JUDAH

32In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, Jotham the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, began to reign. 33He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jerusha[a] the daughter of Zadok. 34And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. 35However the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. He built the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD.

36Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 37In those days the LORD began

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15:12 [a]2 Kings 10:30 **15:13** [a]Called *Azariah* in 14:21ff and 15:1ff **15:19** [a]That is, Tiglath-Pileser III (compare verse 29) **15:33** [a]Spelled *Jerushah* in 2 Chronicles 27:1

to send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah. 38So Jotham rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

AHAZ REIGNS IN JUDAH

16 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. 2Ahaz *was* twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do *what was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, as his father David *had done.* 3But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel; indeed he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel. 4And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

5Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to *make* war; and they besieged Ahaz but could not overcome *him.* 6At that time Rezin king of Syria captured Elath for Syria, and drove the men of Judah from Elath. Then the Edomites[a] went to Elath, and dwell there to this day.

7So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I *am* your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me." 8And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent *it as* a present to the king of Assyria. 9So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, carried *its people* captive to Kir, and killed Rezin.

10Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. 11Then Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made *it* before King Ahaz came back from Damascus. 12And when the king came back from Damascus, the king saw the altar; and the king approached the altar and made offerings on it. 13So he burned his burnt offering and his grain offering; and he poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar. 14He also brought the bronze altar which *was* before the LORD, from the front of the temple—from between the *new* altar and the house of the LORD—and put it on the north side of the *new* altar. 15Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, "On the great *new* altar burn the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, the king's burnt sacrifice, and his grain offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, their grain offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. And the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire *by.*" 16Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded.

17And King Ahaz cut off the panels of the carts, and removed the lavers from them; and he took down the Sea from the bronze oxen that *were* under it, and put it on a pavement of stones. 18Also he removed the Sabbath pavilion which they had built in the temple, and he removed the king's outer entrance from the house of the LORD, on account of the king of Assyria.

19Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 20So Ahaz rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

HOSHEA REIGNS IN ISRAEL

17 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria, *and he reigned* nine years. 2And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel who were before him. 3Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against him; and Hoshea became his vassal, and paid him tribute money. 4And the king of Assyria uncovered a conspiracy by Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no tribute to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year.

16:6 [a]Some ancient authorities read *Syrians.*

Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.

ISRAEL CARRIED CAPTIVE TO ASSYRIA

5Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. 6In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

7For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods, 8and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. 9Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that *were* not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city. 10They set up for themselves *sacred* pillars and wooden images[a] on every high hill and under every green tree. 11There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger, 12for they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this thing."

13Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments *and* My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets." 14Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God. 15And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and *went* after the nations who *were* all around them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them. 16So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, made for themselves a molded image *and* two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. 17And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 18Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone.

OCCULT

How does God feel about occultic practices?

2 Kings 17:17, 18

19Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. 20And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His sight. 21For He tore Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD, and made them commit a great sin. 22For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, 23until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, *as it is* to this day.

ASSYRIA RESETTLES SAMARIA

24Then the king of Assyria brought *people* from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities. 25And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that* they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed *some* of them. 26So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the

17:10 [a]Hebrew *Asherim,* Canaanite deities

MIR MAKING IT REAL // 2 KINGS 17:35–38

A Life of Worship Throughout the ages, God has revealed Himself in mighty ways because He wants us to worship only Him. He wants us to know that He is all-powerful and supremely wise. There is no one else who can even compare to God. No one else deserves our worship or praise. As the One who made us and saved us, only God is worthy of a life completely devoted to Him.

Worship is not just singing songs or attending a church service. God is worshiped when we live our daily lives for His glory. How you spoke to your parents at breakfast, the way you acted at school, what you watched on TV—it all matters when you decide to worship God with your life. Don't let your friends trick you into believing that what they think counts. What God thinks matters most. Has your life been an act of worship today? (See also: Ex. 20:5; Josh. 4:24.)

Words to Live By

Worship: The word translated in 2 Kings 17:36 as "worship" is the Hebrew *shachah* (shaw-khaw'). It means "to come before God with great reverence as before royalty." It is to fall at God's feet in recognition of His holiness and authority.

God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land." 27Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land." 28Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

29However every nation continued to make gods of its own, and put *them* in the shrines on the high places which the Samaritans had made, *every* nation in the cities where they dwelt. 30The men of Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, 31and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. 32So they feared the LORD, and from every class they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. 33They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods—according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away.

34To this day they continue practicing the former rituals; they do not fear the LORD, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances, or the law and commandment which the LORD had commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel, 35with whom the LORD had made a covenant and charged them, saying: "You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them; 36but the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and an outstretched arm, Him you shall fear, Him you shall worship, and to Him you shall offer sacrifice. 37And the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall be careful to observe forever; you shall not fear other gods. 38And the covenant that I have made with you, you shall not forget, nor shall you fear other gods. 39But the LORD your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies." 40However they did not obey, but they followed their former rituals. 41So these nations feared the LORD, yet served their carved images; also their children and their children's children have continued doing as their fathers did, even to this day.

HEZEKIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

18 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, *that* Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 2He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Abi[a] the daughter of Zechariah. 3And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.

4He removed the high places and broke the *sacred* pillars, cut down the wooden image[a] and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.[b] 5He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 6For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses. 7The LORD was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 8He subdued the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.

9Now it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. 10And at the end of three years they took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that *is,* the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. 11Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria, and put them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, 12because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed His covenant *and* all that Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do *them.*

13And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. 14Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15So Hezekiah gave *him* all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house. 16At that time Hezekiah stripped *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD, and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

2 Kings 18:14

Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, was so proud of his victory in Lachish that he had a scene of the battle recreated on one of the walls of his palace in Nineveh. The scene showed his Assyrian soldiers attacking with battering rams and other weapons while the inhabitants of Lachish tried to defend themselves with bows and arrows.

SENNACHERIB BOASTS AGAINST THE LORD

17Then the king of Assyria sent *the* Tartan,[a] *the* Rabsaris,[b] *and the* Rabshakeh[c] from Lachish, with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they had come up, they went and stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, which *was* on the highway to the Fuller's Field. 18And when they had called to the king, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to them. 19Then *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence *is* this in which you trust? 20You speak of *having* plans and power for war; but *they are* mere words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? 21Now look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So *is* Pharaoh

18:2 [a]Called *Abijah* in 2 Chronicles 29:1ff
18:4 [a]Hebrew *Asherah,* a Canaanite goddess [b]Literally *Bronze Thing* **18:17** [a]A title, probably *Commander in Chief* [b]A title, probably *Chief Officer* [c]A title, probably *Chief of Staff* or *Governor*

king of Egypt to all who trust in him. 22But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' *is* it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem'?"' 23Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them! 24How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? 25Have I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'"

26Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to *the* Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it;* and do not speak to us in Hebrew[a] in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall."

27But *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

28Then *the* Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and spoke, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! 29Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; 30nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."' 31Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make *peace* with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; 32until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive groves and honey, that you may live and not die. But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." 33Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 34Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? 35Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?'"

36But the people held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." 37Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with *their* clothes torn, and told him the words of *the* Rabshakeh.

ISAIAH ASSURES DELIVERANCE

19 And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard *it,* that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2Then he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. 3And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day *is* a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but *there is* no strength to bring them forth. 4It may be that the LORD your God will hear all the words of *the* Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

5So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 6And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. 7Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."'"

SENNACHERIB'S THREAT AND HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

8Then *the* Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. 9And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "Look, he has

18:26 [a]Literally *Judean*

come out to make war with you." So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10"Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." 11Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? 12Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who *were* in Telassar? 13Where *is* the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?'"

HOPE
What should you do when the situation is hopeless?
2 Kings 19:14–19

14And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. 15Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel, *the One* who dwells *between* the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. 17Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, 18and have cast their gods into the fire; for they *were* not gods, but the work of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. 19Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You *are* the LORD God, You alone."

THE WORD OF THE LORD CONCERNING SENNACHERIB

20Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.' 21This *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:

'The virgin, the daughter of Zion,
Has despised you, laughed you to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem
Has shaken *her* head behind your back!

22'Whom have you reproached and blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised *your* voice,
And lifted up your eyes on high?
Against the Holy *One* of Israel.
23By your messengers you have reproached the Lord,
And said: "By the multitude of my chariots
I have come up to the height of the mountains,
To the limits of Lebanon;
I will cut down its tall cedars
And its choice cypress trees;
I will enter the extremity of its borders,
To its fruitful forest.
24I have dug and drunk strange water,
And with the soles of my feet I have dried up
All the brooks of defense."

25'Did you not hear long ago
How I made it,
From ancient times that I formed it?
Now I have brought it to pass,
That you should be
For crushing fortified cities *into* heaps of ruins.
26Therefore their inhabitants had little power;
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field
And the green herb,
As the grass on the housetops
And *grain* blighted before it is grown.

PRIDE
What does God think of arrogance and pride?
2 Kings 19:27, 28

27'But I know your dwelling place,
Your going out and your coming in,
And your rage against Me.

28 Because your rage against Me and
your tumult
Have come up to My ears,
Therefore I will put My hook in your
nose
And My bridle in your lips,
And I will turn you back
By the way which you came.

29 "This *shall be* a sign to you:

You shall eat this year such as grows
of itself,
And in the second year what springs
from the same;
Also in the third year sow and reap,
Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of
them.
30 And the remnant who have escaped of
the house of Judah
Shall again take root downward,
And bear fruit upward.
31 For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant,
And those who escape from Mount
Zion.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts[a] will do
this.'

32 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria:

'He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shield,
Nor build a siege mound against it.
33 By the way that he came,
By the same shall he return;
And he shall not come into this city,'
Says the LORD.
34 "For I will defend this city, to save it
For My own sake and for My servant
David's sake.'"

SENNACHERIB'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

35 And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel[a] of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home,* and remained at Nineveh. 37 Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

HEZEKIAH'S LIFE EXTENDED

20 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.'"

2 Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying, 3 "Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done *what was* good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 5 "Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. 6 And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David."'"

GOD
Does God fight for His people?
2 Kings 20:6

7 Then Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs." So they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered.

8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What *is* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?"

9 Then Isaiah said, "This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do

19:31 [a]Following many Hebrew manuscripts and ancient versions (compare Isaiah 37:32); Masoretic Text omits *of hosts.* **19:35** [a]Or *Angel*

the thing which He has spoken: *shall* the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?"

10And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees."

11So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.

THE BABYLONIAN ENVOYS

12At that time Berodach-Baladan[a] the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. 13And Hezekiah was attentive to them, and showed them all the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all[a] his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

14Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?"

So Hezekiah said, "They came from a far country, from Babylon."

15And he said, "What have they seen in your house?"

So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that *is* in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."

16Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD: 17'Behold, the days are coming when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. 18'And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'"

19So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken *is* good!" For he said, "Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?"

DEATH OF HEZEKIAH

20Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah—all his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city—*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 21So Hezekiah rested with his fathers. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

MANASSEH REIGNS IN JUDAH

21 Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Hephzibah. 2And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 3For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and made a wooden image,[a] as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he worshiped all the host of heaven[b] and served them. 4He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name." 5And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *Him* to anger. 7He even set a carved image of Asherah[a] that he had made, in the house of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them." 9But they paid no attention, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

10And the LORD spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, 11"Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations

20:12 [a]Spelled *Merodach-Baladan* in Isaiah 39:1
20:13 [a]Following many Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Targum; Masoretic Text omits *all*.
21:3 [a]Hebrew *Asherah*, a Canaanite goddess [b]The gods of the Assryians **21:7** [a]A Canaanite goddess

(he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who *were* before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols), 12therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Behold, *I* am bringing *such* calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. 13And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as *one* wipes a dish, wiping *it* and turning *it* upside down. 14So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies, 15because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.'"

TEMPTATION
Why should we be careful to resist temptation?
2 Kings 21:8, 9

16Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

2 Kings 21:16
Of all the kings who reigned in Israel and Judah, Manasseh held the throne longest. That's unfortunate, because Manasseh was truly evil. He built altars to pagan gods, reintroduced astrology to the Israelites, and personally practiced witchcraft. Along the way, he also put many innocent people to death. As if that weren't enough, Jewish tradition says Manasseh put Isaiah to death by ordering that the prophet be sawed in half.

17Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh—all that he did, and the sin that he committed—*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 18So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

AMON'S REIGN AND DEATH

19Amon *was* twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. 20And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. 21So he walked in all the ways that his father had walked; and he served the idols that his father had served, and worshiped them. 22He forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD.

23Then the servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house. 24But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

25Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 26And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then Josiah his son reigned in his place.

JOSIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

22 Josiah *was* eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. 2And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

HILKIAH FINDS THE BOOK OF THE LAW

3Now it came to pass, in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the scribe, the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the house of the LORD, saying: 4"Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money which has been brought into the house of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. 5And let them deliver it into the hand of those doing the work, who are the overseers in the house of the LORD; let them give it to those who *are* in the house of the LORD doing the work, to repair the



PROFILE
JOSIAH

Among all the kings of Judah and Israel, including David and Solomon, God's Word gives a unique place to Josiah: "Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him" (2 Kin. 23:25).

Josiah became king of Judah when he was eight years old, after his wicked father was assassinated. Scripture tells us little of Josiah's adolescence. If he had a royal hero, it was probably his godly great-grandfather, Hezekiah. By the time Josiah reached his mid-twenties, he was anxious to make a difference in his nation for God. He organized the renovation of the temple in Jerusalem, which had been neglected. In the process, an even greater neglect was discovered. A book containing God's teachings was delivered to the king. Confronted with the promises and warnings of God's Word, Josiah humbled himself before God. That attitude of responsiveness to God—of wanting to act wholeheartedly on any truthful information discovered about God—made Josiah stand out.

Under Josiah's leadership, there was a national revival of true worship. The king aggressively removed the evidences of paganism from the land. And he reinstituted the joyful celebration of Passover, remembering the faithfulness of God. Josiah made a difference because he demonstrated that even a king can live by the Great Commandment! (Mark 12:28–34).

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

What is your immediate response when you gain a new insight about God? As we learn more about Him, not only should the new information change our view of God, it should also affect our view of ourselves. Too often, young people will acknowledge that what they have learned about God is true, but they won't act on that truth until later in life. Can you hear yourself saying, "Sure, I know God wants my undivided commitment, and someday I plan to give Him that. But for now, I've just got too much going on . . . ."? Postponing or rejecting God's guidance will insure that your life will make the wrong kind of difference. Josiah didn't wait to turn his life over to God. Neither should we.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Josiah's reign is described twice in Scripture: 2 Kings 21:24—23:30; 2 Chronicles 33:25—35:27. Jeremiah also mentions him in Jeremiah 1:1–3; 22:11, 18.

Josiah was a very young man with huge responsibilities. He stepped up and made a real difference. You can, too!

damages of the house— 6to carpenters and builders and masons—and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. 7However there need be no accounting made with them of the money delivered into their hand, because they deal faithfully."

8Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. 9So Shaphan the scribe went to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "Your servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of those who do the work, who oversee the house of the LORD." 10Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

11Now it happened, when the king heard

the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. 12Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor[a] the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, 13"Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."

14So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. (She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.) And they spoke with her. 15Then she said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me, 16"Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants—all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read— 17because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath shall be aroused against this place and shall not be quenched.'"' 18But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "*Concerning* the words which you have heard— 19because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard *you,*" says the LORD. 20"Surely, therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place."'" So they brought back word to the king.

JOSIAH RESTORES TRUE WORSHIP

23 Now the king sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to him. 2The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD.

LEADERSHIP
How can leaders influence their people for good?
2 Kings 23:3

3Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all *his* heart and all *his* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant. 4And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah,[a] and for all the host of heaven;[b] and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. 5Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven. 6And he brought out the wooden image[a] from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground *it* to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people. 7Then he tore down the *ritual* booths of the perverted persons[a] that *were* in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image. 8And he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; also he broke down the high places at the gates

22:12 [a]*Abdon the son of Micah* in 2 Chronicles 34:20 **23:4** [a]A Canaanite goddess [b]The gods of the Assyrians **23:6** [a]Hebrew *Asherah,* a Canaanite goddess **23:7** [a]Hebrew *qedeshim,* that is, those practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals

which *were* at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* to the left of the city gate. 9Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren.

10And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the Valley of the Son[a] of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. 11Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who *was* in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. 12The altars that *were* on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron. 13Then the king defiled the high places that *were* east of Jerusalem, which *were* on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon. 14And he broke in pieces the *sacred* pillars and cut down the wooden images, and filled their places with the bones of men.

2 Kings 23:11

Ancient people believed the sun's rays were pulled across the sky by a horse-drawn chariot driven by—who else?—the sun god.

15Moreover the altar that *was* at Bethel, *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place *and* crushed *it* to powder, and burned the wooden image. 16As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that *were* there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned *them* on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. 17Then he said, "What gravestone *is* this that I see?"

So the men of the city told him, "*It is* the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel."

18And he said, "Let him alone; let no one move his bones." So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.

19Now Josiah also took away all the shrines of the high places that *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD[a] to anger; and he did to them according to all the deeds he had done in Bethel. 20He executed all the priests of the high places who *were* there, on the altars, and burned men's bones on them; and he returned to Jerusalem.

21Then the king commanded all the people, saying, "Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as *it is* written in this Book of the Covenant." 22Such a Passover surely had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. 23But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was held before the LORD in Jerusalem. 24Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. 25Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did *any* arise like him.

IMPENDING JUDGMENT ON JUDAH

26Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. 27And the LORD said, "I will also remove Judah

23:10 [a]Kethib reads *Sons.* **23:19** [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text and Targum omit *the LORD.*

from My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'"[a]

JOSIAH DIES IN BATTLE

[28]Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? [29]In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And *Pharaoh Necho* killed him at Megiddo when he confronted him. [30]Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place.

THE REIGN AND CAPTIVITY OF JEHOAHAZ

[31]Jehoahaz *was* twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. [32]And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. [33]Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. [34]Then Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And *Pharaoh* took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he[a] died there.

JEHOIAKIM REIGNS IN JUDAH

[35]So Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give money according to the command of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, from every one according to his assessment, to give *it* to Pharaoh Necho. [36]Jehoiakim *was* twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Zebudah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. [37]And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

JUDAH OVERRUN BY ENEMIES

24 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal *for* three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. [2]And the LORD sent against him *raiding* bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon; He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servants the prophets. [3]Surely at the commandment of the LORD *this* came upon Judah, to remove *them* from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, [4]and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon.

[5]Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? [6]So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

[7]And the king of Egypt did not come out of his land anymore, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the River Euphrates.

2 Kings 24:11

In 597 B.C., Babylon attacked and defeated Jerusalem and carried off thousands of people, including King Jehoiachin himself. The captivity lasted for seventy years, until after the Persians conquered Babylon. It was the Persian king, Cyrus, who eventually allowed the Jewish people to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple.

THE REIGN AND CAPTIVITY OF JEHOIACHIN

[8]Jehoiachin *was* eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name *was* Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. [9]And he did evil in the sight of the

23:27 [a]1 Kings 8:29 **23:34** [a]That is, Jehoahaz

LORD, according to all that his father had done.

10At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, as his servants were besieging it. 12Then Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers went out to the king of Babylon; and the king of Babylon, in the eighth year of his reign, took him prisoner.

THE CAPTIVITY OF JERUSALEM

13And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. 14Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land. 15And he carried Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officers, and the mighty of the land he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. 16All the valiant men, seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths, one thousand, all *who were* strong *and* fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

ZEDEKIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

17Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, *Jehoiachin's*[a] uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

18Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 19He also did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20For because of the anger of the LORD *this* happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

THE FALL AND CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

25 Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. 2So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. 3By the ninth *day* of the *fourth* month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.

4Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war *fled* at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans *were* still encamped all around against the city. And *the king*[a] went by way of the plain.[b] 5But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. 6So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. 7Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.

8And in the fifth month, on the seventh *day* of the month (which *was* the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 9He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. 10And all the army of the Chaldeans who *were with* the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.

11Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people *who* remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude. 12But the captain of the guard left *some* of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers. 13The bronze pillars that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the carts and the bronze Sea that *were* in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried their bronze to Babylon. 14They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the priests ministered.

24:17 [a]Literally *his* **25:4** [a]Literally *he* [b]Or *Arabah,* that is, the Jordan Valley

15The firepans and the basins, the things of
solid gold and solid silver, the captain of the
guard took away. 16The two pillars, one Sea,
and the carts, which Solomon had made
for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all
these articles was beyond measure. 17The
height of one pillar *was* eighteen cubits,
and the capital on it *was* of bronze. The
height of the capital was three cubits, and
the network and pomegranates all around
the capital were all of bronze. The second
pillar was the same, with a network.

2 Kings 25:13

This was a serious moving project. The bronze Sea alone was almost fifteen feet in diameter, more than seven feet deep, and three inches thick. It weighed more than ten tons and could hold about ten thousand gallons of water.

18And the captain of the guard took
Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the
second priest, and the three doorkeepers.
19He also took out of the city an officer who
had charge of the men of war, five men of
the king's close associates who were found
in the city, the chief recruiting officer of
the army, who mustered the people of the
land, and sixty men of the people of the
land *who were* found in the city. 20So Nebu-
zaradan, captain of the guard, took these
and brought them to the king of Babylon at
Riblah. 21Then the king of Babylon struck
them and put them to death at Riblah in
the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was car-
ried away captive from its own land.

GEDALIAH MADE GOVERNOR OF JUDAH

22Then he made Gedaliah the son of
Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor
over the people who remained in the land
of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of
Babylon had left. 23Now when all the cap-
tains of the armies, they and *their* men,
heard that the king of Babylon had made
Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah
at Mizpah—Ishmael the son of Nethaniah,
Johanan the son of Careah, Seraiah the
son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and
Jaazaniah[a] the son of a Maachathite, they
and their men. 24And Gedaliah took an
oath before them and their men, and said
to them, "Do not be afraid of the servants
of the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and
serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be
well with you."

25But it happened in the seventh month
that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son
of Elishama, of the royal family, came with
ten men and struck and killed Gedaliah,
the Jews, as well as the Chaldeans who
were with him at Mizpah. 26And all the
people, small and great, and the captains
of the armies, arose and went to Egypt; for
they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

JEHOIACHIN RELEASED FROM PRISON

27Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh
year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king
of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the
twenty-seventh *day* of the month, *that*
Evil-Merodach[a] king of Babylon, in the
year that he began to reign, released Je-
hoiachin king of Judah from prison. 28He
spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more
prominent seat than those of the kings
who *were* with him in Babylon. 29So Jehoi-
achin changed from his prison garments,
and he ate bread regularly before the king
all the days of his life. 30And as for his pro-
visions, *there was* a regular ration given
him by the king, a portion for each day, all
the days of his life.

25:23 [a]Spelled *Jezaniah* in Jeremiah 40:8
25:27 [a]Literally *Man of Marduk*

1 Chronicles

DATE OF WRITING: 430–425 B.C.
AUTHOR: ATTRIBUTED TO EZRA
THEME: ENCOURAGEMENT AND EXHORTATION CAN BE GAINED FROM JUDAH'S SPIRITUAL HERITAGE
PURPOSE: GOD BLESSES THOSE WHOSE DESIRE IS TO WORSHIP AND TO SERVE HIM.

OUTLINE

1:1—9:44 ..... Descendants of Adam Until the Time of King Saul
10:1–14 ..... The Death of Saul and His Sons
11:1–9 ..... David Becomes King of Israel and Captures Jerusalem
11:10—12:40 ..... David's Warriors
13:1—16:43 ..... The Ark Is Moved to Jerusalem
17:1–27 ..... Solomon Will Build the Lord's Temple
18:1—20:8 ..... David's Military Victories
21:1—28:21 ..... David's Preparations for Building the Temple
29:1–20 ..... The People Bring Gifts for Building the Temple
29:21–25 ..... Solomon Is Crowned King
29:26–30 ..... The Death of David

KEY VERSE:

"Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all" (1 Chronicles 29:11).

THEN /// You might remember that 1 and 2 Kings were the sequels to 1 and 2 Samuel. You might assume that 1 Chronicles would then be another sequel, but you would be wrong. First and 2 Chronicles present the same story line as 1 and 2 Kings but from a different perspective and by a different storyteller.

The books of the Kings tell the *facts* of the stories: "This king was good and the people followed God. That king was bad and the people fell away *again*." But the Chronicles tell the *whys*. The people fell away because they were not wholehearted about obeying God. God did not bless them unless they became wholehearted again.

NOW /// Having the benefit of another perspective is a good thing. Knowing the facts teaches us lessons, but knowing *why* the facts happened teaches us how to keep from making the same mistakes.

When you read 1 Chronicles, remember to look for the whys. Remember to ask yourself how wholehearted you are. Remember that a person falls for the same reason a kingdom does—letting go of God's hand.

REALITY CHECK /// First of all, let's get this out of the way right here at the beginning: yes, there are a lot of lists of genealogies in the Chronicles. They aren't fun to read. You are allowed to skip some verses. But don't give up on both books because they have some lists in them.

Because of websites where we can quickly begin to trace our family trees, we are hearing more and more about genealogies these days. However, many of us still don't know much about our great-great-great-grandfathers. But to the Hebrews, family history was everything. One reason for this was that the Hebrews were looking forward to the Messiah (Jesus) being born. They knew He would be a descendant of Abraham and then of David. If they kept those families straight, they would have a better chance of spotting the Messiah when He made His appearance.

Looking backward and knowing that Jesus is the Messiah, it is encouraging to see God's hand working so far back through so many generations to bring His Salvation into the world at a specific time and in a specific way. What may seem to be boring lists of names are actually loud voices testifying to the greatness and power of God and His perfect plan.

THE FAMILY OF ADAM—SETH TO ABRAHAM

1 Adam, Seth, Enosh, 2Cainan,[a] Mahalalel, Jared, 3Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, 4Noah,[a] Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

1 Chronicles 1:1–4

Not only did the ancient people of the Middle East make long lists of their ancestors (called genealogies); they actually memorized those lists! The genealogies were used to determine the rightful heir to family property.

5The sons of Japheth *were* Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. 6The sons of Gomer *were* Ashkenaz, Diphath,[a] and Togarmah. 7The sons of Javan *were* Elishah, Tarshishah,[a] Kittim, and Rodanim.[b]

8The sons of Ham *were* Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. 9The sons of Cush *were* Seba, Havilah, Sabta,[a] Raama,[b] and Sabtecha. The sons of Raama *were* Sheba and Dedan. 10Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. 11Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, 12Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and the Caphtorim). 13Canaan begot Sidon, his firstborn, and

1:2 [a]Hebrew *Qenan* **1:4** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint adds *the sons of Noah*. **1:6** [a]Spelled *Riphath* in Genesis 10:3 **1:7** [a]Spelled *Tarshish* in Genesis 10:4 [b]Spelled *Dodanim* in Genesis 10:4 **1:9** [a]Spelled *Sabtah* in Genesis 10:7 [b]Spelled *Raamah* in Genesis 10:7

Heth; 14the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; 15the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; 16the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite.

17The sons of Shem *were* Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech.[a] 18Arphaxad begot Shelah, and Shelah begot Eber. 19To Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* Peleg,[a] for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name *was* Joktan. 20Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 21Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 22Ebal,[a] Abimael, Sheba, 23Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these *were* the sons of Joktan.

1 Chronicles 1:24–27

Abraham and the Israelites were descendants of Noah's oldest son, Shem. Rather than calling themselves "Shemites," they dropped the "h" and called themselves "Semites." Today, a person who holds a prejudice against Jewish people is known as an anti-Semite or anti-Semitic.

24Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah, 25Eber, Peleg, Reu, 26Serug, Nahor, Terah, 27and Abram, who *is* Abraham. 28The sons of Abraham *were* Isaac and Ishmael.

THE FAMILY OF ISHMAEL

29These *are* their genealogies: The firstborn of Ishmael *was* Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 30Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad,[a] Tema, 31Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These *were* the sons of Ishmael.

THE FAMILY OF KETURAH

32Now the sons born to Keturah, Abraham's concubine, *were* Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. The sons of Jokshan *were* Sheba and Dedan. 33The sons of Midian *were* Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

THE FAMILY OF ISAAC

34And Abraham begot Isaac. The sons of Isaac *were* Esau and Israel. 35The sons of Esau *were* Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. 36And the sons of Eliphaz *were* Teman, Omar, Zephi,[a] Gatam, *and* Kenaz; and *by* Timna,[b] Amalek. 37The sons of Reuel *were* Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

THE FAMILY OF SEIR

38The sons of Seir *were* Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. 39And the sons of Lotan *were* Hori and Homam; Lotan's sister *was* Timna. 40The sons of Shobal *were* Alian,[a] Manahath, Ebal, Shephi,[b] and Onam. The sons of Zibeon *were* Ajah and Anah. 41The son of Anah *was* Dishon. The sons of Dishon *were* Hamran,[a] Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. 42The sons of Ezer *were* Bilhan, Zaavan, *and* Jaakan.[a] The sons of Dishan *were* Uz and Aran.

THE KINGS OF EDOM

43Now these *were* the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before a king reigned over the children of Israel: Bela the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. 44And when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. 45When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. 46And when Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. The name of his city *was* Avith. 47When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. 48And when Samlah died, Saul of Rehoboth-by-the-River reigned in his place. 49When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. 50And when Baal-Hanan died, Hadad[a] reigned in his place; and the name of his city was Pai.[b] His wife's name was Mehetabel the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. 51Hadad died also. And the chiefs of Edom were Chief Timnah, Chief Aliah,[a] Chief Jetheth, 52Chief Aholibamah,

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1:17 [a]Spelled *Mash* in Genesis 10:23 **1:19** [a]Literally *Division* **1:22** [a]Spelled *Obal* in Genesis 10:28 **1:30** [a]Spelled *Hadar* in Genesis 25:15 **1:36** [a]Spelled *Zepho* in Genesis 36:11 [b]Compare Genesis 36:12 **1:40** [a]Spelled *Alvan* in Genesis 36:23 [b]Spelled *Shepho* in Genesis 36:23 **1:41** [a]Spelled *Hemdan* in Genesis 36:26 **1:42** [a]Spelled *Akan* in Genesis 36:27 **1:50** [a]Spelled *Hadar* in Genesis 36:39 [b]Spelled *Pau* in Genesis 36:39 **1:51** [a]Spelled *Alvah* in Genesis 36:40

Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, 53Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, 54Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These *were* the chiefs of Edom.

THE FAMILY OF ISRAEL

2 These *were* the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, 2Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

FROM JUDAH TO DAVID

3The sons of Judah *were* Er, Onan, and Shelah. *These* three were born to him by the daughter of Shua, the Canaanitess. Er, the firstborn of Judah, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; so He killed him. 4And Tamar, his daughter-in-law, bore him Perez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah *were* five.

SIN
How serious is sin in God's eyes?
1 Chronicles 2:3

5The sons of Perez *were* Hezron and Hamul. 6The sons of Zerah *were* Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara—five of them in all.

7The son of Carmi *was* Achar,[a] the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the accursed thing.

8The son of Ethan *was* Azariah.

1 Chronicles 2:13–15

David, who was of the tribe of Judah, was a direct descendant of Adam, Noah, and Abraham. As the genealogies of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke show, David was also a direct ancestor of Jesus.

9Also the sons of Hezron who were born to him *were* Jerahmeel, Ram, and Chelubai.[a] 10Ram begot Amminadab, and Amminadab begot Nahshon, leader of the children of Judah; 11Nahshon begot Salma,[a] and Salma begot Boaz; 12Boaz begot Obed, and Obed begot Jesse; 13Jesse begot Eliab his firstborn, Abinadab the second, Shimea[a] the third, 14Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, 15Ozem the sixth, *and* David the seventh.

16Now their sisters *were* Zeruiah and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah *were* Abishai, Joab, and Asahel—three. 17Abigail bore Amasa; and the father of Amasa *was* Jether the Ishmaelite.[a]

THE FAMILY OF HEZRON

18Caleb the son of Hezron had children by Azubah, *his* wife, and by Jerioth. Now these were her sons: Jesher, Shobab, and Ardon. 19When Azubah died, Caleb took Ephrath[a] as his wife, who bore him Hur. 20And Hur begot Uri, and Uri begot Bezalel.

21Now afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he married when he *was* sixty years old; and she bore him Segub. 22Segub begot Jair, who had twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead. 23(Geshur and Syria took from them the towns of Jair, with Kenath and its towns—sixty towns.) All these *belonged to* the sons of Machir the father of Gilead. 24After Hezron died in Caleb Ephrathah, Hezron's wife Abijah bore him Ashhur the father of Tekoa.

THE FAMILY OF JERAHMEEL

25The sons of Jerahmeel, the firstborn of Hezron, *were* Ram, the firstborn, and Bunah, Oren, Ozem, *and* Ahijah. 26Jerahmeel had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam. 27The sons of Ram, the firstborn of Jerahmeel, were Maaz, Jamin, and Eker. 28The sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada. The sons of Shammai *were* Nadab and Abishur.

29And the name of the wife of Abishur *was* Abihail, and she bore him Ahban and Molid. 30The sons of Nadab *were* Seled and Appaim; Seled died without children. 31The son of Appaim *was* Ishi, the son of Ishi *was* Sheshan, and Sheshan's son *was* Ahlai. 32The sons of Jada, the brother of Shammai, *were* Jether and Jonathan; Jether died without children. 33The sons of Jonathan

2:7 [a]Spelled *Achan* in Joshua 7:1 and elsewhere **2:9** [a]Spelled *Caleb* in 2:18, 42 **2:11** [a]Spelled *Salmon* in Ruth 4:21 and Luke 3:32 **2:13** [a]Spelled *Shammah* in 1 Samuel 16:9 and elsewhere **2:17** [a]Compare 2 Samuel 17:25 **2:19** [a]Spelled *Ephrathah* elsewhere

were Peleth and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel.

34Now Sheshan had no sons, only daughters. And Sheshan had an Egyptian servant whose name *was* Jarha. 35Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant as wife, and she bore him Attai. 36Attai begot Nathan, and Nathan begot Zabad; 37Zabad begot Ephlal, and Ephlal begot Obed; 38Obed begot Jehu, and Jehu begot Azariah; 39Azariah begot Helez, and Helez begot Eleasah; 40Eleasah begot Sismai, and Sismai begot Shallum; 41Shallum begot Jekamiah, and Jekamiah begot Elishama.

THE FAMILY OF CALEB

42The descendants of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel *were* Mesha, his firstborn, who was the father of Ziph, and the sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron. 43The sons of Hebron *were* Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema. 44Shema begot Raham the father of Jorkoam, and Rekem begot Shammai. 45And the son of Shammai *was* Maon, and Maon *was* the father of Beth Zur.

46Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bore Haran, Moza, and Gazez; and Haran begot Gazez. 47And the sons of Jahdai *were* Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph.

48Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. 49She also bore Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbenah and the father of Gibea. And the daughter of Caleb *was* Achsah.

50These were the descendants of Caleb: The sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, *were* Shobal the father of Kirjath Jearim, 51Salma the father of Bethlehem, *and* Hareph the father of Beth Gader.

52And Shobal the father of Kirjath Jearim had descendants: Haroeh, *and* half of the *families of* Manuhoth.[a] 53The families of Kirjath Jearim *were* the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shumathites, and the Mishraites. From these came the Zorathites and the Eshtaolites.

54The sons of Salma *were* Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atroth Beth Joab, half of the Manahethites, and the Zorites.

55And the families of the scribes who dwelt at Jabez *were* the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, *and* the Suchathites. These *were* the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.

THE FAMILY OF DAVID

3 Now these were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: The firstborn *was* Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second, Daniel,[a] by Abigail the Carmelitess; 2the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; 3the fifth, Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth, Ithream, by his wife Eglah.

4*These* six were born to him in Hebron. There he reigned seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 5And these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea,[a] Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon—four by Bathshua[b] the daughter of Ammiel.[c] 6Also *there* were Ibhar, Elishama,[a] Eliphelet,[b] 7Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 8Elishama, Eliada,[a] and Eliphelet—nine *in all.* 9*These were* all the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines, and Tamar their sister.

THE FAMILY OF SOLOMON

10Solomon's son *was* Rehoboam; Abijah[a] *was* his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, 11Joram[a] his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash[b] his son, 12Amaziah his son, Azariah[a] his son, Jotham his son, 13Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, 14Amon his son, *and* Josiah his son. 15The sons of Josiah *were* Johanan the firstborn, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, and the fourth Shallum.[a] 16The sons of Jehoiakim *were* Jeconiah his son *and* Zedekiah[a] his son.

THE FAMILY OF JECONIAH

17And the sons of Jeconiah[a] *were* Assir,[b] Shealtiel his son, 18*and* Malchiram, Pedaiah,

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2:52 [a]Same as *the Manahethites,* verse 54
3:1 [a]Called *Chileab* in 2 Samuel 3:3 **3:5** [a]Spelled *Shammua* in 14:4 and 2 Samuel 5:14 [b]Spelled *Bathsheba* in 2 Samuel 11:3 [c]Called *Eliam* in 2 Samuel 11:3 **3:6** [a]Spelled *Elishua* in 14:5 and 2 Samuel 5:15 [b]Spelled *Elpelet* in 14:5 **3:8** [a]Spelled *Beeliada* in 14:7 **3:10** [a]Spelled *Abijam* in 1 Kings 15:1 **3:11** [a]Spelled *Jehoram* in 2 Kings 1:17 and 8:16 [b]Spelled *Jehoash* in 2 Kings 12:1 **3:12** [a]Called *Uzziah* in Isaiah 6:1 **3:15** [a]Called *Jehoahaz* in 2 Kings 23:31 **3:16** [a]Compare 2 Kings 24:17 **3:17** [a]Also called *Coniah* in Jeremiah 22:24 and *Jehoiachin* in 2 Kings 24:8 [b]Or *Jeconiah the captive were*

Shenazzar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. 19The sons of Pedaiah *were* Zerubbabel and Shimei. The sons of Zerubbabel *were* Meshullam, Hananiah, Shelomith their sister, 20and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-Hesed—five *in all.*

1 Chronicles 3:19

Zerubbabel led the first group of Jewish exiles back to Jerusalem after they had spent seventy years as captives in Babylon. (By the way, an exile is a person who has been separated from his country.) He became the governor of Judah and started the long, slow process of rebuilding the temple, which had been completely destroyed. Haggai and Zechariah, two prophets of God, encouraged Zerubbabel in his work.

21The sons of Hananiah *were* Pelatiah and Jeshaiah, the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, and the sons of Shechaniah. 22The son of Shechaniah was Shemaiah. The sons of Shemaiah *were* Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat—six *in all.* 23The sons of Neariah *were* Elioenai, Hezekiah, and Azrikam—three *in all.* 24The sons of Elioenai *were* Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani—seven *in all.*

THE FAMILY OF JUDAH

4 The sons of Judah *were* Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal. 2And Reaiah the son of Shobal begot Jahath, and Jahath begot Ahumai and Lahad. These *were* the families of the Zorathites. 3These *were the sons of* the father of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash; and the name of their sister *was* Hazelelponi; 4and Penuel *was* the father of Gedor, and Ezer *was the* father of Hushah.

These *were* the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah the father of Bethlehem.

5And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah. 6Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni, and Haahashtari. These *were* the sons of Naarah. 7The sons of Helah *were* Zereth, Zohar, and Ethnan; 8and Koz begot Anub, Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum.

9Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez,[a] saying, "Because I bore *him* in pain." 10And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep *me* from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.

11Chelub the brother of Shuhah begot Mehir, who *was* the father of Eshton. 12And Eshton begot Beth-Rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Ir-Nahash. These *were* the men of Rechah.

13The sons of Kenaz *were* Othniel and Seraiah. The sons of Othniel *were* Hathath,[a] 14and Meonothai *who* begot Ophrah. Seraiah begot Joab the father of Ge Harashim,[a] for they were craftsmen. 15The sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh *were* Iru, Elah, and Naam. The son of Elah *was* Kenaz. 16The sons of Jehallelel *were* Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel. 17The sons of Ezrah *were* Jether, Mered, Epher, and Jalon. And *Mered's wife*[a] bore Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. 18(His wife Jehudijah[a] bore Jered the father of Gedor, Heber the father of Sochoh, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah.) And these were the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took.

19The sons of Hodiah's wife, the sister of Naham, *were* the fathers of Keilah the Garmite and of Eshtemoa the Maachathite. 20And the sons of Shimon *were* Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-Hanan, and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi *were* Zoheth and Ben-Zoheth.

21The sons of Shelah the son of Judah *were* Er the father of Lecah, Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of the linen workers of the house of Ashbea; 22also Jokim, the men of Chozeba, and Joash; Saraph, who ruled in Moab, and Jashubi-Lehem. Now the records are ancient. 23These *were* the potters and those who dwell at Netaim[a] and Gederah;[b] there they dwelt with the king for his work.

4:9 [a]Literally *He Will Cause Pain*
4:13 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate add *and Meonothai.* **4:14** [a]Literally *Valley of Craftsmen*
4:17 [a]Literally *she* **4:18** [a]Or *His Judean wife*
4:23 [a]Literally *Plants* [b]Literally *Hedges*

THE FAMILY OF SIMEON

24The sons of Simeon *were* Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib,[a] Zerah,[b] *and* Shaul, 25Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, and Mishma his son. 26And the sons of Mishma *were* Hamuel his son, Zacchur his son, and Shimei his son. 27Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brothers did not have many children, nor did any of their families multiply as much as the children of Judah.

28They dwelt at Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual, 29Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, 30Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, 31Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susim, Beth Biri, and at Shaaraim. These *were* their cities until the reign of David. 32And their villages *were* Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan—five cities— 33and all the villages that *were* around these cities as far as Baal.[a] These *were* their dwelling places, and they maintained their genealogy: 34Meshobab, Jamlech, and Joshah the son of Amaziah; 35Joel, and Jehu the son of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel; 36Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, and Benaiah; 37Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah— 38these mentioned by name *were* leaders in their families, and their father's house increased greatly.

39So they went to the entrance of Gedor, as far as the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks. 40And they found rich, good pasture, and the land *was* broad, quiet, and peaceful; for some Hamites formerly lived there.

41These recorded by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and they attacked their tents and the Meunites who were found there, and utterly destroyed them, as it is to this day. So they dwelt in their place, because *there was* pasture for their flocks there. 42Now *some* of them, five hundred men of the sons of Simeon, went to Mount Seir, having as their captains Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. 43And they defeated the rest of the Amalekites who had escaped. They have dwelt there to this day.

THE FAMILY OF REUBEN

5 Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—he *was* indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright; 2yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him *came* a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's— 3the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

4The sons of Joel *were* Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, 5Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, 6and Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-Pileser[a] king of Assyria carried into captivity. He *was* leader of the Reubenites. 7And his brethren by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was registered: the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah, 8and Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who dwelt in Aroer, as far as Nebo and Baal Meon. 9Eastward they settled as far as the entrance of the wilderness this side of the River Euphrates, because their cattle had multiplied in the land of Gilead.

10Now in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagrites, who fell by their hand; and they dwelt in their tents throughout the entire *area* east of Gilead.

THE FAMILY OF GAD

11And the children of Gad dwelt next to them in the land of Bashan as far as Salcah: 12Joel *was* the chief, Shapham the next, then Jaanai and Shaphat in Bashan, 13and their brethren of their father's house: Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jachan, Zia, and Eber—seven *in all.* 14These *were* the children of Abihail the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; 15Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, *was* chief of their father's house. 16And *the Gadites* dwelt in Gilead, in Bashan and in its villages, and in all the common-lands of Sharon within their borders. 17All these were registered by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.

18The sons of Reuben, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh *had* forty-four

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4:24 [a]Called *Jachin* in Genesis 46:10 [b]Called *Zohar* in Genesis 46:10 **4:33** [a]Or *Baalath Beer* (compare Joshua 19:8) **5:6** [a]Hebrew *Tilgath-Pilneser*

thousand seven hundred and sixty valiant men, men able to bear shield and sword, to shoot with the bow, and skillful in war, who went to war. 19They made war with the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab. 20And they were helped against them, and the Hagrites were delivered into their hand, and all who *were* with them, for they cried out to God in the battle. He heeded their prayer, because they put their trust in Him. 21Then they took away their livestock—fifty thousand of their camels, two hundred and fifty thousand of their sheep, and two thousand of their donkeys—also one hundred thousand of their men; 22for many fell dead, because the war *was* God's. And they dwelt in their place until the captivity.

THE FAMILY OF MANASSEH (EAST)

23So the children of the half-tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land. Their *numbers* increased from Bashan to Baal Hermon, that is, to Senir, or Mount Hermon. 24These *were* the heads of their fathers' houses: Epher, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. They were mighty men of valor, famous men, *and* heads of their fathers' houses.

> ***1 Chronicles 5:26***
> Tiglath-Pileser became king of Assyria in 745 B.C. Rather than killing the leaders of the countries he defeated, Tiglath-Pileser took them captive and deported them. The conquered area then became a province of Assyria. Halah, Habor, and Hara were located near Nineveh, over five hundred miles northeast of Jerusalem. The people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh were a long way from home.

25And they were unfaithful to the God of their fathers, and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. 26So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, that is, Tiglath-Pileser[a] king of Assyria. He carried the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh into captivity. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river of Gozan to this day.

THE FAMILY OF LEVI

6 The sons of Levi *were* Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 2The sons of Kohath *were* Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 3The children of Amram *were* Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. And the sons of Aaron *were* Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 4Eleazar begot Phinehas, *and* Phinehas begot Abishua; 5Abishua begot Bukki, and Bukki begot Uzzi; 6Uzzi begot Zerahiah, and Zerahiah begot Meraioth; 7Meraioth begot Amariah, and Amariah begot Ahitub; 8Ahitub begot Zadok, and Zadok begot Ahimaaz; 9Ahimaaz begot Azariah, and Azariah begot Johanan; 10Johanan begot Azariah (it was he who ministered as priest in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem); 11Azariah begot Amariah, and Amariah begot Ahitub; 12Ahitub begot Zadok, and Zadok begot Shallum; 13Shallum begot Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begot Azariah; 14Azariah begot Seraiah, and Seraiah begot Jehozadak. 15Jehozadak went *into captivity* when the LORD carried Judah and Jerusalem into captivity by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

16The sons of Levi *were* Gershon,[a] Kohath, and Merari. 17These are the names of the sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei. 18The sons of Kohath *were* Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 19The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi. Now these *are* the families of the Levites according to their fathers: 20Of Gershon *were* Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, 21Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, *and* Jeatherai his son. 22The sons of Kohath *were* Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, 23Elkanah his son, Ebiasaph his son, Assir his son, 24Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziah his son, and Shaul his son. 25The sons of Elkanah *were* Amasai and Ahimoth. 26*As for* Elkanah,[a] the sons of Elkanah *were* Zophai[b] his son, Nahath[c] his son, 27Eliab[a] his son, Jeroham his son, *and* Elkanah his son. 28The sons of Samuel *were* Joel[a] the firstborn, and Abijah the second.[b] 29The

5:26 [a]Hebrew *Tilgath-Pilneser* **6:16** [a]Hebrew *Gershom* (alternate spelling of *Gershon,* as in verses 1, 17, 20, 43, 62, and 71)
6:26 [a]Compare verse 35 [b]Spelled *Zuph* in verse 35 and 1 Samuel 1:1 [c]Compare verse 34 **6:27** [a]Compare verse 34 **6:28** [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic (compare verse 33 and 1 Samuel 8:2) [b]Hebrew *Vasheni*

sons of Merari *were* Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzzah his son, 30Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, *and* Asaiah his son.

MUSICIANS IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

31Now these are the men whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark came to rest. 32They were ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they served in their office according to their order.

33And these *are* the ones who ministered with their sons: Of the sons of the Kohathites *were* Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, 34the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel,[a] the son of Toah,[b] 35the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, 36the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, 37the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, 38the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. 39And his brother Asaph, who stood at his right hand, *was* Asaph the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea, 40the son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchijah, 41the son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah, 42the son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei, 43the son of Jahath, the son of Gershon, the son of Levi.

1 Chronicles 6:48

The rules and procedures for entering the Most Holy Place were extremely strict and extremely important to follow. Only the high priest was allowed to enter, once a year, to ask God's forgiveness for Israel's sins. The only piece of furniture allowed in the Most Holy Place was the ark of the covenant, which the Israelites considered to be God's earthly throne.

44Their brethren, the sons of Merari, on the left hand, *were* Ethan the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch, 45the son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah, 46the son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shamer, 47the son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi.

48And their brethren, the Levites, *were* appointed to every kind of service of the tabernacle of the house of God.

THE FAMILY OF AARON

49But Aaron and his sons offered sacrifices on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense, for all the work of the Most Holy *Place,* and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded. 50Now these *are* the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, 51Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son, 52Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son, 53Zadok his son, *and* Ahimaaz his son.

OBEDIENCE

What's a good example of obeying God?

1 Chronicles 6:49

DWELLING PLACES OF THE LEVITES

54Now these *are* their dwelling places throughout their settlements in their territory, for they were *given* by lot to the sons of Aaron, of the family of the Kohathites: 55They gave them Hebron in the land of Judah, with its surrounding common-lands. 56But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 57And to the sons of Aaron they gave *one of* the cities of refuge, Hebron; also Libnah with its common-lands, Jattir, Eshtemoa with its common-lands, 58Hilen[a] with its common-lands, Debir with its common-lands, 59Ashan[a] with its common-lands, and Beth Shemesh with its common-lands. 60And from the tribe of Benjamin: Geba with its common-lands, Alemeth[a] with its common-lands, and Anathoth with its common-lands.

6:34 [a]Spelled *Elihu* in 1 Samuel 1:1 [b]Spelled *Tohu* in 1 Samuel 1:1 **6:58** [a]Spelled *Holon* in Joshua 21:15 **6:59** [a]Spelled *Ain* in Joshua 21:16 **6:60** [a]Spelled *Almon* in Joshua 21:18

All their cities among their families *were* thirteen.

61To the rest of the family of the tribe of the Kohathites *they gave* by lot ten cities from half the tribe of Manasseh. 62And to the sons of Gershon, throughout their families, *they gave* thirteen cities from the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan. 63To the sons of Merari, throughout their families, *they gave* twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun. 64So the children of Israel gave *these* cities with their common-lands to the Levites. 65And they gave by lot from the tribe of the children of Judah, from the tribe of the children of Simeon, and from the tribe of the children of Benjamin these cities which are called by *their* names.

1 Chronicles 6:64

The Levites were the designated priests of Israel. They were responsible for taking care of the tabernacle of meeting, the altar, and the people's sacrifices. They were also responsible for meeting the spiritual needs of their fellow Israelites. Because their job was to take care of the various tribes, the Levites did not receive a specific area of land when they moved to Canaan. Instead, they were given forty-eight cities scattered throughout Israel.

66Now some of the families of the sons of Kohath *were given* cities as their territory from the tribe of Ephraim. 67And they gave them *one of* the cities of refuge, Shechem with its common-lands, in the mountains of Ephraim, also Gezer with its common-lands, 68Jokmeam with its common-lands, Beth Horon with its common-lands, 69Aijalon with its common-lands, and Gath Rimmon with its common-lands. 70And from the half-tribe of Manasseh: Aner with its common-lands and Bileam with its common-lands, for the rest of the family of the sons of Kohath.

71From the family of the half-tribe of Manasseh the sons of Gershon *were given* Golan in Bashan with its common-lands and Ashtaroth with its common-lands. 72And from the tribe of Issachar: Kedesh with its common-lands, Daberath with its common-lands, 73Ramoth with its common-lands, and Anem with its common-lands. 74And from the tribe of Asher: Mashal with its common-lands, Abdon with its common-lands, 75Hukok with its common-lands, and Rehob with its common-lands. 76And from the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee with its common-lands, Hammon with its common-lands, and Kirjathaim with its common-lands.

77From the tribe of Zebulun the rest of the children of Merari *were given* Rimmon[a] with its common-lands and Tabor with its common-lands. 78And on the other side of the Jordan, across from Jericho, on the east side of the Jordan, *they were given* from the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the wilderness with its common-lands, Jahzah with its common-lands, 79Kedemoth with its common-lands, and Mephaath with its common-lands. 80And from the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead with its common-lands, Mahanaim with its common-lands, 81Heshbon with its common-lands, and Jazer with its common-lands.

THE FAMILY OF ISSACHAR

7 The sons of Issachar *were* Tola, Puah,[a] Jashub, and Shimron—four *in all.* 2The sons of Tola *were* Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their father's house. *The sons* of Tola *were* mighty men of valor in their generations; their number in the days of David *was* twenty-two thousand six hundred. 3The son of Uzzi *was* Izrahiah, and the sons of Izrahiah *were* Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Ishiah. All five of them *were* chief men. 4And with them, by their generations, according to their fathers' houses, *were* thirty-six thousand troops ready for war; for they had many wives and sons.

5Now their brethren among all the families of Issachar *were* mighty men of valor, listed by their genealogies, eighty-seven thousand in all.

6:77 [a]Hebrew *Rimmono,* alternate spelling of *Rimmon;* see 4:32 **7:1** [a]Spelled *Puvah* in Genesis 46:13

THE FAMILY OF BENJAMIN

6 *The sons* of Benjamin *were* Bela, Becher, and Jediael—three *in all.* 7 The sons of Bela were Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri—five *in all.* They *were* heads of *their* fathers' houses, and they were listed by their genealogies, twenty-two thousand and thirty-four mighty men of valor.

8 The sons of Becher *were* Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jerimoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. All these *are* the sons of Becher. 9 And they were recorded by genealogy according to their generations, heads of their fathers' houses, twenty thousand two hundred mighty men of valor. 10 The son of Jediael *was* Bilhan, and the sons of Bilhan *were* Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tharshish, and Ahishahar.

11 All these sons of Jediael *were* heads of their fathers' houses; *there were* seventeen thousand two hundred mighty men of valor fit to go out for war *and* battle. 12 Shuppim and Huppim[a] *were* the sons of Ir, *and* Hushim *was* the son of Aher.

THE FAMILY OF NAPHTALI

13 The sons of Naphtali *were* Jahziel,[a] Guni, Jezer, and Shallum,[b] the sons of Bilhah.

> ***1 Chronicles 7:15***
> Usually only sons inherited their father's land. Since Zelophehad had no sons, though, Moses allowed his land to be given to his daughters—on one condition. The daughters had to marry men in their own tribe. That way, Zelophehad's land would remain in the tribe of Manasseh.

THE FAMILY OF MANASSEH (WEST)

14 The descendants of Manasseh: his Syrian concubine bore him Machir the father of Gilead, the father of Asriel.[a] 15 Machir took as his wife *the sister* of Huppim and Shuppim,[a] whose name *was* Maachah. The name of *Gilead's* grandson[b] *was* Zelophehad,[c] but Zelophehad begot only daughters. 16 (Maachah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she called his name Peresh. The name of his brother *was* Sheresh, and his sons *were* Ulam and Rakem. 17 The son of Ulam *was* Bedan.) These *were* the descendants of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh.

18 His sister Hammoleketh bore Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah.

19 And the sons of Shemida were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

THE FAMILY OF EPHRAIM

20 The sons of Ephraim *were* Shuthelah, Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eladah his son, Tahath his son, 21 Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead. The men of Gath who were born in *that* land killed *them* because they came down to take away their cattle. 22 Then Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him.

23 And when he went in to his wife, she conceived and bore a son; and he called his name Beriah,[a] because tragedy had come upon his house. 24 Now his daughter *was* Sheerah, who built Lower and Upper Beth Horon and Uzzen Sheerah; 25 and Rephah *was* his son, *as well* as Resheph, and Telah his son, Tahan his son, 26 Laadan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, 27 Nun[a] his son, and Joshua his son.

28 Now their possessions and dwelling places *were* Bethel and its towns: to the east Naaran, to the west Gezer and its towns, and Shechem and its towns, as far as Ayyah[a] and its towns; 29 and by the borders of the children of Manasseh *were* Beth Shean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, Megiddo and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these dwelt the children of Joseph, the son of Israel.

THE FAMILY OF ASHER

30 The sons of Asher *were* Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. 31 The sons of Beriah *were* Heber and Malchiel, who was the father of Birzaith.[a] 32 And

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7:12 [a]Called *Hupham* in Numbers 26:39
7:13 [a]Spelled *Jahzeel* in Genesis 46:24 [b]Spelled *Shillem* in Genesis 46:24 **7:14** [a]The son of Gilead (compare Numbers 26:30, 31)
7:15 [a]Compare verse 12 [b]Literally *the second* [c]Compare Numbers 26:30–33 **7:23** [a]Literally *In Tragedy* **7:27** [a]Hebrew *Non* **7:28** [a]Many Hebrew manuscripts, Bomberg, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *Gazza.* **7:31** [a]Or *Birzavith* or *Birzoth*

Heber begot Japhlet, Shomer,[a] Hotham,[b]
and their sister Shua. 33The sons of Japhlet
were Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These
were the children of Japhlet. 34The sons of
Shemer *were* Ahi, Rohgah, Jehubbah, and
Aram. 35And the sons of his brother Helem
were Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal.
36The sons of Zophah *were* Suah, Har-
nepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, 37Bezer, Hod,
Shamma, Shilshah, Jithran,[a] and Beera.
38The sons of Jether *were* Jephunneh, Pis-
pah, and Ara. 39The sons of Ulla *were* Arah,
Haniel, and Rizia.

40All these *were* the children of Asher,
heads of *their* fathers' houses, choice men,
mighty men of valor, chief leaders. And
they were recorded by genealogies among
the army fit for battle; their number *was*
twenty-six thousand.

THE FAMILY TREE OF KING SAUL OF BENJAMIN

8 Now Benjamin begot Bela his first-
born, Ashbel the second, Aharah[a]
the third, 2Nohah the fourth, and Ra-
pha the fifth. 3The sons of Bela *were* Addar,[a]
Gera, Abihud, 4Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah,
5Gera, Shephuphan, and Huram.

6These *are* the sons of Ehud, who were
the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the in-
habitants of Geba, and who forced them to
move to Manahath: 7Naaman, Ahijah, and
Gera who forced them to move. He begot
Uzza and Ahihud.

8Also Shaharaim had children in the
country of Moab, after he had sent away
Hushim and Baara his wives. 9By Hodesh
his wife he begot Jobab, Zibia, Mesha,
Malcam, 10Jeuz, Sachiah, and Mirmah.
These *were* his sons, heads of their fathers'
houses.

11And by Hushim he begot Abitub and
Elpaal. 12The sons of Elpaal *were* Eber,
Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono
and Lod with its towns; 13and Beriah and
Shema, who *were* heads of their fathers'
houses of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who
drove out the inhabitants of Gath. 14Ahio,
Shashak, Jeremoth, 15Zebadiah, Arad,
Eder, 16Michael, Ispah, and Joha *were* the
sons of Beriah. 17Zebadiah, Meshullam,
Hizki, Heber, 18Ishmerai, Jizliah, and Jobab
were the sons of Elpaal. 19Jakim, Zichri,
Zabdi, 20Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, 21Adaiah,
Beraiah, and Shimrath *were* the sons of
Shimei. 22Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, 23Abdon,
Zichri, Hanan, 24Hananiah, Elam, Anto-
thijah, 25Iphdeiah, and Penuel *were* the
sons of Shashak. 26Shamsherai, Shehariah,
Athaliah, 27Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zichri
were the sons of Jeroham.

28These *were* heads of the fathers' *houses*
by their generations, chief men. These
dwelt in Jerusalem.

29Now the father of Gibeon, whose
wife's name *was* Maacah, dwelt at
Gibeon. 30And his firstborn son *was* Ab-
don, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab, 31Gedor,
Ahio, Zecher, 32and Mikloth, *who* begot
Shimeah.[a] They also dwelt alongside
their relatives in Jerusalem, with their
brethren. 33Ner[a] begot Kish, Kish begot
Saul, and Saul begot Jonathan, Malchi-
shua, Abinadab,[b] and Esh-Baal.[c] 34The
son of Jonathan *was* Merib-Baal,[a] and
Merib-Baal begot Micah. 35The sons of
Micah *were* Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and
Ahaz. 36And Ahaz begot Jehoaddah;[a] Je-
hoaddah begot Alemeth, Azmaveth, and
Zimri; and Zimri begot Moza. 37Moza be-
got Binea, Raphah[a] his son, Eleasah his
son, *and* Azel his son.

38Azel had six sons whose names *were*
these: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Shea-
riah, Obadiah, and Hanan. All these *were*
the sons of Azel. 39And the sons of Eshek
his brother *were* Ulam his firstborn, Jeush
the second, and Eliphelet the third.

40The sons of Ulam were mighty men of
valor—archers. *They* had many sons and
grandsons, one hundred and fifty *in all.*
These *were* all sons of Benjamin.

9 So all Israel was recorded by genealo-
gies, and indeed, they *were* inscribed
in the book of the kings of Israel. But
Judah was carried away captive to Babylon
because of their unfaithfulness. 2And the
first inhabitants who *dwelt* in their posses-
sions in their cities *were* Israelites, priests,
Levites, and the Nethinim.

7:32 [a]Spelled *Shemer* in verse 34 [b]Spelled *Helem* in verse 35 **7:37** [a]Spelled *Jether* in verse 38 **8:1** [a]Spelled *Ahiram* in Numbers 26:38 **8:3** [a]Called *Ard* in Numbers 26:40 **8:32** [a]Spelled *Shimeam* in 9:38 **8:33** [a]Also the son of Gibeon (compare 9:36, 39) [b]Called *Jishui* in 1 Samuel 14:49 [c]Called *Ishbosheth* in 2 Samuel 2:8 and elsewhere **8:34** [a]Called *Mephibosheth* in 2 Samuel 4:4 **8:36** [a]Spelled *Jarah* in 9:42 **8:37** [a]Spelled *Rephaiah* in 9:43

DWELLERS IN JERUSALEM

3Now in Jerusalem the children of Judah
dwelt, and some of the children of Benja-
min, and of the children of Ephraim and
Manasseh: 4Uthai the son of Ammihud,
the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son
of Bani, of the descendants of Perez, the
son of Judah. 5Of the Shilonites: Asaiah
the firstborn and his sons. 6Of the sons of
Zerah: Jeuel, and their brethren—six hun-
dred and ninety. 7Of the sons of Benjamin:
Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of
Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah; 8Ibneiah
the son of Jeroham; Elah the son of Uzzi,
the son of Michri; Meshullam the son of
Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of
Ibnijah; 9and their brethren, according to
their generations—nine hundred and fifty-
six. All these men *were* heads of a father's
house in their fathers' houses.

THE PRIESTS AT JERUSALEM

10Of the priests: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, and
Jachin; 11Azariah the son of Hilkiah, the
son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the
son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the of-
ficer over the house of God; 12Adaiah the
son of Jeroham, the son of Pashur, the son
of Malchijah; Maasai the son of Adiel, the
son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the
son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer;
13and their brethren, heads of their fathers'
houses—one thousand seven hundred and
sixty. *They were* very able men for the work
of the service of the house of God.

THE LEVITES AT JERUSALEM

14Of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of
Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of
Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; 15Bakbak-
kar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah the son of
Micah, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph;
16Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of
Galal, the son of Jeduthun; and Berechiah
the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, who
lived in the villages of the Netophathites.

THE LEVITE GATEKEEPERS

17And the gatekeepers *were* Shallum, Ak-
kub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their brethren.
Shallum *was* the chief. 18Until then *they had
been* gatekeepers for the camps of the chil-
dren of Levi at the King's Gate on the east.
19Shallum the son of Kore, the son of
Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his breth-
ren, from his father's house, the Korahites,
were in charge of the work of the service,
gatekeepers of the tabernacle. Their fa-
thers had been keepers of the entrance
to the camp of the LORD. 20And Phinehas
the son of Eleazar had been the officer
over them in time past; the LORD *was* with
him. 21Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah
was keeper of the door of the tabernacle of
meeting.
22All those chosen as gatekeepers *were*
two hundred and twelve. They were re-
corded by their genealogy, in their villages.
David and Samuel the seer had appointed
them to their trusted office. 23So they and
their children *were* in charge of the gates
of the house of the LORD, the house of the
tabernacle, by assignment. 24The gate-
keepers were assigned to the four direc-
tions: the east, west, north, and south.
25And their brethren in their villages *had*
to come with them from time to time for
seven days. 26For in this trusted office *were*
four chief gatekeepers; they were Levites.
And they had charge over the chambers
and treasuries of the house of God. 27And
they lodged *all* around the house of God
because they *had* the responsibility, and
they *were* in charge of opening *it* every
morning.

OTHER LEVITE RESPONSIBILITIES

28Now *some* of them were in charge of the
serving vessels, for they brought them
in and took them out by count. 29*Some* of
them *were* appointed over the furnishings
and over all the implements of the sanctu-
ary, and over the fine flour and the wine
and the oil and the incense and the spices.
30And *some* of the sons of the priests made
the ointment of the spices.
31Mattithiah of the Levites, the firstborn
of Shallum the Korahite, had the trusted
office over the things that were baked in
the pans. 32And some of their brethren of
the sons of the Kohathites *were* in charge
of preparing the showbread for every Sab-
bath.
33These are the singers, heads of the fa-
thers' *houses* of the Levites, *who lodged* in
the chambers, *and were* free *from other du-
ties;* for they were employed in *that* work
day and night. 34These heads of the fathers'

houses of the Levites *were* heads throughout their generations. They dwelt at Jerusalem.

THE FAMILY OF KING SAUL

35Jeiel the father of Gibeon, whose wife's
name *was* Maacah, dwelt at Gibeon.
36His firstborn son *was* Abdon, then Zur,
Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, 37Gedor, Ahio,
Zechariah,[a] and Mikloth. 38And Mikloth
begot Shimeam.[a] They also dwelt alongside their relatives in Jerusalem, with their
brethren. 39Ner begot Kish, Kish begot
Saul, and Saul begot Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-Baal. 40The son of
Jonathan *was* Merib-Baal, and Merib-Baal
begot Micah. 41The sons of Micah *were*
Pithon, Melech, Tahrea,[a] and Ahaz.[b] 42And
Ahaz begot Jarah;[a] Jarah begot Alemeth,
Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begot
Moza; 43Moza begot Binea, Rephaiah[a] his
son, Eleasah his son, and Azel his son.

44And Azel had six sons whose names
were these: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael,
Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan; these *were*
the sons of Azel.

TRAGIC END OF SAUL AND HIS SONS

10 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. 3The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was wounded by the archers.
4Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it.
5And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died. 6So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together. 7And when all the men of Israel who *were* in the valley saw that they had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; then the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

8So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9And they stripped him and took his head and his armor, and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news *in the temple* of their idols and among the people. 10Then they put his armor in the temple of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.

1 Chronicles 10:11, 12

Receiving a proper burial was very important in the Israelite culture. In fact, it was so important that Israelite law did not allow a body to be left out overnight. The people of Jabesh were insulted by the shameful and degrading way Saul's body was being treated. Their courage and commitment to following proper burial procedures was rewarded by King David.

11And when all Jabesh Gilead heard all
that the Philistines had done to Saul, 12all
the valiant men arose and took the body
of Saul and the bodies of his sons; and they
brought them to Jabesh, and buried their
bones under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh,
and fasted seven days.

OCCULT

How severely does God judge occultic practices?

1 Chronicles 10:13, 14

13So Saul died for his unfaithfulness
which he had committed against the
LORD, because he did not keep the word of
the LORD, and also because he consulted a
medium for guidance. 14But *he* did not inquire of the LORD; therefore He killed him,
and turned the kingdom over to David the
son of Jesse.

9:37 [a]Called *Zecher* in 8:31 **9:38** [a]Spelled *Shimeah* in 8:32 **9:41** [a]Spelled *Tarea* in 8:35 [b]Following Arabic, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate (compare 8:35); Masoretic Text and Septuagint omit *and Ahaz*. **9:42** [a]Spelled *Jehoaddah* in 8:36 **9:43** [a]Spelled *Raphah* in 8:37

DAVID MADE KING OVER ALL ISRAEL

11 Then all Israel came together to David at Hebron, saying, "Indeed we *are* your bone and your flesh. 2Also, in time past, even when Saul was king, you *were* the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD your God said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over My people Israel.'" 3Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel.

THE CITY OF DAVID

4And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus, where the Jebusites *were,* the inhabitants of the land. 5But the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You shall not come in here!" Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David). 6Now David said, "Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain." And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and became chief. 7Then David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore they called it the City of David. 8And he built the city around it, from the Millo[a] to the surrounding area. Joab repaired the rest of the city. 9So David went on and became great, and the LORD of hosts *was* with him.

THE MIGHTY MEN OF DAVID

10Now these *were* the heads of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel.

11And this *is* the number of the mighty men whom David had: Jashobeam the son of a Hachmonite, chief of the captains;[a] he had lifted up his spear against three hundred, killed *by him* at one time.

12After him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who *was one* of the three mighty men. 13He was with David at Pas-dammim. Now there the Philistines were gathered for battle, and there was a piece of ground full of barley. So the people fled from the Philistines. 14But they stationed themselves in the middle of *that* field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.

SUCCESS
Can we trust God for our success?
1 Chronicles 11:14

15Now three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the army of the Philistines encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. 16David *was* then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then in Bethlehem. 17And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" 18So the three broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that *was* by the gate, and took *it* and brought *it* to David. Nevertheless David would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD. 19And he said, "Far be it from me, O my God, that I should do this! Shall I drink the blood of these men *who have put* their lives *in jeopardy?* For at the risk of their lives they brought it." Therefore he would not drink it. These things were done by the three mighty men.

20Abishai the brother of Joab was chief of *another* three.[a] He had lifted up his spear against three hundred *men,* killed *them,* and won a name among *these* three. 21Of the three he was more honored than the other two men. Therefore he became their captain. However he did not attain to the *first* three.

22Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds. He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. 23And he killed an Egyptian, a man of *great* height, five cubits tall. In the Egyptian's hand *there was* a spear like a weaver's beam; and he went down to him with a staff, wrested

11:8 [a]Literally *The Landfill* **11:11** [a]Following Qere; Kethib, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *the thirty* (compare 2 Samuel 23:8).
11:20 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Syriac reads *thirty*.

the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. 24These *things* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men. 25Indeed he was more honored than the thirty, but he did not attain to the *first* three. And David appointed him over his guard.

26Also the mighty warriors *were* Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, 27Shammoth the Harorite,[a] Helez the Pelonite,[b] 28Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Anathothite, 29Sibbechai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, 30Maharai the Netophathite, Heled[a] the son of Baanah the Netophathite, 31Ithai[a] the son of Ribai of Gibeah, of the sons of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, 32Hurai[a] of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel[b] the Arbathite, 33Azmaveth the Baharumite,[a] Eliahba the Shaalbonite, 34the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shageh the Hararite, 35Ahiam the son of Sacar the Hararite, Eliphal the son of Ur, 36Hepher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, 37Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai, 38Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, 39Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite[a] (the armorbearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah), 40Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, 41Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai, 42Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite (a chief of the Reubenites) and thirty with him, 43Hanan the son of Maachah, Joshaphat the Mithnite, 44Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite, 45Jediael the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, 46Eliel the Mahavite, Jeribai and Joshaviah the sons of Elnaam, Ithmah the Moabite, 47Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

THE GROWTH OF DAVID'S ARMY

12 Now these *were* the men who came to David at Ziklag while he was still a fugitive from Saul the son of Kish; and they *were* among the mighty men, helpers in the war, 2armed with bows, using both the right hand and the left in *hurling* stones and *shooting* arrows with the bow. *They were* of Benjamin, Saul's brethren.

3The chief *was* Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; Jeziel and Pelet the sons of Azmaveth; Berachah, and Jehu the Anathothite; 4Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty; Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, and Jozabad the Gederathite; 5Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite; 6Elkanah, Jisshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites; 7and Joelah and Zebadiah the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

8*Some* Gadites joined David at the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for battle, who could handle shield and spear, whose faces *were like* the faces of lions, and *were* as swift as gazelles on the mountains: 9Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, 10Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, 11Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, 12Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, 13Jeremiah the tenth, and Machbanai the eleventh. 14These *were* from the sons of Gad, captains of the army; the least was over a hundred, and the greatest was over a thousand. 15These *are* the ones who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all its banks; and they put to flight all *those* in the valleys, to the east and to the west.

16Then some of the sons of Benjamin and Judah came to David at the stronghold. 17And David went out to meet them, and answered and said to them, "If you have come peaceably to me to help me, my heart will be united with you; but if to betray me to my enemies, since *there is* no wrong in my hands, may the God of our fathers look and bring judgment." 18Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the captains, *and he said:*

"*We are* yours, O David;
We *are* on your side, O son of Jesse!
Peace, peace to you,
And peace to your helpers!
For your God helps you."

11:27 [a]Spelled *Harodite* in 2 Samuel 23:25 [b]Called *Paltite* in 2 Samuel 23:26 **11:30** [a]Spelled *Heleb* in 2 Samuel 23:29 and *Heldai* in 1 Chronicles 27:15 **11:31** [a]Spelled *Ittai* in 2 Samuel 23:29 **11:32** [a]Spelled *Hiddai* in 2 Samuel 23:30 [b]Spelled *Abi-Albon* in 2 Samuel 23:31 **11:33** [a]Spelled *Barhumite* in 2 Samuel 23:31 **11:39** [a]Spelled *Beerothite* in 2 Samuel 23:37

So David received them, and made them captains of the troop.

19And *some* from Manasseh defected to David when he was going with the Philistines to battle against Saul; but they did not help them, for the lords of the Philistines sent him away by agreement, saying, "He may defect to his master Saul *and endanger* our heads." 20When he went to Ziklag, those of Manasseh who defected to him were Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai, captains of the thousands who *were* from Manasseh. 21And they helped David against the bands *of raiders,* for they *were* all mighty men of valor, and they were captains in the army. 22For at *that* time they came to David day by day to help him, until *it was* a great army, like the army of God.

DAVID'S ARMY AT HEBRON

23Now these *were* the numbers of the divisions *that were* equipped for war, *and* came to David at Hebron to turn *over* the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD: 24of the sons of Judah bearing shield and spear, six thousand eight hundred armed for war; 25of the sons of Simeon, mighty men of valor fit for war, seven thousand one hundred; 26of the sons of Levi four thousand six hundred; 27Jehoiada, the leader of the Aaronites, and with him three thousand seven hundred; 28Zadok, a young man, a valiant warrior, and from his father's house twenty-two captains; 29of the sons of Benjamin, relatives of Saul, three thousand (until then the greatest part of them had remained loyal to the house of Saul); 30of the sons of Ephraim twenty thousand eight hundred, mighty men of valor, famous men throughout their father's house; 31of the half-tribe of Manasseh eighteen thousand, who were designated by name to come and make David king; 32of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command; 33of Zebulun there were fifty thousand who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks; 34of Naphtali one thousand captains, and with them thirty-seven thousand with shield and spear; 35of the Danites who could keep battle formation, twenty-eight thousand six hundred; 36of Asher, those who could go out to war, able to keep battle formation, forty thousand; 37of the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, from the other side of the Jordan, one hundred and twenty thousand armed for battle with every *kind* of weapon of war.

38All these men of war, who could keep ranks, came to Hebron with a loyal heart, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel *were* of one mind to make David king. 39And they were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their brethren had prepared for them. 40Moreover those who were near to them, from as far away as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing food on donkeys and camels, on mules and oxen—provisions of flour and cakes of figs and cakes of raisins, wine and oil and oxen and sheep abundantly, for *there was* joy in Israel.

THE ARK BROUGHT FROM KIRJATH JEARIM

13 Then David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, *and* with every leader. 2And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If *it seems* good to you, and if it is of the LORD our God, let us send out to our brethren everywhere *who are* left in all the land of Israel, and with them to the priests and Levites *who are* in their cities *and* their common-lands, that they may gather together to us; 3and let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we have not inquired at it since the days of Saul." 4Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

5So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor in Egypt to as far as the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim. 6And David and all Israel went up to Baalah,[a] to Kirjath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the LORD, who dwells *between* the cherubim, where *His* name is proclaimed. 7So they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. 8Then David and all Israel played *music* before

13:6 [a]Called *Baale Judah* in 2 Samuel 6:2

God with all *their* might, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets.

9And when they came to Chidon's[a] threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. 10Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. 11And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzza; therefore that place is called Perez Uzza[a] to this day. 12David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How can I bring the ark of God to me?"

1 Chronicles 13:9, 10

David made a tragic error when he decided not to follow God's specific instructions for moving the ark of the covenant. The descendants of Kohath, the son of Levi, were supposed to carry the ark by its poles. Everyone else was forbidden to touch it. Those who did, like Uzza, would die.

13So David would not move the ark with him into the City of David, but took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. 14The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that he had.

DAVID ESTABLISHED AT JERUSALEM

14 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, with masons and carpenters, to build him a house. 2So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, for his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of His people Israel.

3Then David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David begot more sons and daughters. 4And these are the names of his children whom he had in Jerusalem: Shammua,[a] Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 5Ibhar, Elishua,[a] Elpelet,[b] 6Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 7Elishama, Beeliada,[a] and Eliphelet.

THE PHILISTINES DEFEATED

8Now when the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard *of it* and went out against them. 9Then the Philistines went and made a raid on the Valley of Rephaim. 10And David inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?"

The LORD said to him, "Go up, for I will deliver them into your hand."

GUIDANCE

Can we trust God to lead us?

1 Chronicles 14:10

11So they went up to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there. Then David said, "God has broken through my enemies by my hand like a breakthrough of water." Therefore they called the name of that place Baal Perazim.[a] 12And when they left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire.

13Then the Philistines once again made a raid on the valley. 14Therefore David inquired again of God, and God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; circle around them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. 15And it shall be, when you hear a sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God has gone out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines." 16So David did as God commanded him, and they drove back the army of the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gezer. 17Then the fame of David went out into all lands, and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations.

THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM

15 *David* built houses for himself in the City of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it. 2Then David said, "No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites, for the LORD has chosen them to

13:9 [a]Called *Nachon* in 2 Samuel 6:6
13:11 [a]Literally *Outburst Against Uzza*
14:4 [a]Spelled *Shimea* in 3:5 **14:5** [a]Spelled *Elishama* in 3:6 [b]Spelled *Eliphelet* in 3:6
14:7 [a]Spelled *Eliada* in 3:8 **14:11** [a]Literally *Master of Breakthroughs*

carry the ark of God and to minister before Him forever." 3And David gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it. 4Then David assembled the children of Aaron and the Levites: 5of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and one hundred and twenty of his brethren; 6of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, and two hundred and twenty of his brethren; 7of the sons of Gershom, Joel the chief, and one hundred and thirty of his brethren; 8of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and two hundred of his brethren; 9of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, and eighty of his brethren; 10of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and one hundred and twelve of his brethren.

11And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites: for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. 12He said to them, "You *are* the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to *the place* I have prepared for it. 13For because you *did* not *do it* the first *time,* the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order."

14So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. 15And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.

16Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy. 17So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of their brethren, the sons of Merari, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; 18and with them their brethren of the second *rank:* Zechariah, Ben,[a] Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Elipheleh, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, and Jeiel, the gatekeepers; 19the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, *were* to sound the cymbals of bronze; 20Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with strings according to Alamoth; 21Mattithiah, Elipheleh, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah, to direct with harps on the Sheminith; 22Chenaniah, leader of the Levites, was instructor *in charge of* the music, because he *was* skillful; 23Berechiah and Elkanah *were* doorkeepers for the ark; 24Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, were to blow the trumpets before the ark of God; and Obed-Edom and Jehiah, doorkeepers for the ark.

25So David, the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-Edom with joy. 26And so it was, when God helped the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bulls and seven rams. 27David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the music master *with* the singers. David also wore a linen ephod. 28Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps.

29And it happened, *as* the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the City of David, that Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David whirling and playing music; and she despised him in her heart.

THE ARK PLACED IN THE TABERNACLE

16 So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. 2And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. 3Then he

THANKFULNESS
What should we do when we are thankful?
1 Chronicles 16:4–6

15:18 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint omits *Ben.*

LIFE APP

Salvation / 1 Chronicles 16:23–31

It can be really frustrating to attend a church service only to hear words you just don't understand. "Salvation" may be one of those words. It means the rescue of someone in trouble.

You may or may not realize the people who don't know Jesus need to be rescued. You may need to be rescued yourself. Why? Because without Jesus, we are all in the worst kind of trouble; and if Someone doesn't save us, we will never know all God has for us.

You've most likely read or heard the story about Adam and Eve. When God created them, they had this incredible inner connection with Him. They knew exactly who they were and why they were created. They knew God's love completely because He actually came to visit them; they walked and talked with Him every day. God gave them one rule to follow, but they chose to disobey God and sin was born. Because of sin, sickness, pain, and death entered the world. But not just physical death; sin caused Adam and Eve to die spiritually. The inner part of them that had once been connected completely to God, died. Because of sin, people became totally separated from God and His kingdom and were unable to do anything to change what sin had done.

But God loves us and made a way for all people to be reconnected to Him. He sent Jesus into the world to pay the price for sin. Through His death on the cross and His resurrection, Jesus rescued us from sin and its consequences. The beginning of our salvation through Jesus is when we accept Him as our Savior. But our salvation continues throughout our lives with the Lord as He changes us from the inside out and helps us to become all God meant for us to be.

distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece *of meat,* and a cake of raisins.

4And he appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to commemorate, to thank, and to praise the LORD God of Israel: 5Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, *then* Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, and Obed-Edom: Jeiel with stringed instruments and harps, but Asaph made music with cymbals; 6Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests regularly *blew* the trumpets before the ark of the covenant of God.

DAVID'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING

7On that day David first delivered *this psalm* into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to thank the LORD:

8Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
9Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!
10Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
11Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
12Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,
13O seed of Israel His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!

1 Chronicles 16:13

Don't get confused here. Jacob and Israel were the same person. Israel was the name given to Jacob after he wrestled with a mysterious stranger who turned out to be an angel of God—or perhaps even God Himself. Later, the name Israel was given to the nation that was made up of Jacob's twelve sons and their descendants.

14He *is* the LORD our God;
His judgments *are* in all the earth.
15Remember His covenant forever,
The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations,
16*The covenant which* He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
17And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel *for* an everlasting covenant,
18Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance,"
19When you were few in number,
Indeed very few, and strangers in it.

20When they went from one nation to another,
And from *one* kingdom to another people,
21He permitted no man to do them wrong;
Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes,
22*Saying,* "Do not touch My anointed ones,
And do My prophets no harm."[a]

23Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.
24Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.

WITNESSING
What should we tell others about God?
1 Chronicles 16:24

25For the LORD *is* great and greatly to be praised;
He *is* also to be feared above all gods.
26For all the gods of the peoples *are* idols,
But the LORD made the heavens.
27Honor and majesty *are* before Him;
Strength and gladness are in His place.

28Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
Give to the LORD glory and strength.
29Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name;
Bring an offering, and come before Him.

16:22 [a]Compare verses 8–22 with Psalm 105:1–15

Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of
holiness!
30 Tremble before Him, all the earth.
The world also is firmly established,
It shall not be moved.

31 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the
earth be glad;
And let them say among the nations,
"The LORD reigns."
32 Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
Let the field rejoice, and all that *is* in it.
33 Then the trees of the woods shall
rejoice before the LORD,
For He is coming to judge the earth.[a]

WORSHIP
Why should we worship God?
1 Chronicles 16:34

34 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is*
good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.[a]
35 And say, "Save us, O God of our
salvation;
Gather us together, and deliver us
from the Gentiles,
To give thanks to Your holy name,
To triumph in Your praise."

36 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting![a]

And all the people said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD.

REGULAR WORSHIP MAINTAINED

37 So he left Asaph and his brothers there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD to minister before the ark regularly, as every day's work required; 38 and Obed-Edom with his sixty-eight brethren, including Obed-Edom the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah, *to be* gatekeepers; 39 and Zadok the priest and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the LORD at the high place that *was* at Gibeon, 40 to offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering regularly morning and evening, and *to do* according to all that is written in the Law of the LORD which He commanded Israel; 41 and with them Heman and Jeduthun and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because His mercy *endures* forever; 42 and with them Heman and Jeduthun, to sound aloud with trumpets and cymbals and the musical instruments of God. Now the sons of Jeduthun *were* gatekeepers.

43 Then all the people departed, every man to his house; and David returned to bless his house.

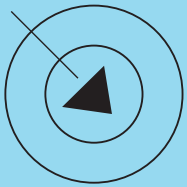
GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

17 Now it came to pass, when David was dwelling in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD *is* under tent curtains."

2 Then Nathan said to David, "Do all that *is* in your heart, for God *is* with you."

3 But it happened that night that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, 4 "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not build Me a house to dwell in. 5 For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought up Israel, even to this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from *one* tabernacle *to another.* 6 Wherever I have moved about with all Israel, have I ever spoken a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'" ' 7 Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. 8 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a name like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth. 9 Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, 10 since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people Israel. Also I will subdue all your enemies. Furthermore I tell you that the LORD will build you a house.[a] 11 And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled,

16:33 [a]Compare verses 23–33 with Psalm 96:1–13 **16:34** [a]Compare verse 34 with Psalm 106:1 **16:36** [a]Compare verses 35, 36 with Psalm 106:47, 48 **17:10** [a]That is, a royal dynasty



PROMISE

God promises that Israel will be His people forever.

"For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God" (1 Chr. 17:22).

Can you imagine belonging to someone forever—even long after you're dead? God has chosen Israel to belong to Him forever. As a Christian, you are a part of Israel because of Christ (Gal. 3:13, 14, 29). One of the most awesome things about becoming a Christian is that "forever" becomes a real part of your life. Even though your body will eventually die, your spirit will live forever, with God. When your life on earth is over, you will enter into a new kind of life in heaven. It's mind-blowing to think about, but you really will live forever with God. Even though you are a Christian, you won't always be perfect. You'll make mistakes, have regrets, and wish you'd made different choices. Through all those times, you'll still belong to God. When He says you belong to Him forever, He means forever—even when you do stuff He wouldn't be pleased with. You can seek forgiveness—He's right there. He's chosen you to be a part of Israel. And you'll belong to Him from now on. Forever never ends.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Exodus 2:23–25; 1 Chronicles 16:11–13; Isaiah 43:20, 21; 1 Peter 2:9, 10

when you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. 13I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took *it* from *him* who was before you. 14And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever."'"

15According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

16Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: "Who *am* I, O LORD God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? 17And *yet* this was a small thing in Your sight, O God; and You have *also* spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come, and have regarded me according to the rank of a man of high degree, O LORD God. 18What more can David *say* to You for the honor of Your servant? For You know Your servant. 19O LORD, for Your servant's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all this greatness, in making known all these great things. 20O LORD, *there is* none like You, nor *is there any* God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 21And who *is* like Your people Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself *as* a people—to make for Yourself a name by great and awesome deeds, by driving out nations from before Your people whom You redeemed from Egypt? 22For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God.

23"And now, O LORD, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, *let it* be established forever, and do as You have said. 24So let it be established, that Your name may be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, *is* Israel's God.' And let the house of Your servant David be established before You. 25For You, O my God, have revealed to Your servant that You will build him a house. Therefore Your servant has found it *in his heart* to pray before You. 26And now, LORD, You are God, and have promised this goodness to Your servant. 27Now You have been pleased to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue

before You forever; for You have blessed it, O LORD, and *it shall be* blessed forever."

TRUST
Does God keep His promises?
1 Chronicles 17:26, 27

DAVID'S FURTHER CONQUESTS

18 After this it came to pass that David attacked the Philistines, subdued them, and took Gath and its towns from the hand of the Philistines. 2Then he defeated Moab, and the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought tribute.

3And David defeated Hadadezer[a] king of Zobah *as far as* Hamath, as he went to establish his power by the River Euphrates. 4David took from him one thousand chariots, seven thousand[a] horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Also David hamstrung all the chariot *horses,* except that he spared enough of them for one hundred chariots.

5When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians. 6Then David put *garrisons* in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, *and* brought tribute. So the LORD preserved David wherever he went. 7And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8Also from Tibhath[a] and from Chun, cities of Hadadezer, David brought a large amount of bronze, with which Solomon made the bronze Sea, the pillars, and the articles of bronze.

1 Chronicles 18:8

Solomon's bronze Sea was a large, round basin almost fifteen feet across and more than seven feet deep. The Sea, which could hold up to ten thousand gallons of water, was positioned in front of the temple and was used by the priest for ceremonial cleansing. The basin was supported by metal statues of twelve bulls.

9Now when Tou[a] king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, 10he sent Hadoram[a] his son to King David, to greet him and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him (for Hadadezer had been at war with Tou); and *Hadoram brought with him* all kinds of articles of gold, silver, and bronze. 11King David also dedicated these to the LORD, along with the silver and gold that he had brought from all *these* nations—from Edom, from Moab, from the people of Ammon, from the Philistines, and from Amalek.

12Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah killed eighteen thousand Edomites[a] in the Valley of Salt. 13He also put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David wherever he went.

DAVID'S ADMINISTRATION

14So David reigned over all Israel, and administered judgment and justice to all his people. 15Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the army; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; 16Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar *were* the priests; Shavsha[a] *was* the scribe; 17Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons *were* chief ministers at the king's side.

THE AMMONITES AND SYRIANS DEFEATED

19 It happened after this that Nahash the king of the people of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his place. 2Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." So David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came to Hanun in the land of the people of Ammon to comfort him.

3And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun, "Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Did his

18:3 [a]Hebrew *Hadarezer,* and so throughout chapters 18 and 19 **18:4** [a]Or *seven hundred* (compare 2 Samuel 8:4) **18:8** [a]Spelled *Betah* in 2 Samuel 8:8 **18:9** [a]Spelled *Toi* in 2 Samuel 8:9, 10 **18:10** [a]Spelled *Joram* in 2 Samuel 8:10 **18:12** [a]Or *Syrians* (compare 2 Samuel 8:13) **18:16** [a]Spelled *Seraiah* in 2 Samuel 8:17

servants not come to you to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?"

4Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved them, and cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away. 5Then *some* went and told David about the men; and he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and *then* return."

6When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, Hanun and the people of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire for themselves chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia,[a] from Syrian Maacah, and from Zobah.[b] 7So they hired for themselves thirty-two thousand chariots, with the king of Maacah and his people, who came and encamped before Medeba. Also the people of Ammon gathered together from their cities, and came to battle.

8Now when David heard *of it,* he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. 9Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array before the gate of the city, and the kings who had come *were* by themselves in the field.

10When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best and put *them* in battle array against the Syrians. 11And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, and they set *themselves* in battle array against the people of Ammon. 12Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will help you. 13Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do *what is* good in His sight."

14So Joab and the people who *were* with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. 15When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai his brother, and entered the city. So Joab went to Jerusalem.

16Now when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers and brought the Syrians who were beyond the River,[a] and Shophach[b] the commander of Hadadezer's army *went* before them. 17When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan and came upon them, and set up in *battle* array against them. So when David had set up in battle array against the Syrians, they fought with him. 18Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven thousand[a] charioteers and forty thousand foot soldiers[b] of the Syrians, and killed Shophach the commander of the army. 19And when the servants of Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became his servants. So the Syrians were not willing to help the people of Ammon anymore.

RABBAH IS CONQUERED

20 It happened in the spring of the year, at the time kings go out *to battle,* that Joab led out the armed forces and ravaged the country of the people of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. And Joab defeated Rabbah and overthrew it. 2Then David took their king's crown from his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and *there were* precious stones in it. And it was set on David's head. Also he brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance. 3And he brought out the people who *were* in it, and put *them* to work[a] with saws, with iron picks, and with axes. So David did to all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned *to* Jerusalem.

PHILISTINE GIANTS DESTROYED

4Now it happened afterward that war broke out at Gezer with the Philistines, at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Sippai,[a] *who was one* of the sons of the giant. And they were subdued.

5Again there was war with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair[a] killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam.

19:6 [a]Hebrew *Aram Naharaim* [b]Spelled *Zoba* in 2 Samuel 10:6 **19:16** [a]That is, the Euphrates [b]Spelled *Shobach* in 2 Samuel 10:16 **19:18** [a]Or *seven hundred* (compare 2 Samuel 10:18) [b]Or *horsemen* (compare 2 Samuel 10:18) **20:3** [a]Septuagint reads *cut them.* **20:4** [a]Spelled *Saph* in 2 Samuel 21:18 **20:5** [a]Spelled *Jaare-Oregim* in 2 Samuel 21:19

1 Chronicles 20:4–8

The men from Gath were ancestors of certain Philistines who lived during the time of David. Their most notable feature was their size. Goliath, the giant David killed, was from Gath.

6Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of *great* stature, with twenty-four fingers and toes, six *on each hand* and six *on each foot;* and he also was born to the giant. 7So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea,[a] David's brother, killed him.

8These were born to the giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

THE CENSUS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

21 Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel. 2So David said to Joab and to the leaders of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba to Dan, and bring the number of them to me that I may know *it.*"

3And Joab answered, "May the LORD make His people a hundred times more than they are. But, my lord the king, *are* they not all my lord's servants? Why then does my lord require this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt in Israel?"

4Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came to Jerusalem. 5Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to David. All Israel *had* one million one hundred thousand men who drew the sword, and Judah *had* four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew the sword. 6But he did not count Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's word was abominable to Joab.

7And God was displeased with this thing; therefore He struck Israel. 8So David said to God, "I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing; but now, I pray, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

9Then the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying, 10"Go and tell David, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "I offer you three *things;* choose one of them for yourself, that I may do *it* to you."'"

SIN

How should we feel about our own sin?

1 Chronicles 21:7, 8

11So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Choose for yourself, 12either three[a] years of famine, or three months to be defeated by your foes with the sword of your enemies overtaking *you,* or else for three days the sword of the LORD—the plague in the land, with the angel[b] of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now consider what answer I should take back to Him who sent me."

13And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies *are* very great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

14So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell. 15And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As he[a] was destroying, the LORD looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, "It is enough; now restrain your[b] hand." And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan[c] the Jebusite.

16Then David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. So David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces. 17And David said to God, "Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued."

18Therefore, the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

20:7 [a]Spelled *Shimeah* in 2 Samuel 21:21 and *Shammah* in 1 Samuel 16:9 **21:12** [a]Or *seven* (compare 2 Samuel 24:13) [b]Or *Angel*, and so elsewhere in this chapter **21:15** [a]Or *He* [b]Or *Your* [c]Spelled *Araunah* in 2 Samuel 24:16

19So David went up at the word of Gad, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD. 20Now Ornan turned and saw the angel; and his four sons *who were* with him hid themselves, but Ornan continued threshing wheat. 21So David came to Ornan, and Ornan looked and saw David. And he went out from the threshing floor, and bowed before David with *his* face to the ground. 22Then David said to Ornan, "Grant me the place of *this* threshing floor, that I may build an altar on it to the LORD. You shall grant it to me at the full price, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people."

23But Ornan said to David, "Take *it* to yourself, and let my lord the king do *what is* good in his eyes. Look, I *also* give *you* the oxen for burnt offerings, the threshing implements for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give *it* all."

24Then King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will surely buy *it* for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings with *that which* costs *me* nothing." 25So David gave Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the place. 26And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the LORD; and He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering.

27So the LORD commanded the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath.

28At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there. 29For the tabernacle of the LORD and the altar of the burnt offering, which Moses had made in the wilderness, *were* at that time at the high place in Gibeon. 30But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

DAVID PREPARES TO BUILD THE TEMPLE

22 Then David said, "This *is* the house of the LORD God, and this *is* the altar of burnt offering for Israel." 2So David commanded to gather the aliens who *were* in the land of Israel; and he appointed masons to cut hewn stones to build the house of God. 3And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails of the doors of the gates and for the joints, and bronze in abundance beyond measure, 4and cedar trees in abundance; for the Sidonians and those from Tyre brought much cedar wood to David.

5Now David said, "Solomon my son *is* young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD *must be* exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries. I will now make preparation for it." So David made abundant preparations before his death.

6Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. 7And David said to Solomon: "My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God; 8but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight. 9Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon,[a] for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. 10He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I *will be* his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' 11Now, my son, may the LORD be with you; and may you prosper, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said to you. 12Only may the LORD give you wisdom and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. 13Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the statutes and judgments with which the LORD charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed. 14Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the LORD one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them. 15Moreover *there are* workmen with you in abundance: woodsmen and stonecutters, and all types of skillful men for every kind of work. 16Of gold and silver and bronze and iron *there is* no limit. Arise and begin working, and the LORD be with you."

17David also commanded all the leaders

22:9 [a]Literally *Peaceful*

of Israel to help Solomon his son, *saying,*
18"*Is* not the LORD your God with you? And has He *not* given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the LORD and before His people. 19Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God. Therefore arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy articles of God into the house that is to be built for the name of the LORD."

THE DIVISIONS OF THE LEVITES

23 So when David was old and full of days, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.
2And he gathered together all the leaders of Israel, with the priests and the Levites.
3Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and above; and the number of individual males was thirty-eight thousand. 4Of these, twenty-four thousand *were* to look after the work of the house of the LORD, six thousand *were* officers and judges, 5four thousand *were* gatekeepers, and four thousand praised the LORD with *musical* instruments, "which I made," *said David,* "for giving praise."
6Also David separated them into divisions among the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.
7Of the Gershonites: Laadan[a] and Shimei. 8The sons of Laadan: the first Jehiel, then Zetham and Joel—three *in all.*
9The sons of Shimei: Shelomith, Haziel, and Haran—three *in all.* These were the heads of the fathers' *houses* of Laadan. 10And the sons of Shimei: Jahath, Zina,[a] Jeush, and Beriah. These *were* the four sons of Shimei.
11Jahath was the first and Zizah the second. But Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons; therefore they were assigned as one father's house.
12The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel—four *in all.* 13The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses; and Aaron was set apart, he and his sons forever, that he should sanctify the most holy things, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister to Him, and to give the blessing in His name forever. 14Now the sons of Moses the man of God were reckoned to the tribe of Levi. 15The sons of Moses *were* Gershon[a] and Eliezer. 16Of the sons of Gershon, Shebuel[a] *was* the first. 17Of the descendants of Eliezer, Rehabiah was the first. And Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehabiah were very many. 18Of the sons of Izhar, Shelomith *was* the first. 19Of the sons of Hebron, Jeriah *was* the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. 20Of the sons of Uzziel, Michah *was* the first and Jesshiah the second.
21The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli *were* Eleazar and Kish. 22And Eleazar died, and had no sons, but only daughters; and their brethren, the sons of Kish, took them *as wives.* 23The sons of Mushi *were* Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth—three *in all.*
24These *were* the sons of Levi by their fathers' houses—the heads of the fathers' *houses* as they were counted individually by the number of their names, who did the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from the age of twenty years and above.
25For David said, "The LORD God of Israel has given rest to His people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem forever"; 26and also to the Levites, "They shall no longer carry the tabernacle, or any of the articles for its service." 27For by the last words of David the Levites *were* numbered from twenty years old and above; 28because their duty *was* to help the sons of Aaron in the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts and in the chambers, in the purifying of all holy things and the work of the service of the house of God, 29both with the showbread and the fine flour for the grain offering, with the unleavened cakes and *what is baked in* the pan, with what is mixed and with all kinds of measures and sizes; 30to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at evening; 31and at every presentation of a burnt offering to the LORD on the Sabbaths and on the New Moons and on the set feasts, by number according to the ordinance governing them, regularly before the LORD; 32and that they should attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, the needs of the holy *place,* and the needs of the sons of Aaron

23:7 [a]Spelled *Libni* in Exodus 6:17
23:10 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Zizah* (compare verse 11). **23:15** [a]Hebrew *Gershom* (compare 6:16) **23:16** [a]Spelled *Shubael* in 24:20

their brethren in the work of the house of the LORD.

THE DIVISIONS OF THE PRIESTS

24 Now *these are* the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron *were* Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2And Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children; therefore Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests. 3Then David with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to the schedule of their service.

4There were more leaders found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar, and *thus* they were divided. Among the sons of Eleazar *were* sixteen heads of *their* fathers' houses, and eight heads of their fathers' houses among the sons of Ithamar. 5Thus they were divided by lot, one group as another, for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials *of the house* of God, from the sons of Eleazar and from the sons of Ithamar. 6And the scribe, Shemaiah the son of Nethanel, *one of* the Levites, wrote them down before the king, the leaders, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the priests and Levites, one father's house taken for Eleazar and *one* for Ithamar.

7Now the first lot fell to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, 8the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, 9the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin, 10the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, 11the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah, 12the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, 13the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, 14the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, 15the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Happizzez,[a] 16the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezekel,[a] 17the twenty-first to Jachin, the twenty-second to Gamul, 18the twenty-third to Delaiah, the twenty-fourth to Maaziah.

19This *was* the schedule of their service for coming into the house of the LORD according to their ordinance by the hand of Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

OTHER LEVITES

20And the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, Shubael;[a] of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. 21Concerning Rehabiah, of the sons of Rehabiah, the first *was* Isshiah. 22Of the Izharites, Shelomoth;[a] of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. 23Of the sons *of Hebron*,[a] Jeriah *was the first*,[b] Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, *and* Jekameam the fourth. 24*Of* the sons of Uzziel, Michah; of the sons of Michah, Shamir. 25The brother of Michah, Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. 26The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi; the son of Jaaziah, Beno. 27The sons of Merari by Jaaziah *were* Beno, Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri. 28Of Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons. 29Of Kish: the son of Kish, Jerahmeel.

30Also the sons of Mushi *were* Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth. These *were* the sons of the Levites according to their fathers' houses.

31These also cast lots just as their brothers the sons of Aaron did, in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the priests and Levites. The chief fathers *did* just as their younger brethren.

1 Chronicles 25:1

Ever wonder who introduced music as part of a worship service? It was King David. David's son, Solomon, carried on the tradition in grand style after the temple was built. Nearly three hundred "master musicians" led the four thousand members of the choir and orchestra in carrying out their duties.

THE MUSICIANS

25 Moreover David and the captains of the army separated for the service *some* of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who *should* prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals. And the number

24:15 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Aphses.*
24:16 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Jehezkel.*
24:20 [a]Spelled *Shebuel* in 23:16 **24:22** [a]Spelled *Shelomith* in 23:18 **24:23** [a]Supplied from 23:19 (following some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint manuscripts) [b]Supplied from 23:19 (following some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint manuscripts)

of the skilled men performing their service was: 2Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asharelah;[a] the sons of Asaph *were* under the direction of Asaph, who prophesied according to the order of the king. 3Of Jeduthun, the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, Zeri,[a] Jeshaiah, *Shimei*, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six,[b] under the direction of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp to give thanks and to praise the LORD. 4Of Heman, the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel,[a] Shebuel,[b] Jerimoth,[c] Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti-Ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, *and* Mahazioth. 5All these *were* the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to exalt his horn.[a] For God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.

6All these *were* under the direction of their father for the music *in* the house of the LORD, with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps, for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman *were* under the authority of the king. 7So the number of them, with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the LORD, all who were skillful, *was* two hundred and eighty-eight.

8And they cast lots for their duty, the small as well as the great, the teacher with the student.

9Now the first lot for Asaph came out for Joseph; the second for Gedaliah, him with his brethren and sons, twelve; 10the third for Zaccur, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 11the fourth for Jizri,[a] his sons and his brethren, twelve; 12the fifth for Nethaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 13the sixth for Bukkiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 14the seventh for Jesharelah,[a] his sons and his brethren, twelve; 15the eighth for Jeshaiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 16the ninth for Mattaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 17the tenth for Shimei, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 18the eleventh for Azarel,[a] his sons and his brethren, twelve; 19the twelfth for Hashabiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 20the thirteenth for Shubael,[a] his sons and his brethren, twelve; 21the fourteenth for Mattithiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 22the fifteenth for Jeremoth,[a] his sons and his brethren, twelve; 23the sixteenth for Hananiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 24the seventeenth for Joshbekashah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 25the eighteenth for Hanani, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 26the nineteenth for Mallothi, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 27the twentieth for Eliathah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 28the twenty-first for Hothir, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 29the twenty-second for Giddalti, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 30the twenty-third for Mahazioth, his sons and his brethren, twelve; 31the twenty-fourth for Romamti-Ezer, his sons and his brethren, twelve.

THE GATEKEEPERS

26 Concerning the divisions of the gatekeepers: of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph. 2And the sons of Meshelemiah *were* Zechariah the firstborn, Jediael the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, 3Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh.

4Moreover the sons of Obed-Edom *were* Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, 5Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth; for God blessed him.

6Also to Shemaiah his son were sons born who governed their fathers' houses, because they *were* men of great ability. 7The sons of Shemaiah *were* Othni, Rephael, Obed, and Elzabad, whose brothers Elihu and Semachiah *were* able men.

8All these *were* of the sons of Obed-Edom, they and their sons and their brethren, able men with strength for the work: sixty-two of Obed-Edom.

9And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, eighteen able men.

25:2 [a]Spelled *Jesharelah* in verse 14
25:3 [a]Spelled *Jizri* in verse 11 [b]*Shimei,* appearing in one Hebrew and several Septuagint manuscripts, completes the total of six sons (compare verse 17). **25:4** [a]Spelled *Azarel* in verse 18 [b]Spelled *Shubael* in verse 20 [c]Spelled *Jeremoth* in verse 22 **25:5** [a]That is, to increase his power or influence
25:11 [a]Spelled *Zeri* in verse 3 **25:14** [a]Spelled *Asharelah* in verse 2 **25:18** [a]Spelled *Uzziel* in verse 4 **25:20** [a]Spelled *Shebuel* in verse 4
25:22 [a]Spelled *Jerimoth* in verse 4

10 Also Hosah, of the children of Merari,
had sons: Shimri the first (for *though* he
was not the firstborn, his father made him
the first), 11 Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah
the third, Zechariah the fourth; all the sons
and brethren of Hosah *were* thirteen.

12 Among these *were* the divisions of the
gatekeepers, among the chief men, *having*
duties just like their brethren, to serve in
the house of the LORD. 13 And they cast lots
for each gate, the small as well as the great,
according to their father's house. 14 The lot
for the East *Gate* fell to Shelemiah. Then
they cast lots *for* his son Zechariah, a wise
counselor, and his lot came out for the
North Gate; 15 to Obed-Edom the South
Gate, and to his sons the storehouse.[a] 16 To
Shuppim and Hosah *the lot came out* for
the West Gate, with the Shallecheth Gate
on the ascending highway—watchman
opposite watchman. 17 On the east *were*
six Levites, on the north four each day, on
the south four each day, and for the store-
house[a] two by two. 18 As for the Parbar[a] on
the west, *there were* four on the highway
and two at the Parbar. 19 These were the di-
visions of the gatekeepers among the sons
of Korah and among the sons of Merari.

1 Chronicles 26:20

All money and treasures that were taken in battle or dedicated to the Lord by grateful Israelites were kept in the temple for safekeeping. The money was used to maintain the temple and keep it properly furnished. For extra security, Solomon's temple had a courtyard with a wall and gates around it.

THE TREASURIES AND OTHER DUTIES

20 Of the Levites, Ahijah *was* over the
treasuries of the house of God and over
the treasuries of the dedicated things.
21 The sons of Laadan, the descendants of
the Gershonites of Laadan, heads of their
fathers' *houses,* of Laadan the Gershonite:
Jehieli. 22 The sons of Jehieli, Zetham and
Joel his brother, *were* over the treasuries of
the house of the LORD. 23 Of the Amramites,
the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uz-
zielites: 24 Shebuel the son of Gershom, the
son of Moses, *was* overseer of the treasur-
ies. 25 And his brethren by Eliezer *were*
Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiah his son, Joram
his son, Zichri his son, and Shelomith his
son.

26 This Shelomith and his brethren *were*
over all the treasuries of the dedicated
things which King David and the heads
of fathers' *houses,* the captains over thou-
sands and hundreds, and the captains of
the army, had dedicated. 27 Some of the
spoils won in battles they dedicated to
maintain the house of the LORD. 28 And all
that Samuel the seer, Saul the son of Kish,
Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of
Zeruiah had dedicated, every dedicated
thing, was under the hand of Shelomith
and his brethren.

MONEY

What's a good way to spend some of the money we earn?

1 Chronicles 26:27

29 Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his
sons *performed* duties as officials and
judges over Israel outside Jerusalem.

30 Of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his
brethren, one thousand seven hundred
able men, had the oversight of Israel on the
west side of the Jordan for all the business
of the LORD, and in the service of the king.
31 Among the Hebronites, Jerijah *was* head
of the Hebronites according to his geneal-
ogy of the fathers. In the fortieth year of the
reign of David they were sought, and there
were found among them capable men at
Jazer of Gilead. 32 And his brethren *were*
two thousand seven hundred able men,
heads of fathers' *houses,* whom King David
made officials over the Reubenites, the
Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh,
for every matter pertaining to God and the
affairs of the king.

THE MILITARY DIVISIONS

27 And the children of Israel, ac-
cording to their number, the
heads of fathers' *houses,* the

26:15 [a]Hebrew *asuppim* **26:17** [a]Hebrew *asuppim* **26:18** [a]Probably a court or colonnade extending west of the temple

captains of thousands and hundreds and their officers, served the king in every matter of the *military* divisions. *These divisions* came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, each division *having* twenty-four thousand.

1 Chronicles 27:1

Even though the Hebrew calendar had twelve months, it was much different from the one we use today. The Hebrew year began in spring—what would be our late March or early April. The months followed the cycle of the moon, from crescent to full. Later, the Israelites adopted the calendar of the Babylonians, which also began in the spring.

2Over the first division for the first month *was* Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel, and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand; 3*he was* of the children of Perez, and the chief of all the captains of the army for the first month. 4Over the division of the second month *was* Dodai[a] an Ahohite, and of his division Mikloth also *was* the leader; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 5The third captain of the army for the third month *was* Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who was chief; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 6This was the Benaiah *who was* mighty *among* the thirty, and was over the thirty; in his division *was* Ammizabad his son. 7The fourth *captain* for the fourth month *was* Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 8The fifth captain for the fifth month *was* Shamhuth[a] the Izrahite; in his division were twenty-four thousand. 9The sixth *captain* for the sixth month *was* Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 10The seventh *captain* for the seventh month *was* Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 11The eighth *captain* for the eighth month *was* Sibbechai the Hushathite, of the Zarhites; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 12The ninth *captain* for the ninth month *was* Abiezer the Anathothite, of the Benjamites; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 13The tenth *captain* for the tenth month *was* Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zarhites; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 14The eleventh *captain* for the eleventh month *was* Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 15The twelfth *captain* for the twelfth month *was* Heldai[a] the Netophathite, of Othniel; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

LEADERS OF TRIBES

16Furthermore, over the tribes of Israel: the officer over the Reubenites *was* Eliezer the son of Zichri; over the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maachah; 17*over* the Levites, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel; over the Aaronites, Zadok; 18*over* Judah, Elihu, *one* of David's brothers; *over* Issachar, Omri the son of Michael; 19*over* Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah; *over* Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel; 20*over* the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah; *over* the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiah; 21*over* the half–*tribe* of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah; *over* Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner; 22*over* Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham. These *were* the leaders of the tribes of Israel.

23But David did not take the number of those twenty years old and under, because the LORD had said He would multiply Israel like the stars of the heavens. 24Joab the son of Zeruiah began a census, but he did not finish, for wrath came upon Israel because of this census; nor was the number recorded in the account of the chronicles of King David.

OTHER STATE OFFICIALS

25And Azmaveth the son of Adiel *was* over the king's treasuries; and Jehonathan the son of Uzziah was over the storehouses in the field, in the cities, in the villages, and in the fortresses. 26Ezri the son of Chelub was over those who did the work of the field for tilling the ground. 27And Shimei the Ramathite *was* over the vineyards, and Zabdi the Shiphmite was over the produce of the

27:4 [a]Hebrew *Dodai,* usually spelled *Dodo* (compare 2 Samuel 23:9) **27:8** [a]Spelled *Shammoth* in 11:27 and *Shammah* in 2 Samuel 23:11 **27:15** [a]Spelled *Heled* in 11:30 and *Heleb* in 2 Samuel 23:29

vineyards for the supply of wine. 28Baal-Hanan the Gederite was over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that *were* in the lowlands, and Joash *was* over the store of oil. 29And Shitrai the Sharonite *was* over the herds that fed in Sharon, and Shaphat the son of Adlai was over the herds *that were* in the valleys. 30Obil the Ishmaelite *was* over the camels, Jehdeiah the Meronothite *was* over the donkeys, 31and Jaziz the Hagrite *was* over the flocks. All these *were* the officials over King David's property.

32Also Jehonathan, David's uncle, *was* a counselor, a wise man, and a scribe; and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni *was* with the king's sons. 33Ahithophel *was* the king's counselor, and Hushai the Archite *was* the king's companion. 34After Ahithophel *was* Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, then Abiathar. And the general of the king's army *was* Joab.

SOLOMON INSTRUCTED TO BUILD THE TEMPLE

28 Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the leaders of Israel: the officers of the tribes and the captains of the divisions who served the king, the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officials, the valiant men, and all the mighty men of valor.

2Then King David rose to his feet and said, "Hear me, my brethren and my people: I *had* it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it. 3But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you *have been* a man of war and have shed blood.' 4However the LORD God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah *to be* the ruler. And of the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make *me* king over all Israel. 5And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. 6Now He said to me, 'It is your son Solomon *who* shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him *to be* My son, and I will be his Father. 7Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, as it is this day.' 8Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, be careful to seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land, and leave *it* as an inheritance for your children after you forever.

FAMILY
What's a good legacy parents can leave their children?
1 Chronicles 28:8

9"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. 10Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it."

11Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; 12and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things; 13also for the division of the priests and the Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD. 14*He gave* gold by weight for *things* of gold, for all articles used in every kind of service; also *silver* for all articles of silver by weight, for all articles used in every kind of service; 15the weight for the lampstands of gold, and their lamps of gold, by weight for each lampstand and its lamps; for the lampstands of silver by weight, for the lampstand and its lamps, according to the use of each lampstand. 16And by weight *he gave* gold for the tables of the showbread, for each table, and silver for the tables of silver; 17also pure gold for

the forks, the basins, the pitchers of pure gold, and the golden bowls—*he gave gold* by weight for every bowl; and for the silver bowls, *silver* by weight for every bowl; 18and refined gold by weight for the altar of incense, and for the construction of the chariot, that is, the gold cherubim that spread *their wings* and overshadowed the ark of the covenant of the LORD. 19"All *this,*" *said David,* "the LORD made me understand in writing, by *His* hand upon me, all the works of these plans."

20And David said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and of good courage, and do *it;* do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God—my God—*will be* with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD. 21*Here are* the divisions of the priests and the Levites for all the service of the house of God; and every willing craftsman *will be* with you for all manner of workmanship, for every kind of service; also the leaders and all the people *will be* completely at your command."

OFFERINGS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE

29 Furthermore King David said to all the assembly: "My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, *is* young and inexperienced; and the work *is* great, because the temple[a] *is* not for man but for the LORD God. 2Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might: gold for *things to be made of* gold, silver for *things of* silver, bronze for *things of* bronze, iron for *things of* iron, wood for *things of* wood, onyx stones, *stones* to be set, glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and marble slabs in abundance. 3Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver: 4three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses; 5the gold for *things of* gold and the silver for *things of* silver, and for all kinds of work *to be done* by the hands of craftsmen. Who *then* is willing to consecrate himself this day to the LORD?"

6Then the leaders of the fathers' *houses,* leaders of the tribes of Israel, the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the officers over the king's work, offered willingly. 7They gave for the work of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. 8And whoever had *precious* stones gave *them* to the treasury of the house of the LORD, into the hand of Jehiel[a] the Gershonite. 9Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the LORD; and King David also rejoiced greatly.

DAVID'S PRAISE TO GOD

10Therefore David blessed the LORD before all the assembly; and David said:

"Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel,
our Father, forever and ever.
11Yours, O LORD, *is* the greatness,
The power and the glory,
The victory and the majesty;
For all *that is* in heaven and in earth
is Yours;
Yours *is* the kingdom, O LORD,
And You are exalted as head over all.
12Both riches and honor *come* from You,
And You reign over all.
In Your hand *is* power and might;
In Your hand *it is* to make great
And to give strength to all.

WORRY
Where should we find the confidence to face hard times?
1 Chronicles 29:12

13"Now therefore, our God,
We thank You
And praise Your glorious name.
14But who *am* I, and who *are* my
people,
That we should be able to offer so
willingly as this?
For all things *come* from You,
And of Your own we have given You.

29:1 [a]Literally *palace* **29:8** [a]Possibly the same as *Jehieli* (compare 26:21, 22)

15 For we *are* aliens and pilgrims before
You,
As *were* all our fathers;
Our days on earth *are* as a shadow,
And without hope.

16 "O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and *is* all Your own. 17 I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these *things;* and now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here to offer willingly to You. 18 O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You. 19 And give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all *these things,* and to build the temple[a] for which I have made provision."

20 Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless the LORD your God." So all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king.

SOLOMON ANOINTED KING

21 And they made sacrifices to the LORD and offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the next day: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. 22 So they ate and drank before the LORD with great gladness on that day. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed *him* before the LORD *to be* the leader, and Zadok *to be* priest. 23 Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. 24 All the leaders and the mighty men, and also all the sons of King David, submitted themselves to King Solomon. 25 So the LORD exalted Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed on him *such* royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

THE CLOSE OF DAVID'S REIGN

26 Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. 27 And the period that he reigned over Israel *was* forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and thirty-three *years* he reigned in Jerusalem. 28 So he died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place. 29 Now the acts of King David, first and last, indeed they *are* written in the book of Samuel the seer, in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, 30 with all his reign and his might, and the events that happened to him, to Israel, and to all the kingdoms of the lands.

29:19 [a] Literally *palace*

2 Chronicles

DATE OF WRITING: 430–425 B.C.
AUTHOR: ATTRIBUTED TO EZRA
THEME: ENCOURAGEMENT AND EXHORTATION CAN BE GAINED FROM JUDAH'S SPIRITUAL HERITAGE
PURPOSE: GOD IS ALWAYS FAITHFUL TO THOSE WHO PUT HIM FIRST.

OUTLINE

1:1–17 ..... Solomon's Wisdom and Wealth
2:1—7:22 ..... Building and Dedication of the Jerusalem Temple
8:1—9:28 ..... Other Events During Solomon's Rule
9:29–31 ..... The Death of Solomon
10:1–19 ..... The Northern Tribes of Israel Rebel Against King Rehoboam
11:1—28:27 ..... Kings of Judah
29:1—32:33 ..... King Hezekiah and the Assyrian Invasion
33:1–25 ..... King Manasseh and King Amon
34:1—35:27 ..... King Josiah and *The Book of God's Law*
36:1–14 ..... The Last Kings of Judah
36:15–21 ..... Jerusalem Is Destroyed and the People Are Taken to Babylon
36:22, 23 ..... King Cyrus of Persia Lets the Jews Return to Judah

KEY VERSE:

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

THEN ///

When you read some of the previous books of the Bible, like 1 and 2 Kings and 1 Chronicles, it can feel like you're watching a Ping-Pong tournament the way the Hebrews fall away from God, then return to God, then fall away from God, then return to God; especially once there are two kingdoms to keep up with. Unfortunately, they fall away a few more times than they return.

But the Book of 2 Chronicles doesn't tell the story of all the kings and all the people. This book concentrates on the southern kingdom of Judah, and it often concentrates on the stand-up kind of guys who rule. It tells the stories of kings like Josiah and Joash who became kings when they were young, but really made a difference.

NOW ///

Even though we see rays of hope in 2 Chronicles, it is still the kind of book that can prompt us to ask a lot of "why" questions. Why did the leaders and their people keep falling away even though they saw God take care of them over and over? Why did they worship false gods even though they should have known they were false? Why did they ignore the obvious and fall away again and again? We have to ask ourselves the same questions. Why do we do what is wrong when we know what is right? Why are we afraid even though God promises to take care of us? Why do we make friends with people who will push us farther away from God? Why do we ignore the obvious and fall away again and again?

Although 2 Chronicles can prompt those questions, 2 Chronicles also reminds us that when we take a chance and stand up for God, He meets us every time. He doesn't hang us out to dry alone. He just wants us to have the faith to stand up and do the right thing.

REALITY CHECK ///

What's with the blood and gore? As you read through these historical books of the Old Testament, you might wonder after a while if all they did was fight. It really was a barbaric time in history.

Remember that Judah had become unbelievably wealthy during Solomon's rule and was famous for that wealth. So as the kingdom split and as the government weakened, the country became more of a target for invaders.

Keep in mind, too, that at this time, boundaries for land ownership were up for grabs to the strongest bully. There weren't any maps with black lines that showed who owned what. That was all being formed. It was definitely a different world. Understanding this as you read through these real historical events will help you relate more to the real people who lived them.

SOLOMON REQUESTS WISDOM

1 Now Solomon the son of David was
strengthened in his kingdom, and the
LORD his God *was* with him and ex-
alted him exceedingly.

2And Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to every leader in all Israel, the heads of the fathers' *houses.* 3Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that *was* at Gibeon; for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. 4But David had brought up the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim to *the place* David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. 5Now the bronze altar that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put[a] before the tabernacle of the LORD; Solomon and the assembly sought Him *there.* 6And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

7On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

8And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. 9Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. 10Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?"

WISDOM
How can we receive wisdom?
2 Chronicles 1:9, 10

11Then God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king—
12wisdom and knowledge *are* granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who *were* before you, nor shall any after you have the like."

SOLOMON'S MILITARY AND ECONOMIC POWER

13So Solomon came to Jerusalem from the high place that *was* at Gibeon, from before the tabernacle of meeting, and reigned over Israel. 14And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. 15Also the king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland. 16And Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the *current* price. 17They also acquired and imported from Egypt a chariot for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse for one hundred and fifty; thus, through their agents,[a] they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

2 Chronicles 1:16, 17

Solomon recognized the best way to strengthen Israel's military force was to invest in chariots, the most important piece of battle machinery available at that time. Ancient chariots came in all styles and sizes. Some were pulled by two horses, others by four. Some carried two riders; others carried four.

The problem with chariots was the expense. Building, buying, and maintaining a fleet of chariots was costly and only the wealthiest nations could afford to keep a strong chariot force.

SOLOMON PREPARES TO BUILD THE TEMPLE

2 Then Solomon determined to build
a temple for the name of the LORD,
and a royal house for himself. 2Sol-
omon selected seventy thousand men to

1:5 [a]Some authorities read *it was there.*
1:17 [a]Literally *by their hands*

bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry *stone* in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them.

3Then Solomon sent to Hiram[a] king of Tyre, saying:

As you have dealt with David my father, and sent him cedars to build himself a house to dwell in, *so deal with me.* 4Behold, I am building a temple for the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate *it* to Him, to burn before Him sweet incense, for the continual showbread, for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, on the New Moons, and on the set feasts of the LORD our God. This *is an ordinance* forever to Israel.

5And the temple which I build *will be* great, for our God is greater than all gods. 6But who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who *am* I then, that I should build Him a temple, except to burn sacrifice before Him?

7Therefore send me at once a man skillful to work in gold and silver, in bronze and iron, in purple and crimson and blue, who has skill to engrave with the skillful men who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided. 8Also send me cedar and cypress and algum logs from Lebanon, for I know that your servants have skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and indeed my servants *will be* with your servants, 9to prepare timber for me in abundance, for the temple which I am about to build *shall be* great and wonderful.

10And indeed I will give to your servants, the woodsmen who cut timber, twenty thousand kors of ground wheat, twenty thousand kors of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.

11Then Hiram king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon:

Because the LORD loves His people, He has made you king over them.

12Hiram[a] also said:

Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, for He has given King David a wise son, endowed with prudence and understanding, who will build a temple for the LORD and a royal house for himself!

13And now I have sent a skillful man, endowed with understanding, Huram[a] my master[b] *craftsman* 14(the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre), skilled to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, purple and blue, fine linen and crimson, and to make any engraving and to accomplish any plan which may be given to him, with your skillful men and with the skillful men of my lord David your father.

15Now therefore, the wheat, the barley, the oil, and the wine which my lord has spoken of, let him send to his servants. 16And we will cut wood from Lebanon, as much as you need; we will bring it to you in rafts by sea to Joppa, and you will carry it up to Jerusalem.

17Then Solomon numbered all the aliens who *were* in the land of Israel, after the census in which David his father had numbered them; and there were found to be one hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred. 18And he made seventy thousand of them bearers of burdens, eighty thousand stonecutters in the mountain, and three thousand six hundred overseers to make the people work.

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

3 Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where *the LORD*[a] had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing

2:3 [a]Hebrew *Huram* (compare 1 Kings 5:1)
2:12 [a]Hebrew *Huram* (compare 1 Kings 5:1)
2:13 [a]Spelled *Hiram* in 1 Kings 7:13 [b]Literally *father* (compare 1 Kings 7:13, 14) **3:1** [a]Literally *He,* following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *the LORD*; Targum reads *the Angel of the LORD.*

floor of Ornan[b] the Jebusite. 2And he began to build on the second *day* of the second month in the fourth year of his reign.

2 Chronicles 3:1, 2

God had shown Solomon's father, David, the spot to build the temple by lighting David's sacrifice with fire from heaven. The temple Solomon built was later destroyed by the Babylonians. In Jesus' day, another temple—this one built by Herod the Great—sat on the site. If you were to go to Israel today, you would find a building known as the Dome of the Rock there.

3This is the foundation which Solomon laid for building the house of God: The length *was* sixty cubits (by cubits according to the former measure) and the width twenty cubits. 4And the vestibule that *was* in front *of the sanctuary*[a] was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and the height *was* one hundred and[b] twenty. He overlaid the inside with pure gold. 5The larger room[a] he paneled with cypress which he overlaid with fine gold, and he carved palm trees and chainwork on it. 6And he decorated the house with precious stones for beauty, and the gold *was* gold from Parvaim. 7He also overlaid the house—the beams and doorposts, its walls and doors—with gold; and he carved cherubim on the walls.

8And he made the Most Holy Place. Its length was according to the width of the house, twenty cubits, and its width twenty cubits. He overlaid it with six hundred talents of fine gold. 9The weight of the nails *was* fifty shekels of gold; and he overlaid the upper area with gold. 10In the Most Holy Place he made two cherubim, fashioned by carving, and overlaid them with gold. 11The wings of the cherubim *were* twenty cubits in *overall* length: one wing *of the one cherub was* five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing *was* five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub; 12*one* wing of the other cherub *was* five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing *also was* five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub. 13The wings of these cherubim spanned twenty cubits overall. They stood on their feet, and they faced inward. 14And he made the veil of blue, purple, crimson, and fine linen, and wove cherubim into it.

2 Chronicles 3:8

Six hundred talents (twenty-five tons) of gold will go a long way in any building project. Solomon used it to coat the walls of the Most Holy Place in his temple; the coating was about one-fifth of an inch thick.

15Also he made in front of the temple[a] two pillars thirty-five[b] cubits high, and the capital that *was* on the top of each of *them* was five cubits. 16He made wreaths of chainwork, as in the inner sanctuary, and put *them* on top of the pillars; and he made one hundred pomegranates, and put *them* on the wreaths of chainwork. 17Then he set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand and the other on the left; he called the name of the one on the right hand Jachin, and the name of the one on the left Boaz.

FURNISHINGS OF THE TEMPLE

4 Moreover he made a bronze altar: twenty cubits was its length, twenty cubits its width, and ten cubits its height.

2Then he made the Sea of cast *bronze,* ten cubits from one brim to the other; *it was* completely round. Its height *was* five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference. 3And under it *was* the likeness of oxen encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, all the way around the Sea. The oxen *were* cast in two rows, when it was cast. 4It stood on twelve oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the

3:1 [b]Spelled *Araunah* in 2 Samuel 24:16ff
3:4 [a]The main room of the temple; elsewhere called the holy place (compare 1 Kings 6:3) [b]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Arabic, some manuscripts of the Septuagint, and Syriac omit *one hundred and.*
3:5 [a]Literally *house* **3:15** [a]Literally *house* [b]Or *eighteen* (compare 1 Kings 7:15; 2 Kings 25:17; and Jeremiah 52:21)

south, and three looking toward the east; the Sea *was set* upon them, and all their back parts *pointed* inward. 5It *was* a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, *like* a lily blossom. It contained three thousand[a] baths.

6He also made ten lavers, and put five on the right side and five on the left, to wash in them; such things as they offered for the burnt offering they would wash in them, but the Sea *was* for the priests to wash in. 7And he made ten lampstands of gold according to their design, and set *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. 8He also made ten tables, and placed *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. And he made one hundred bowls of gold.

9Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court and doors for the court; and he overlaid these doors with bronze. 10He set the Sea on the right side, toward the southeast.

11Then Huram made the pots and the shovels and the bowls. So Huram finished doing the work that he was to do for King Solomon for the house of God: 12the two pillars and the bowl-shaped capitals *that were* on top of the two pillars; the two networks covering the two bowl-shaped capitals which *were* on top of the pillars; 13four hundred pomegranates for the two networks (two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals that *were* on the pillars); 14he also made carts and the lavers on the carts; 15one Sea and twelve oxen under it; 16also the pots, the shovels, the forks—and all their articles Huram his master[a] *craftsman* made of burnished bronze for King Solomon for the house of the LORD.

17In the plain of Jordan the king had them cast in clay molds, between Succoth and Zeredah.[a] 18And Solomon had all these articles made in such great abundance that the weight of the bronze was not determined.

19Thus Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of God: the altar of gold and the tables on which *was* the showbread; 20the lampstands with their lamps of pure gold, to burn in the prescribed manner in front of the inner sanctuary, 21with the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold, of purest gold; 22the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers of pure gold. As for the entry of the sanctuary, its inner doors to the Most Holy *Place,* and the doors of the main hall of the temple, *were* gold.

5 So all the work that Solomon had done for the house of the LORD was finished; and Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated: the silver and the gold and all the furnishings. And he put *them* in the treasuries of the house of God.

THE ARK BROUGHT INTO THE TEMPLE

2Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD up from the City of David, which *is* Zion. 3Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with the king at the feast, which *was* in the seventh month. 4So all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. 5Then they brought up the ark, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that *were* in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. 6Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him before the ark, were sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. 7Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple,[a] to the Most Holy *Place,* under the wings of the cherubim. 8For the cherubim spread *their* wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. 9The poles extended so that the ends of the poles of the ark could be seen from *the holy place,* in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. 10Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets which Moses put *there* at Horeb, when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they had come out of Egypt.

11And it came to pass when the priests came out of the *Most* Holy *Place* (for all

4:5 [a]Or *two thousand* (compare 1 Kings 7:26)
4:16 [a]Literally *father* **4:17** [a]Spelled *Zaretan* in 1 Kings 7:46 **5:7** [a]Literally *house*

MAKING IT REAL // 2 CHRONICLES 5:13

Love Without End It's hard to imagine anything that will last forever and never change. On this earth, everything is temporary or conditional—even love. Your boyfriend loved you yesterday, but he loves someone else today. Your friends seem to love you more when you're doing the things they want you to do. You know someone whose dad just left because he doesn't love their mom anymore. Love seems to come and go very easily down here on earth. But there is Someone who is truly in love with you. He can't keep His eyes off of you. He is so proud that you belong to Him. The love of God will never disappoint you. His commitment is forever. There will be no trial separations, no grounds for divorce. He is good, and you are the one He loves without end. (See also: Rom. 5:8–11; Eph. 2:4–7; 1 John 4:7–11.)

Words to Live By

Mercy: The word translated as "mercy" in 2 Chronicles 5:13 is the Hebrew word *chesed* (cheh'-sed). It means "lovingkindness, unfailing love, tenderness, and faithfulness." The word *chesed* occurs 250 times in the Old Testament. Obviously, God wanted to make sure we would never doubt His mercy toward us.

the priests who *were* present had sanctified themselves, without keeping to their divisions), 12and the Levites *who were* the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets— 13indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying:*

"For He is good,
For His mercy *endures* forever,"[a]

that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, 14so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

6 Then Solomon spoke:

"The LORD said He would dwell in
the dark cloud.
2I have surely built You an exalted house,
And a place for You to dwell in forever."

SOLOMON'S SPEECH UPON COMPLETION OF THE WORK

3Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. 4And he said: "Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who has fulfilled with His hands *what* He spoke with His mouth to my father David, saying, 5'Since the day that I brought My people out of the land of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel *in which* to build a house, that My name might be there, nor did I choose any man to be a ruler over My people Israel. 6Yet I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be there, and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel.' 7Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple[a] for the name of the LORD God of Israel. 8But the LORD said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well in that it was in your heart. 9Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.' 10So the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke, and I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on

5:13 [a]Compare Psalm 106:1 **6:7** [a]Literally *house,* and so in verses 8–10

the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and I have built the temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. 11And there I have put the ark, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD which He made with the children of Israel."

SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION

12Then *Solomon*[a] stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands 13(for Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt down on his knees before all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven); 14and he said: "LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God in heaven or on earth like You, who keep *Your* covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. 15You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled *it* with Your hand, as *it is* this day. 16Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk in My law as you have walked before Me.' 17And now, O LORD God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David.

18"But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple[a] which I have built! 19Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You: 20that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where *You* said *You would* put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. 21And may You hear the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, forgive.

22"If anyone sins against his neighbor, and is forced to take an oath, and comes *and* takes an oath before Your altar in this temple, 23then hear from heaven, and act, and judge Your servants, bringing retribution on the wicked by bringing his way on his own head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.

24"Or if Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and return and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication before You in this temple, 25then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to them and their fathers.

SIN
How do we receive forgiveness from God?
2 Chronicles 6:24, 25

26"When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, 27then hear *in* heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance.

28"When there is famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers; when their enemies besiege them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness *there is;* 29whatever prayer, whatever supplication is *made* by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows his own burden and his own grief, and spreads out his hands to this temple: 30then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of the sons of men), 31that they may fear You, to walk in Your ways as long as they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.

32"Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for the sake of

6:12 [a]Literally *he* (compare 1 Kings 8:22)
6:18 [a]Literally *house*

Your great name and Your mighty hand
and Your outstretched arm, when they
come and pray in this temple; 33then hear
from heaven Your dwelling place, and do
according to all for which the foreigner
calls to You, that all peoples of the earth
may know Your name and fear You, as *do*
Your people Israel, and that they may know
that this temple which I have built is called
by Your name.

34"When Your people go out to battle
against their enemies, wherever You send
them, and when they pray to You toward
this city which You have chosen and the
temple which I have built for Your name,
35then hear from heaven their prayer and
their supplication, and maintain their
cause.

36"When they sin against You (for *there*
is no one who does not sin), and You be-
come angry with them and deliver them
to the enemy, and they take them captive
to a land far or near; 37*yet* when they come
to themselves in the land where they were
carried captive, and repent, and make sup-
plication to You in the land of their captiv-
ity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have done
wrong, and have committed wickedness';
38and *when* they return to You with all their
heart and with all their soul in the land of
their captivity, where they have been car-
ried captive, and pray toward their land
which You gave to their fathers, the city
which You have chosen, and toward the
temple which I have built for Your name:
39then hear from heaven Your dwelling
place their prayer and their supplications,
and maintain their cause, and forgive
Your people who have sinned against You.
40Now, my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open
and *let* Your ears *be* attentive to the prayer
made in this place.

41"Now therefore,
Arise, O LORD God, to Your resting
place,
You and the ark of Your strength.
Let Your priests, O LORD God, be
clothed with salvation,
And let Your saints rejoice in
goodness.

42"O LORD God, do not turn away the face
of Your Anointed;
Remember the mercies of Your
servant David."[a]

SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE

7 When Solomon had finished pray-
ing, fire came down from heaven and
consumed the burnt offering and
the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD
filled the temple.[a] 2And the priests could
not enter the house of the LORD, because
the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's
house. 3When all the children of Israel saw
how the fire came down, and the glory of
the LORD on the temple, they bowed their
faces to the ground on the pavement, and
worshiped and praised the LORD, *saying:*

"For *He is* good,
For His mercy *endures* forever."[a]

4Then the king and all the people of-
fered sacrifices before the LORD. 5King
Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-
two thousand bulls and one hundred and
twenty thousand sheep. So the king and
all the people dedicated the house of God.
6And the priests attended to their services;
the Levites also with instruments of the
music of the LORD, which King David had
made to praise the LORD, saying, "For His
mercy *endures* forever,"[a] whenever David
offered praise by their ministry. The priests
sounded trumpets opposite them, while all
Israel stood.

7Furthermore Solomon consecrated
the middle of the court that *was* in front of
the house of the LORD; for there he offered
burnt offerings and the fat of the peace
offerings, because the bronze altar which
Solomon had made was not able to receive
the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and
the fat.

8At that time Solomon kept the feast
seven days, and all Israel with him, a very
great assembly from the entrance of Ha-
math to the Brook of Egypt.[a] 9And on the
eighth day they held a sacred assembly, for
they observed the dedication of the altar
seven days, and the feast seven days. 10On
the twenty-third day of the seventh month
he sent the people away to their tents, joy-
ful and glad of heart for the good that the
LORD had done for David, for Solomon,

6:42 [a]Compare Psalm 132:8–10 **7:1** [a]Literally *house* **7:3** [a]Compare Psalm 106:1
7:6 [a]Compare Psalm 106:1 **7:8** [a]That is, the Shihor (compare 1 Chronicles 13:5)

and for His people Israel. 11Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house; and Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the LORD and in his own house.

2 Chronicles 7:8

The Brook of Egypt was the southern and western border of Israel and Egypt. Hamath was the northern border of Israel—what we call Lebanon today. People poured in from all directions to celebrate the completion of the temple in Jerusalem and, most importantly, to worship God in the new facility.

GOD'S SECOND APPEARANCE TO SOLOMON

12Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. 13When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 15Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer *made* in this place. 16For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. 17As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, 18then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail *to have* a man as ruler in Israel.'

19"But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, 20then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

21"And *as for* this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and this house?' 22Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this calamity on them.'"

BLESSING

What attitude will open a flow of blessing in your life?

2 Chronicles 7:14

FOLLOWING GOD

Does obedience have a reward?

2 Chronicles 7:17, 18

SOLOMON'S ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

8 It came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the house of the LORD and his own house, 2that the cities which Hiram[a] had given to Solomon, Solomon built them; and he settled the children of Israel there. 3And Solomon went to Hamath Zobah and seized it. 4He also built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the storage cities which he built in Hamath. 5He built Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon, fortified cities *with* walls, gates, and bars, 6also Baalath and all the storage cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities and the cities of the cavalry, and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

7All the people *who were* left of the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who *were* not of Israel— 8that is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Israel did not destroy—from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day. 9But Solomon did not make the children of Is-

8:2 [a]Hebrew *Huram* (compare 2 Chronicles 2:3)

rael servants for his work. Some *were* men of war, captains of his officers, captains of his chariots, and his cavalry. 10And others *were* chiefs of the officials of King Solomon: two hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people.

11Now Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh up from the City of David to the house he had built for her, for he said, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because *the places* to which the ark of the LORD has come are holy."

2 Chronicles 8:11

Here we see the two sides of Solomon's personality. For whatever reason, he wanted to marry the Pharaoh's daughter, so he did—not caring that the Lord had forbidden Israelites from marrying foreigners. At the same time, though, he cared so much about the holiness of God's temple that he moved his new wife to another house so that her idol worship wouldn't cause problems.

12Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the LORD which he had built before the vestibule, 13according to the daily rate, offering according to the commandment of Moses, for the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the three appointed yearly feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. 14And, according to the order of David his father, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, the Levites for their duties (to praise and serve before the priests) as the duty of each day required, and the gatekeepers by their divisions at each gate; for so David the man of God had commanded. 15They did not depart from the command of the king to the priests and Levites concerning any matter or concerning the treasuries.

16Now all the work of Solomon was well-ordered from[a] the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD until it was finished. So the house of the LORD was completed.

17Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and Elath[a] on the seacoast, in the land of Edom. 18And Hiram sent him ships by the hand of his servants, and servants who knew the sea. They went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and acquired four hundred and fifty talents of gold from there, and brought it to King Solomon.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S PRAISE OF SOLOMON

9 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions, *having* a very great retinue, camels that bore spices, gold in abundance, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. 2So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for Solomon that he could not explain it to her. 3And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, 4the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers and their apparel, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.

5Then she said to the king: "*It was* a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. 6However I did not believe their words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me. You exceed the fame of which I heard. 7Happy *are* your men and happy *are* these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! 8Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on His throne *to be* king for the LORD your God! Because your God has loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness."

9And she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great abundance, and precious stones; there never were any spices such as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

10Also, the servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon, who brought gold from Ophir, brought algum[a] wood and precious stones. 11And the king made

8:16 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *as far as.* **8:17** [a]Hebrew *Eloth* (compare 2 Kings 14:22) **9:10** [a]Or *almug* (compare 1 Kings 10:11, 12)

walkways *of* the algum[a] wood for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, also harps and stringed instruments for singers; and there were none such *as these* seen before in the land of Judah.

12Now King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, *much more* than she had brought to the king. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

SOLOMON'S GREAT WEALTH

13The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, 14besides *what* the traveling merchants and traders brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon. 15And King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred *shekels* of hammered gold went into each shield. 16*He* also *made* three hundred shields of hammered gold; three hundred *shekels*[a] of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

17Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. 18The throne *had* six steps, with a footstool of gold, *which were* fastened to the throne; there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. 19Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like *this* had been made for any *other* kingdom.

20All King Solomon's drinking vessels *were* gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon *were* pure gold. Not *one was* silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. 21For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram.[a] Once every three years the merchant ships[b] came, bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys.[c]

22So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. 23And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 24Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year.

25Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem.

26So he reigned over all the kings from the River[a] to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. 27The king made silver *as common* in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland. 28And they brought horses to Solomon from Egypt and from all lands.

DEATH OF SOLOMON

29Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat? 30Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 31Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

2 Chronicles 9:29

The books by Nathan, Ahijah, or Iddo have been lost for centuries. Many Old Testament writers list books other than the Bible as sources for historical information. Most of those books, however, have been lost to history.

THE REVOLT AGAINST REHOBOAM

10 And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. 2So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard *it* (he was in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of King Solomon), that Jeroboam returned from Egypt. 3Then they sent for him and called him. And Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, 4"Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you."

9:11 [a]Or *almug* (compare 1 Kings 10:11, 12)
9:16 [a]Or *three minas* (compare 1 Kings 10:17)
9:21 [a]Hebrew *Huram* (compare 1 Kings 10:22)
[b]Literally *ships of Tarshish* (deep-sea vessels)
[c]Or *peacocks* **9:26** [a]That is, the Euphrates

FRIENDSHIP
Is it always best to listen to your friends?
2 Chronicles 10:1–14

5So he said to them, "Come back to me after three days." And the people departed.
6Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, saying, "How do you advise *me* to answer these people?"
7And they spoke to him, saying, "If you are kind to these people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever."
8But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. 9And he said to them, "What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us'?"
10Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus you should speak to the people who have spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter on us'—thus you shall say to them: 'My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's waist! 11And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scourges!' "[a]
12So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had directed, saying, "Come back to me the third day." 13Then the king answered them roughly. King Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders, 14and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father[a] made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scourges!"[b] 15So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn *of events* was from God, that the LORD might fulfill His word, which He had spoken by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.
16Now when all Israel *saw* that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying:

"What share have we in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
Every man to your tents, O Israel!
Now see to your own house,
O David!"

So all Israel departed to their tents. 17But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.
18Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who *was* in charge of revenue; but the children of Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted *his* chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. 19So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

11 Now when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled from the house of Judah and Benjamin one hundred and eighty thousand chosen *men* who were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.
2But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 3"Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, 4'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not go up or fight against your brethren! Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me."' " Therefore they obeyed the words of the LORD, and turned back from attacking Jeroboam.

REHOBOAM FORTIFIES THE CITIES

5So Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. 6And he built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7Beth Zur, Sochoh, Adullam, 8Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 9Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, 10Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and Benjamin, fortified cities. 11And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine. 12Also in every city *he put* shields and spears, and made them very strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

10:11 [a]Literally *scorpions* **10:14** [a]Following many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate (compare verse 10 and 1 Kings 12:14); Masoretic Text reads *I.* [b]Literally *scorpions*

PRIESTS AND LEVITES MOVE TO JUDAH

13And from all their territories the priests
and the Levites who *were* in all Israel took
their stand with him. 14For the Levites left
their common-lands and their posses-
sions and came to Judah and Jerusalem,
for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected
them from serving as priests to the LORD.
15Then he appointed for himself priests for
the high places, for the demons, and the
calf idols which he had made. 16And after
the Levites left,[a] those from all the tribes of
Israel, such as set their heart to seek the
LORD God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to
sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers.
17So they strengthened the kingdom of
Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Sol-
omon strong for three years, because they
walked in the way of David and Solomon
for three years.

> ***2 Chronicles 11:15***
> Jeroboam was afraid that if the people returned to Jerusalem to worship God, he would lose his control over them. To keep them away from Jerusalem, Jeroboam made two golden idols in the shape of calves for the people to worship in Bethel and Dan. As if that weren't enough, in direct disobedience to God, Jeroboam appointed priests who were not from the tribe of Levi.

THE FAMILY OF REHOBOAM

18Then Rehoboam took for himself as wife
Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son
of David, *and of* Abihail the daughter of
Eliah the son of Jesse. 19And she bore him
children: Jeush, Shamariah, and Zaham.
20After her he took Maachah the grand-
daughter[a] of Absalom; and she bore him
Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. 21Now
Rehoboam loved Maachah the grand-
daughter of Absalom more than all his
wives and his concubines; for he took eigh-
teen wives and sixty concubines, and begot
twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.
22And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son
of Maachah as chief, *to be* leader among his
brothers; for he *intended* to make him king.
23He dealt wisely, and dispersed some of his
sons throughout all the territories of Judah
and Benjamin, to every fortified city; and
he gave them provisions in abundance. He
also sought many wives *for them.*

EGYPT ATTACKS JUDAH

12 Now it came to pass, when Re-
hoboam had established the
kingdom and had strength-
ened himself, that he forsook the law of
the LORD, and all Israel along with him.
2And it happened in the fifth year of King
Rehoboam *that* Shishak king of Egypt
came up against Jerusalem, because they
had transgressed against the LORD, 3with
twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand
horsemen, and people without number
who came with him out of Egypt—the Lu-
bim and the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians.
4And he took the fortified cities of Judah
and came to Jerusalem.

> SUCCESS
> ***What is the danger in treasuring success more than the Lord?***
> 2 Chronicles 12:1

5Then Shemaiah the prophet came to
Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah, who
were gathered together in Jerusalem be-
cause of Shishak, and said to them, "Thus
says the LORD: 'You have forsaken Me, and
therefore I also have left you in the hand of
Shishak.'"

6So the leaders of Israel and the king
humbled themselves; and they said, "The
LORD *is* righteous."

7Now when the LORD saw that they
humbled themselves, the word of the LORD
came to Shemaiah, saying, "They have
humbled themselves; *therefore* I will not
destroy them, but I will grant them some
deliverance. My wrath shall not be poured
out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak.
8Nevertheless they will be his servants,
that they may distinguish My service from
the service of the kingdoms of the nations."

11:16 [a]Literally *after them* **11:20** [a]Literally *daughter,* but in the broader sense of granddaughter (compare 2 Chronicles 13:2)

9So Shishak king of Egypt came up
against Jerusalem, and took away the
treasures of the house of the LORD and
the treasures of the king's house; he took
everything. He also carried away the gold
shields which Solomon had made. 10Then
King Rehoboam made bronze shields in
their place, and committed *them* to the
hands of the captains of the guard, who
guarded the doorway of the king's house.
11And whenever the king entered the house
of the LORD, the guard would go and bring
them out; then they would take them back
into the guardroom. 12When he humbled
himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from
him, so as not to destroy *him* completely;
and things also went well in Judah.

THE END OF REHOBOAM'S REIGN

13Thus King Rehoboam strengthened
himself in Jerusalem and reigned. Now
Rehoboam *was* forty-one years old when
he became king; and he reigned seventeen
years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD
had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel,
to put His name there. His mother's name
was Naamah, an Ammonitess. 14And he did
evil, because he did not prepare his heart
to seek the LORD.

15The acts of Rehoboam, first and last,
are they not written in the book of She-
maiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer
concerning genealogies? And *there were*
wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all
their days. 16So Rehoboam rested with his
fathers, and was buried in the City of David.
Then Abijah[a] his son reigned in his place.

ABIJAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

13 In the eighteenth year of King
Jeroboam, Abijah became king
over Judah. 2He reigned three
years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was*
Michaiah[a] the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.

And there was war between Abijah and
Jeroboam. 3Abijah set the battle in order
with an army of valiant warriors, four hun-
dred thousand choice men. Jeroboam also
drew up in battle formation against him
with eight hundred thousand choice men,
mighty men of valor.

4Then Abijah stood on Mount Zem-
araim, which *is* in the mountains of
Ephraim, and said, "Hear me, Jeroboam
and all Israel: 5Should you not know that
the LORD God of Israel gave the dominion
over Israel to David forever, to him and his
sons, by a covenant of salt? 6Yet Jeroboam
the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon
the son of David, rose up and rebelled
against his lord. 7Then worthless rogues
gathered to him, and strengthened them-
selves against Rehoboam the son of Sol-
omon, when Rehoboam was young and
inexperienced and could not withstand
them. 8And now you think to withstand
the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the
hand of the sons of David; and you *are* a
great multitude, and with you are the gold
calves which Jeroboam made for you as
gods. 9Have you not cast out the priests of
the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Le-
vites, and made for yourselves priests, like
the peoples of *other* lands, so that whoever
comes to consecrate himself with a young
bull and seven rams may be a priest of
things that are not gods? 10But as for us, the
LORD *is* our God, and we have not forsaken
Him; and the priests who minister to the
LORD *are* the sons of Aaron, and the Le-
vites *attend* to *their* duties. 11And they burn
to the LORD every morning and every eve-
ning burnt sacrifices and sweet incense;
they also *set* the showbread *in order on*
the pure *gold* table, and the lampstand of
gold with its lamps to burn every evening;
for we keep the command of the LORD our
God, but you have forsaken Him. 12Now
look, God Himself is with us as *our* head,
and His priests with sounding trumpets to
sound the alarm against you. O children of
Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of
your fathers, for you shall not prosper!"

13But Jeroboam caused an ambush to
go around behind them; so they were in
front of Judah, and the ambush *was* behind
them. 14And when Judah looked around,
to their surprise the battle line *was* at both
front and rear; and they cried out to the
LORD, and the priests sounded the trum-
pets. 15Then the men of Judah gave a shout;
and as the men of Judah shouted, it hap-
pened that God struck Jeroboam and all
Israel before Abijah and Judah. 16And the
children of Israel fled before Judah, and

12:16 [a]Spelled *Abijam* in 1 Kings 14:31
13:2 [a]Spelled *Maachah* in 11:20, 21 and 1 Kings 15:2

MAKING IT REAL // 2 CHRONICLES 13:11B, 12

God's Team Have you ever been on a team with a coach who left a lot to be desired? It can be really frustrating to try your best, but have a leader who is just not very good. A team with a poor leader doesn't win many games.

Well, when you belong to the Lord, you are on God's team. And His team is always the winning one. God is more than just the best coach—He doesn't just teach you how to win and then send you out on your own, He gives you the ability and then goes with you into the game. And when God is your leader, there's no question who will win. Your victory has already been decided. It's a sure thing. So get in the game! Let God lead you into the greatest victories of your life. (See also: 2 Chr. 32:8; Ps. 25:8, 9; Zech. 10:5.)

Words to Live By

Head: Second Chronicles 13:12 says, "God Himself is with us as our head." The word translated as "head" is the Hebrew word *rosh* (roshe). *Rosh* can also be translated as "captain," "leader," or "ruler," and signifies a position of authority.

God delivered them into their hand. 17Then Abijah and his people struck them with a great slaughter; so five hundred thousand choice men of Israel fell slain. 18Thus the children of Israel were subdued at that time; and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD God of their fathers.

19And Abijah pursued Jeroboam and took cities from him: Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages, and Ephrain[a] with its villages. 20So Jeroboam did not recover strength again in the days of Abijah; and the LORD struck him, and he died.

21But Abijah grew mighty, married fourteen wives, and begot twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. 22Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, his ways, and his sayings *are* written in the annals of the prophet Iddo.

14 So Abijah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place. In his days the land was quiet for ten years.

ASA REIGNS IN JUDAH

2Asa did *what was* good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God, 3for he removed the altars of the foreign *gods* and the high places, and broke down the *sacred* pillars and cut down the wooden images. 4He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment. 5He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and the kingdom was quiet under him. 6And he built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest; he had no war in those years, because the LORD had given him rest. 7Therefore he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and make walls around *them,* and towers, gates, and bars, *while* the land *is* yet before us, because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought *Him,* and He has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered. 8And Asa had an army of three hundred thousand from Judah who carried shields and spears, and from Benjamin two hundred and eighty thousand men who carried shields and drew bows; all these *were* mighty men of valor.

2 Chronicles 14:9

In ancient times, Ethiopia was the area beyond the southern part of Egypt. The country was controlled by Egypt until after David's death. The Egyptians often hired Ethiopians to fight on their side in times of war.

9Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million

13:19 [a]Or *Ephron*

men and three hundred chariots, and he came to Mareshah. 10So Asa went out against him, and they set the troops in battle array in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11And Asa cried out to the LORD his God, and said, "LORD, *it is* nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, You *are* our God; do not let man prevail against You!"

TRIALS
Who do we trust in when life gets hard?
2 Chronicles 14:11

12So the LORD struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. 13And Asa and the people who *were* with him pursued them to Gerar. So the Ethiopians were overthrown, and they could not recover, for they were broken before the LORD and His army. And they carried away very much spoil. 14Then they defeated all the cities around Gerar, for the fear of the LORD came upon them; and they plundered all the cities, for there was exceedingly much spoil in them. 15They also attacked the livestock enclosures, and carried off sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

THE REFORMS OF ASA

15 Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. 2And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD *is* with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. 3For a long time Israel *has been* without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; 4but when in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them. 5And in those times *there was* no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil *was* on all the inhabitants of the lands. 6So nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity. 7But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!"

8And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded[a] the prophet, he took courage, and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim; and he restored the altar of the LORD that *was* before the vestibule of the LORD. 9Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.

10So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. 11And they offered to the LORD at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought. 12Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; 13and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. 14Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams' horns. 15And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.

FOLLOWING GOD
How should we follow God?
2 Chronicles 15:15

16Also he removed Maachah, the mother of Asa the king, from *being* queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah;[a] and Asa cut down her obscene image, then crushed and burned *it* by the Brook Kidron. 17But the high places were not removed from Israel. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was loyal all his days.

15:8 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Septuagint; Syriac and Vulgate read *Azariah the son of Oded* (compare verse 1). **15:16** [a]A Canaanite deity

2 Chronicles 15:16, 17

The Israelites had adopted several different Canaanite gods and goddesses as their own. Asherah was one of their favorites. Shrines to Asherah were scattered throughout the land, especially on hilltops and in groves of trees. The shrines were easy to spot because they were marked by carved wooden poles.

18 He also brought into the house of God
the things that his father had dedicated
and that he himself had dedicated: silver
and gold and utensils. 19 And there was no
war until the thirty-fifth year of the reign
of Asa.

ASA'S TREATY WITH SYRIA

16 In the thirty-sixth year of the
reign of Asa, Baasha king of Is-
rael came up against Judah and
built Ramah, that he might let none go
out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 2 Then
Asa brought silver and gold from the trea-
suries of the house of the LORD and of the
king's house, and sent to Ben-Hadad king
of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying,
3 "*Let there be* a treaty between you and me,
as there was between my father and your
father. See, I have sent you silver and gold;
come, break your treaty with Baasha king
of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me."
4 So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and
sent the captains of his armies against the
cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan,
Abel Maim, and all the storage cities of
Naphtali. 5 Now it happened, when Baasha
heard *it,* that he stopped building Ramah
and ceased his work. 6 Then King Asa took
all Judah, and they carried away the stones
and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had
used for building; and with them he built
Geba and Mizpah.

HANANI'S MESSAGE TO ASA

7 And at that time Hanani the seer came
to Asa king of Judah, and said to him:
"Because you have relied on the king of
Syria, and have not relied on the LORD
your God, therefore the army of the king of
Syria has escaped from your hand. 8 Were
the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge
army with very many chariots and horse-
men? Yet, because you relied on the LORD,
He delivered them into your hand. 9 For the
eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout
the whole earth, to show Himself strong on
behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him.
In this you have done foolishly; therefore
from now on you shall have wars." 10 Then
Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in
prison, for *he was* enraged at him because
of this. And Asa oppressed *some* of the peo-
ple at that time.

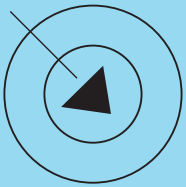
ILLNESS AND DEATH OF ASA

11 Note that the acts of Asa, first and last, are
indeed written in the book of the kings of
Judah and Israel. 12 And in the thirty-ninth
year of his reign, Asa became diseased in
his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in
his disease he did not seek the LORD, but
the physicians.
13 So Asa rested with his fathers; he died
in the forty-first year of his reign. 14 They
buried him in his own tomb, which he
had made for himself in the City of David;
and they laid him in the bed which was
filled with spices and various ingredients
prepared in a mixture of ointments. They
made a very great burning for him.

JEHOSHAPHAT REIGNS IN JUDAH

17 Then Jehoshaphat his son
reigned in his place, and
strengthened himself against
Israel. 2 And he placed troops in all the
fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons
in the land of Judah and in the cities of
Ephraim which Asa his father had taken.
3 Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, be-
cause he walked in the former ways of his
father David; he did not seek the Baals, 4 but
sought the God[a] of his father, and walked
in His commandments and not according
to the acts of Israel. 5 Therefore the LORD
established the kingdom in his hand; and
all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and
he had riches and honor in abundance.
6 And his heart took delight in the ways of
the LORD; moreover he removed the high
places and wooden images from Judah.
7 Also in the third year of his reign he sent
his leaders, Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah,

17:4 [a]Septuagint reads *LORD God.*



PROMISE

God promises to keep an eye on you constantly.

"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" (2 Chr. 16:9a).

God watches you constantly. He's not peering down from heaven so He can whack you on the head when you blow it, but to give an extra measure of strength to people who are being faithful. He gives strength and support to those who are obedient—to those whose hearts belong to Him. If you've ever tried to be obedient, you know that most of the time it takes more courage to do the right thing than to follow the crowd. God promises to see you and your efforts. He will make your weak knees strong. He will give your voice power and authority when you need it. He will sense your fear and cast it out. Your job is to be faithful. God promises to never miss a thing.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 34:15; 139:1–6; 1 Peter 3:12

Nethanel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. 8And with them *he sent* Levites: Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah—the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests. 9So they taught in Judah, and *had* the Book of the Law of the LORD with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people.

10And the fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that *were* around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat. 11Also *some* of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver as tribute; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred male goats.

12So Jehoshaphat became increasingly powerful, and he built fortresses and storage cities in Judah. 13He had much property in the cities of Judah; and the men of war, mighty men of valor, *were* in Jerusalem.

14These *are* their numbers, according to their fathers' houses. Of Judah, the captains of thousands: Adnah the captain, and with him three hundred thousand mighty men of valor; 15and next to him *was* Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and eighty thousand; 16and next to him *was* Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself to the LORD, and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valor. 17Of Benjamin: Eliada a mighty man of valor, and with him two hundred thousand men armed with bow and shield; 18and next to him *was* Jehozabad, and with him one hundred and eighty thousand prepared for war. 19These served the king, besides those the king put in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

MICAIAH WARNS AHAB

18 Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance; and by marriage he allied himself with Ahab. 2After some years he went down to *visit* Ahab in Samaria; and Ahab killed sheep and oxen in abundance for him and the people who were with him, and persuaded him to go up *with him* to Ramoth Gilead. 3So Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will you go with me *against* Ramoth Gilead?"

And he answered him, "I *am* as you *are,* and my people as your people; *we will be* with you in the war."

4Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the LORD today."

5Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

So they said, "Go up, for God will deliver it into the king's hand."

6But Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?"[a]

7So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "*There is* still one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil. He *is* Micaiah the son of Imla."

And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!"

8Then the king of Israel called one *of his* officers and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imla quickly!"

9The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, clothed in *their* robes, sat each on his throne; and they sat at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. 10Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.' "

11And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the king's hand."

12Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Therefore please let your word be like *the word of* one of them, and speak encouragement."

13And Micaiah said, "*As* the LORD lives, whatever my God says, that I will speak."

14Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

And he said, "Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!"

15So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

16Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.' "

17And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

18Then *Micaiah* said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and His left. 19And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab king of Israel to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. 20Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.' The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' 21So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And *the LORD* said, 'You shall persuade *him* and also prevail; go out and do so.' 22Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

23Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?"

24And Micaiah said, "Indeed you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!"

25Then the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; 26and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this *fellow* in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I return in peace." ' "

27But Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!"

AHAB DIES IN BATTLE

28So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. 29And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.

30Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots who *were* with him, saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel."

31So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "It *is* the king of Israel!" Therefore they sur-

18:6 [a]Or *him*

rounded him to attack; but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him. 32For so it was, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. 33Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded." 34The battle increased that day, and the king of Israel propped *himself* up in *his* chariot facing the Syrians until evening; and about the time of sunset he died.

19 Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem. 2And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD *is* upon you. 3Nevertheless good things are found in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God."

LEADERSHIP
What authority do leaders have to make decisions?
2 Chronicles 19:5–7

THE REFORMS OF JEHOSHAPHAT

4So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the LORD God of their fathers. 5Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, 6and said to the judges, "Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who *is* with you in the judgment. 7Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do *it,* for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes."

8Moreover in Jerusalem, for the judgment of the LORD and for controversies, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the chief fathers of Israel, when they returned to Jerusalem.[a] 9And he commanded them, saying, "Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart: 10Whatever case comes to you from your brethren who dwell in their cities, whether of bloodshed or offenses against law or commandment, against statutes or ordinances, you shall warn them, lest they trespass against the LORD and wrath come upon you and your brethren. Do this, and you will not be guilty. 11And take notice: Amariah the chief priest *is* over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters; also the Levites *will be* officials before you. Behave courageously, and the LORD will be with the good."

2 Chronicles 19:5–11
Jehoshaphat wasn't satisfied with changing the religious life of Judah. He wanted to change the judicial system as well. He succeeded—so well, in fact, that his system became a model for Jewish society throughout the years.

2 Chronicles 20:3
Fasting—that is, going without food for a certain period of time—was a common practice in ancient Israel. Usually it was done as part of a religious ceremony or as a way to show grief or repentance. Officially, the Israelites were only required to fast on the Day of Atonement. Sometimes, though, the leaders of the country would call for a voluntary fast during times of war.

AMMON, MOAB, AND MOUNT SEIR DEFEATED

20 It happened after this *that* the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and *others* with them besides the Ammonites,[a] came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2Then some

19:8 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* **20:1** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Meunites* (compare 26:7).

came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria;[a] and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which *is* En Gedi). 3And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4So Judah gathered together to ask *help* from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

5Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, 6and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, *are* You not God in heaven, and do You *not* rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand *is there not* power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? 7*Are* You not our God, *who* drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 8And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 9'If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name *is* in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' 10And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them— 11here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. 12O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes *are* upon You."

13Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD.

14Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. 15And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle *is* not yours, but God's. 16Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. 17You will not *need* to fight in this *battle.* Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD *is* with you."

FEAR
Why should we not be afraid?
2 Chronicles 20:15

18And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. 19Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

20So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." 21And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:

"Praise the LORD,
For His mercy *endures* forever."[a]

22Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy *them.* And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

24So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there *were* their

20:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Old Latin read *Edom.* **20:21** [a]Compare Psalm 106:1

dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

25When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies,[a] and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. 26And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah[a] until this day. 27Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. 28So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD. 29And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. 30Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

THE END OF JEHOSHAPHAT'S REIGN

31So Jehoshaphat was king over Judah. *He was* thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 32And he walked in the way of his father Asa, and did not turn aside from it, doing *what was* right in the sight of the LORD. 33Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not directed their hearts to the God of their fathers.

34Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, indeed they *are* written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, which *is* mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

35After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. 36And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. 37But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works." Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

JEHORAM REIGNS IN JUDAH

21 And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place. 2He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these *were* the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. 3Their father gave them great gifts of silver and gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he *was* the firstborn.

4Now when Jehoram was established over the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword, and also *others* of the princes of Israel.

5Jehoram *was* thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 7Yet the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.

8In his days Edom revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves. 9So Jehoram went out with his officers, and all his chariots with him. And he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots. 10Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. At that time Libnah revolted against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. 11Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry, and led Judah astray.

12And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying,

> Thus says the LORD God of your father David:

20:25 [a]A few Hebrew manuscripts, Old Latin, and Vulgate read *garments;* Septuagint reads *armor.* **20:26** [a]Literally *Blessing*

Because you have not walked in the
ways of Jehoshaphat your father,
or in the ways of Asa king of Judah,
13but have walked in the way of the
kings of Israel, and have made Judah
and the inhabitants of Jerusalem
to play the harlot like the harlotry
of the house of Ahab, and also have
killed your brothers, those of your
father's household, *who were* better
than yourself, 14behold, the LORD
will strike your people with a serious
affliction—your children, your wives,
and all your possessions; 15and you
will become very sick with a disease of
your intestines, until your intestines
come out by reason of the sickness,
day by day.

16Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians who *were* near the Ethiopians. 17And they came up into Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions that were found in the king's house, and also his sons and his wives, so that there was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz,[a] the youngest of his sons.

18After all this the LORD struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease. 19Then it happened in the course of time, after the end of two years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness; so he died in severe pain. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning for his fathers.

20He was thirty-two years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem eight years and, to no one's sorrow, departed. However they buried him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

AHAZIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

22 Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his place, for the raiders who came with the Arabians into the camp had killed all the older *sons.* So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, reigned. 2Ahaziah *was* forty-two[a] years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri. 3He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly. 4Therefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab; for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction. 5He also followed their advice, and went with Jehoram[a] the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. 6Then he returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which he had received at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah[a] the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

2 Chronicles 22:7

The prophet Elisha had anointed Jehu as the eleventh king of Israel and had given him instructions to wipe out the family of Ahab. Ahab knew about his death sentence. Years before, the prophet Elijah had warned Ahab that his family would be destroyed because of the evil things he had done.

7His going to Joram was God's occasion for Ahaziah's downfall; for when he arrived, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. 8And it happened, when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers who served Ahaziah, that he killed them. 9Then he searched for Ahaziah; and they caught him (he was hiding in Samaria), and brought him to Jehu. When they had killed him, they buried him, "because," they said, "he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart."

So the house of Ahaziah had no one to assume power over the kingdom.

ATHALIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

10Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose

21:17 [a]Elsewhere called *Ahaziah* (compare 2 Chronicles 22:1) **22:2** [a]Or *twenty-two* (compare 2 Kings 8:26) **22:5** [a]Also spelled *Joram* (compare verses 5 and 7; 2 Kings 8:28; and elsewhere) **22:6** [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, and 2 Kings 8:29 read *Ahaziah.*

and destroyed all the royal heirs of the house of Judah. 11But Jehoshabeath,[a] the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered, and put him and his nurse in a bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she did not kill him. 12And he was hidden with them in the house of God for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.

JOASH CROWNED KING OF JUDAH

23 In the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, *and made a* covenant with the captains of hundreds: Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri. 2And they went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the chief fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

3Then all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said to them, "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD has said of the sons of David. 4This *is* what you shall do: One-third of you entering on the Sabbath, of the priests and the Levites, *shall be* keeping watch over the doors; 5one-third *shall be* at the king's house; and one-third at the Gate of the Foundation. All the people *shall be* in the courts of the house of the LORD. 6But let no one come into the house of the LORD except the priests and those of the Levites who serve. They may go in, for they *are* holy; but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. 7And the Levites shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes into the house, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out."

8So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each man took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going *off duty* on the Sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest had not dismissed the divisions. 9And Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and the large and small shields which *had belonged* to King David, that *were* in the temple of God. 10Then he set all the people, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and by the temple, all around the king. 11And they brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, *gave him* the Testimony,[a] and made him king. Then Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, "*Long* live the king!"

2 Chronicles 23:9

Often, money and other valuables were stored in the temple. David's weapons probably were considered historic relics and were stored in the temple for safekeeping.

DEATH OF ATHALIAH

12Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people *in* the temple of the LORD. 13*When* she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance; and the leaders and the trumpeters *were* by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, also the singers with musical instruments, and those who led in praise. So Athaliah tore her clothes and said, "Treason! Treason!"

14And Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were set over the army, and said to them, "Take her outside under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not kill her in the house of the LORD."

15So they seized her; and she went by way of the entrance of the Horse Gate *into* the king's house, and they killed her there.

16Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, the people, and the king, that they should be the LORD's people. 17And all the people went to the temple[a] of Baal, and tore it down. They broke in pieces its altars and images, and killed

22:11 [a]Spelled *Jehosheba* in 2 Kings 11:2
23:11 [a]That is, the Law (compare Exodus 25:16, 21; 31:18) **23:17** [a]Literally *house*

Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.
18 Also Jehoiada appointed the oversight of
the house of the LORD to the hand of the
priests, the Levites, whom David had as-
signed in the house of the LORD, to offer
the burnt offerings of the LORD, as *it is* writ-
ten in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and
with singing, *as it was established* by David.
19 And he set the gatekeepers at the gates of
the house of the LORD, so that no one *who*
was in any way unclean should enter.
20 Then he took the captains of hun-
dreds, the nobles, the governors of the
people, and all the people of the land, and
brought the king down from the house of
the LORD; and they went through the Up-
per Gate to the king's house, and set the
king on the throne of the kingdom. 21 So
all the people of the land rejoiced; and the
city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah
with the sword.

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

24 Joash *was* seven years old when
he became king, and he reigned
forty years in Jerusalem. His
mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beersheba.
2 Joash did *what was* right in the sight of the
LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.
3 And Jehoiada took two wives for him, and
he had sons and daughters.
4 Now it happened after this *that* Joash
set his heart on repairing the house of the
LORD. 5 Then he gathered the priests and
the Levites, and said to them, "Go out to
the cities of Judah, and gather from all Is-
rael money to repair the house of your God
from year to year, and see that you do it
quickly."
However the Levites did not do it
quickly. 6 So the king called Jehoiada the
chief *priest,* and said to him, "Why have you
not required the Levites to bring in from Ju-
dah and from Jerusalem the collection, *ac-*
cording to the commandment of Moses the
servant of the LORD and of the assembly of
Israel, for the tabernacle of witness?" 7 For
the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman,
had broken into the house of God, and had
also presented all the dedicated things of
the house of the LORD to the Baals.
8 Then at the king's command they made
a chest, and set it outside at the gate of
the house of the LORD. 9 And they made a
proclamation throughout Judah and Jeru-
salem to bring to the LORD the collection
that Moses the servant of God *had imposed*
on Israel in the wilderness. 10 Then all the
leaders and all the people rejoiced, brought
their contributions, and put *them* into the
chest until all had given. 11 So it was, at
that time, when the chest was brought to
the king's official by the hand of the Le-
vites, and when they saw that *there was*
much money, that the king's scribe and
the high priest's officer came and emptied
the chest, and took it and returned it to its
place. Thus they did day by day, and gath-
ered money in abundance.
12 The king and Jehoiada gave it to those
who did the work of the service of the
house of the LORD; and they hired ma-
sons and carpenters to repair the house
of the LORD, and also those who worked
in iron and bronze to restore the house of
the LORD. 13 So the workmen labored, and
the work was completed by them; they
restored the house of God to its original
condition and reinforced it. 14 When they
had finished, they brought the rest of the
money before the king and Jehoiada; they
made from it articles for the house of the
LORD, articles for serving and offering,
spoons and vessels of gold and silver. And
they offered burnt offerings in the house
of the LORD continually all the days of Je-
hoiada.

APOSTASY OF JOASH

15 But Jehoiada grew old and was full of
days, and he died; *he was* one hundred and
thirty years old when he died. 16 And they
buried him in the City of David among the
kings, because he had done good in Israel,
both toward God and His house.
17 Now after the death of Jehoiada the
leaders of Judah came and bowed down
to the king. And the king listened to them.
18 Therefore they left the house of the LORD
God of their fathers, and served wooden
images and idols; and wrath came upon
Judah and Jerusalem because of their
trespass. 19 Yet He sent prophets to them,
to bring them back to the LORD; and they
testified against them, but they would not
listen.
20 Then the Spirit of God came upon
Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest,
who stood above the people, and said to

them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.'" 21So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. 22Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, "The LORD look on *it,* and repay!"

DEATH OF JOASH

23So it happened in the spring of the year *that* the army of Syria came up against him; and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the leaders of the people from among the people, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus. 24For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men; but the LORD delivered a very great army into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash. 25And when they had withdrawn from him (for they left him severely wounded), his own servants conspired against him because of the blood of the sons[a] of Jehoiada the priest, and killed him on his bed. So he died. And they buried him in the City of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings.

26These are the ones who conspired against him: Zabad[a] the son of Shimeath the Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith[b] the Moabitess. 27Now *concerning* his sons, and the many oracles about him, and the repairing of the house of God, indeed they *are* written in the annals of the book of the kings. Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

AMAZIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

25 Amaziah *was* twenty-five years old *when* he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. 2And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a loyal heart.

3Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established for him, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. 4However he did not execute their children, but *did* as *it is* written in the Law in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, "The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall die for his own sin."[a]

THE WAR AGAINST EDOM

5Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, according to *their* fathers' houses, throughout all Judah and Benjamin; and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them to be three hundred thousand choice *men, able* to go to war, who could handle spear and shield. 6He also hired one hundred thousand mighty men of valor from Israel for one hundred talents of silver. 7But a man of God came to him, saying, "O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD *is* not with Israel—*not with* any of the children of Ephraim. 8But if you go, be gone! Be strong in battle! *Even so,* God shall make you fall before the enemy; for God has power to help and to overthrow."

9Then Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what *shall we* do about the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?"

And the man of God answered, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this." 10So Amaziah discharged the troops that had come to him from Ephraim, to go back home. Therefore their anger was greatly aroused against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

11Then Amaziah strengthened himself, and leading his people, he went to the Valley of Salt and killed ten thousand of the people of Seir. 12Also the children of Judah took captive ten thousand alive, brought them to the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, so that they all were dashed in pieces.

13But as for the soldiers of the army which Amaziah had discharged, so that

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24:25 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *son* (compare verses 20–22). **24:26** [a]Or *Jozachar* (compare 2 Kings 12:21) [b]Or *Shomer* (compare 2 Kings 12:21) **25:4** [a]Deuteronomy 24:16

they would not go with him to battle, they raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon, killed three thousand in them, and took much spoil.

14Now it was so, after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up *to be* his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them. 15Therefore the anger of the LORD was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, "Why have you sought the gods of the people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?"

16So it was, as he talked with him, that *the king* said to him, "Have we made you the king's counselor? Cease! Why should you be killed?"

Then the prophet ceased, and said, "I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not heeded my advice."

ISRAEL DEFEATS JUDAH

17Now Amaziah king of Judah asked advice and sent to Joash[a] the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us face one another *in battle*."

18And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as wife'; and a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. 19Indeed you say that you have defeated the Edomites, and your heart is lifted up to boast. Stay at home now; why should you meddle with trouble, that you should fall—you and Judah with you?"

20But Amaziah would not heed, for it *came* from God, that He might give them into the hand *of their enemies,* because they sought the gods of Edom. 21So Joash king of Israel went out; and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at Beth Shemesh, which *belongs* to Judah. 22And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. 23Then Joash the king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth Shemesh; and he brought him to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate—four hundred cubits. 24And *he took* all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of God with Obed-Edom, the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

DEATH OF AMAZIAH

25Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. 26Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, from first to last, indeed *are* they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? 27After the time that Amaziah turned away from following the LORD, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. 28Then they brought him on horses and buried him with his fathers in the City of Judah.

UZZIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

26 Now all the people of Judah took Uzziah,[a] who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. 2He built Elath[a] and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers.

3Uzziah *was* sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. 4And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. 5He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions[a] of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper.

INTEGRITY
What's a great definition of integrity?
2 Chronicles 26:4

6Now he went out and made war against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities *around*

25:17 [a]Spelled *Jehoash* in 2 Kings 14:8ff
26:1 [a]Called *Azariah* in 2 Kings 14:21ff
26:2 [a]Hebrew *Eloth* **26:5** [a]Several Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Arabic read *fear.*

Ashdod and among the Philistines. 7God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabians who lived in Gur Baal, and against the Meunites. 8Also the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong.

9And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the corner buttress of the wall; then he fortified them. 10Also he built towers in the desert. He dug many wells, for he had much livestock, both in the lowlands and in the plains; *he also had* farmers and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for he loved the soil.

11Moreover Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war by companies, according to the number on their roll as prepared by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's captains. 12The total number of chief officers[a] of the mighty men of valor *was* two thousand six hundred. 13And under their authority *was* an army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. 14Then Uzziah prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slings *to cast* stones. 15And he made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong.

2 Chronicles 26:15

The description of these war devices seems to suggest that they were like catapults. From about 800 B.C. to A.D. 1500, catapults were among the most feared weapons of war. They were capable of firing objects between 350 and 500 yards. Bows and arrows were also dangerous weapons; when fired, an arrow fired could travel up to 300 yards.

THE PENALTY FOR UZZIAH'S PRIDE

16But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to *his* destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD—valiant men. 18And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, "*It is* not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You *shall have* no honor from the LORD God."

19Then Uzziah became furious; and he *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. 20And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he *was* leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him.

21King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. Then Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

22Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote. 23So Uzziah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which *belonged* to the kings, for they said, "He is a leper." Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

JOTHAM REIGNS IN JUDAH

27 Jotham *was* twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jerushah[a] the daughter of Zadok. 2And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done (although he did not enter the temple of the LORD). But still the people acted corruptly.

3He built the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD, and he built extensively on the wall of Ophel. 4Moreover he built cities in

26:12 [a]Literally *chief fathers* **27:1** [a]Spelled *Jerusha* in 2 Kings 15:33

the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built fortresses and towers. 5He also fought with the king of the Ammonites and defeated them. And the people of Ammon gave him in that year one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand kors of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. The people of Ammon paid this to him in the second and third years also. 6So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God.

7Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars and his ways, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. 8He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9So Jotham rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

AHAZ REIGNS IN JUDAH

28 Ahaz *was* twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, as his father David *had done.* 2For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molded images for the Baals. 3He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 4And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

> ***2 Chronicles 28:3***
> The Canaanites figured the best way to get on the good side of their gods was to kill a human being as an offering to them. God wanted His people to have nothing to do with the disgusting practice of human sacrifice.

SYRIA AND ISRAEL DEFEAT JUDAH

5Therefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria. They defeated him, and carried away a great multitude of them as captives, and brought *them* to Damascus. Then he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with a great slaughter. 6For Pekah the son of Remaliah killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. 7Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam the officer over the house, and Elkanah *who was* second to the king. 8And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughters; and they also took away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

ISRAEL RETURNS THE CAPTIVES

9But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name *was* Oded; and he went out before the army that came to Samaria, and said to them: "Look, because the LORD God of your fathers was angry with Judah, He has delivered them into your hand; but you have killed them in a rage *that* reaches up to heaven. 10And now you propose to force the children of Judah and Jerusalem to be your male and female slaves; *but are* you not also guilty before the LORD your God? 11Now hear me, therefore, and return the captives, whom you have taken captive from your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the LORD *is* upon you."

12Then some of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against those who came from the war, 13and said to them, "You shall not bring the captives here, for we *already* have offended the LORD. You intend to add to our sins and to our guilt; for our guilt is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel." 14So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the leaders and all the assembly. 15Then the men who were designated by name rose up and took the captives, and from the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them, dressed them and gave them sandals, gave them food and drink, and anointed them; and they let all the feeble ones ride on donkeys. So they brought them to their brethren at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.

ASSYRIA REFUSES TO HELP JUDAH

16At the same time King Ahaz sent to the kings[a] of Assyria to help him. 17For again the Edomites had come, attacked Judah, and carried away captives. 18The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the South of Judah, and had taken Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Sochoh with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages; and they dwelt there. 19For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the LORD. 20Also Tiglath-Pileser[a] king of Assyria came to him and distressed him, and did not assist him. 21For Ahaz took part *of the treasures* from the house of the LORD, from the house of the king, and from the leaders, and he gave *it* to the king of Assyria; but he did not help him.

APOSTASY AND DEATH OF AHAZ

22Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the LORD. This *is that* King Ahaz. 23For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, saying, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me." But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel. 24So Ahaz gathered the articles of the house of God, cut in pieces the articles of the house of God, shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. 25And in every single city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers.

26Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 27So Ahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem; but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

HEZEKIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

29 Hezekiah became king *when he was* twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Abijah[a] the daughter of Zechariah. 2And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.

HEZEKIAH CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

3In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them. 4Then he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them in the East Square, 5and said to them: "Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy *place.* 6For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the LORD our God; they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the LORD, and turned *their* backs *on Him.* 7They have also shut up the doors of the vestibule, put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy *place* to the God of Israel. 8Therefore the wrath of the LORD fell upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He has given them up to trouble, to desolation, and to jeering, as you see with your eyes. 9For indeed, because of this our fathers have fallen by the sword; and our sons, our daughters, and our wives *are* in captivity.

10"Now *it is* in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that His fierce wrath may turn away from us. 11My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that you should minister to Him and burn incense."

12Then these Levites arose: Mahath the son of Amasai and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites; of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi and Azariah the son of Jehallelel; of the Gershonites, Joah the son of Zimmah and Eden the son of Joah; 13of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeiel; of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah; 14of the sons of Heman, Jehiel and Shimei; and of the sons of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel.

15And they gathered their brethren, sanctified themselves, and went according to the commandment of the king, at the

28:16 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *king* (compare verse 20). **28:20** [a]Hebrew *Tilgath-Pilneser* **29:1** [a]Spelled *Abi* in 2 Kings 18:2

words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD. 16Then the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse *it,* and brought out all the debris that they found in the temple of the LORD to the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took *it* out and carried *it* to the Brook Kidron.

17Now they began to sanctify on the first *day* of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the vestibule of the LORD. So they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished.

18Then they went in to King Hezekiah and said, "We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offerings with all its articles, and the table of the showbread with all its articles. 19Moreover all the articles which King Ahaz in his reign had cast aside in his transgression we have prepared and sanctified; and there they *are,* before the altar of the LORD."

2 Chronicles 29:23, 24

Each part of the sacrifice ritual had an important meaning. Touching the sacrificial animal symbolized that the sins of the priest and the people were being transferred to the animal. The animal carrying the people's sin was then either killed or taken away. Splattering the blood on the altar represented the forgiveness of sins.

HEZEKIAH RESTORES TEMPLE WORSHIP

20Then King Hezekiah rose early, gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. 21And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. Then he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer *them* on the altar of the LORD. 22So they killed the bulls, and the priests received the blood and sprinkled *it* on the altar. Likewise they killed the rams and sprinkled the blood on the altar. They also killed the lambs and sprinkled the blood on the altar. 23Then they brought out the male goats *for* the sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them. 24And the priests killed them; and they presented their blood on the altar as a sin offering to make an atonement for all Israel, for the king commanded *that* the burnt offering and the sin offering *be made* for all Israel.

25And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus *was* the commandment of the LORD by His prophets. 26The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. 27Then Hezekiah commanded *them* to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD *also* began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel. 28So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all *this continued* until the burnt offering was finished. 29And when they had finished offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshiped. 30Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.

31Then Hezekiah answered and said, "Now *that* you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD." So the assembly brought in sacrifices and thank offerings, and as many as were of a willing heart *brought* burnt offerings. 32And the number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was seventy bulls, one hundred rams, *and* two hundred lambs; all these *were* for a burnt offering to the LORD. 33The consecrated things *were* six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep. 34But the priests were too few, so that they could not skin all the burnt offerings; therefore their brethren the Levites helped them until the work was ended and until the *other* priests had sanctified themselves, for the Levites were more diligent in sanctifying themselves than the priests. 35Also the burnt offerings *were* in abundance, with the fat of the

peace offerings and *with* the drink offerings for *every* burnt offering.

So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order. 36Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced that God had prepared the people, since the events took place so suddenly.

HEZEKIAH KEEPS THE PASSOVER

30 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel. 2For the king and his leaders and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month. 3For they could not keep it at the regular time,[a] because a sufficient number of priests had not consecrated themselves, nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem. 4And the matter pleased the king and all the assembly. 5So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done *it* for a long *time* in the *prescribed* manner.

2 Chronicles 30:6

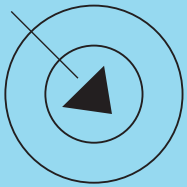
The Assyrians conquered Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, in 722 B.C. They destroyed the city and hauled the people away as captives. As a result, the ten tribes of the northern kingdom were never reunited.

6Then the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king and his leaders, and spoke according to the command of the king: "Children of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; then He will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. 7And do not be like your fathers and your brethren, who trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, so that He gave them up to desolation, as you see. 8Now do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers *were, but* yield yourselves to the LORD; and enter His sanctuary, which He has sanctified forever, and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you. 9For if you return to the LORD, your brethren and your children *will be treated* with compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land; for the LORD your God *is* gracious and merciful, and will not turn *His* face from you if you return to Him."

10So the runners passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun; but they laughed at them and mocked them. 11Nevertheless some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. 12Also the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders, at the word of the LORD.

13Now many people, a very great assembly, gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. 14They arose and took away the altars that *were* in Jerusalem, and they took away all the incense altars and cast *them* into the Brook Kidron. 15Then they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* on the fourteenth *day* of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought the burnt offerings to the house of the LORD. 16They stood in their place according to their custom, according to the Law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood *received* from the hand of the Levites. 17For *there were* many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover *lambs* for everyone *who was* not clean, to sanctify *them* to the LORD. 18For a multitude of the people, many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the good LORD provide atonement for everyone 19*who* prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though *he is* not *cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary." 20And the LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.

30:3 [a]That is, the first month (compare Leviticus 23:5); literally *at that time*



PROMISE

God promises to be gracious and merciful.

"For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn His face from you if you return to Him" (2 Chr. 30:9b).

Kindhearted people sometimes make us suspicious. We wonder, *Is she for real? Is he like this all the time? What does she want from me?* Unfortunately, some people have learned how to use kindness to manipulate and charm others for selfish purposes. But you don't have to wonder about God's kindness. He is for real. There are no strings attached. He is truly gracious, generous, sympathetic, and tolerant toward you. He cannot be unkind.

There's nothing manipulative about God. He owns the whole world, so He won't charm you into giving Him something. He's always got your best interest at heart. He's genuinely gracious, kind, and merciful. You can trust Him because He loves you so purely and so much. And as you know Him more, get closer to Him, and become more like Him, you will find yourself becoming more gracious, kind, and merciful as well.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 111:4; 145:8; Galatians 5:22, 23; 2 Timothy 2:1



21So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, *singing* to the LORD, accompanied by loud instruments. 22And Hezekiah gave encouragement to all the Levites who taught the good knowledge of the LORD; and they ate throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.

23Then the whole assembly agreed to keep *the feast* another seven days, and they kept it *another* seven days with gladness. 24For Hezekiah king of Judah gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and the leaders gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. 25The whole assembly of Judah rejoiced, also the priests and Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, the sojourners who came from the land of Israel, and those who dwelt in Judah. 26So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, *there had* been nothing like this in Jerusalem. 27Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard; and their prayer came *up* to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.

THE REFORMS OF HEZEKIAH

31 Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke the *sacred* pillars in pieces, cut down the wooden images, and threw down the high places and the altars—from all Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh—until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned to their own cities, every man to his possession.

2And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites according to their divisions, each man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and peace offerings, to serve, to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the camp[a] of the LORD. 3The king also *appointed* a portion of his possessions for the burnt offerings: for the morning and evening burnt offerings, the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and the New Moons and the set feasts, as *it is* written in the Law of the LORD.

4Moreover he commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute sup-

31:2 [a]That is, the temple

port for the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the Law of the LORD.

GIVING
How are church leaders paid?
2 Chronicles 31:4

5As soon as the commandment was circulated, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of grain and wine, oil and honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. 6And the children of Israel and Judah, who dwelt in the cities of Judah, brought the tithe of oxen and sheep; also the tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the LORD their God they laid in heaps.

7In the third month they began laying them in heaps, and they finished in the seventh month. 8And when Hezekiah and the leaders came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD and His people Israel. 9Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. 10And Azariah the chief priest, from the house of Zadok, answered him and said, "Since *the people* began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and have plenty left, for the LORD has blessed His people; and what is left *is* this great abundance."

11Now Hezekiah commanded *them* to prepare rooms in the house of the LORD, and they prepared them. 12Then they faithfully brought in the offerings, the tithes, and the dedicated things; Cononiah the Levite had charge of them, and Shimei his brother *was* the next. 13Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah *were* overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, at the commandment of Hezekiah the king and Azariah the ruler of the house of God. 14Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the keeper of the East Gate, *was* over the freewill offerings to God, to distribute the offerings of the LORD and the most holy things. 15And under him *were* Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, *his* faithful assistants in the cities of the priests, to distribute allotments to their brethren by divisions, to the great as well as the small.

16Besides those males from three years old and up who were written in the genealogy, they distributed to everyone who entered the house of the LORD his daily portion for the work of his service, by his division, 17and to the priests who were written in the genealogy according to their father's house, and to the Levites from twenty years old and up according to their work, by their divisions, 18and to all who were written in the genealogy—their little ones and their wives, their sons and daughters, the whole company of them—for in their faithfulness they sanctified themselves in holiness.

19Also for the sons of Aaron the priests, *who were* in the fields of the common-lands of their cities, in every single city, *there were* men who were designated by name to distribute portions to all the males among the priests and to all who were listed by genealogies among the Levites.

20Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what *was* good and right and true before the LORD his God. 21And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did *it* with all his heart. So he prospered.

2 Chronicles 32:1
Sennacherib's biggest claims to fame as king of Assyria were his conquering of Babylon in 689 B.C., his work on his capital in Nineveh, and his cruel attacks on Judah in which he destroyed forty-six towns and villages and took many captives.

SENNACHERIB BOASTS AGAINST THE LORD

32 After these deeds of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered Judah; he encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them over to himself. 2And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, and that his purpose was to make war against Jerusalem, 3he consulted with

his leaders and commanders[a] to stop the water from the springs which *were* outside the city; and they helped him. 4Thus many people gathered together who stopped all the springs and the brook that ran through the land, saying, "Why should the kings[a] of Assyria come and find much water?" 5And he strengthened himself, built up all the wall that was broken, raised *it* up to the towers, and *built* another wall outside; also he repaired the Millo[a] *in* the City of David, and made weapons and shields in abundance. 6Then he set military captains over the people, gathered them together to him in the open square of the city gate, and gave them encouragement, saying, 7"Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that *is* with him; for *there are* more with us than with him. 8With him *is* an arm of flesh; but with us *is* the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles." And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

9After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem (but he and all the forces with him *laid siege* against Lachish), to Hezekiah king of Judah, and to all Judah who *were* in Jerusalem, saying, 10"Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria: 'In what do you trust, that you remain under siege in Jerusalem? 11Does not Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst, saying, "The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria"? 12Has not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, "You shall worship before one altar and burn incense on it"? 13Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of *other* lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands in any way able to deliver their lands out of my hand? 14Who *was there* among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed that could deliver his people from my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand? 15Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or persuade you like this, and do not believe him; for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand?'"

16Furthermore, his servants spoke against the LORD God and against His servant Hezekiah.

17He also wrote letters to revile the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against Him, saying, "As the gods of the nations of *other* lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand." 18Then they called out with a loud voice in Hebrew[a] to the people of Jerusalem who *were* on the wall, to frighten them and trouble them, that they might take the city. 19And they spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth—the work of men's hands.

SENNACHERIB'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

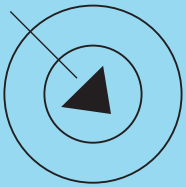
20Now because of this King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven. 21Then the LORD sent an angel who cut down every mighty man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned shamefaced to his own land. And when he had gone into the temple of his god, some of his own offspring struck him down with the sword there.

22Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *others,* and guided them[a] on every side. 23And many brought gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter.

HEZEKIAH HUMBLES HIMSELF

24In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the LORD; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. 25But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor *shown* him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. 26Then

32:3 [a]Literally *mighty men* **32:4** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Arabic, Septuagint, and Syriac read *king.* **32:5** [a]Literally *The Landfill* **32:18** [a]Literally *Judean* **32:22** [a]Septuagint reads *gave them rest;* Vulgate reads *gave them treasures.*



PROMISE

God promises to fight with you on your side.

"Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him; for there are more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles" (2 Chr. 32:7, 8a).

Have you ever had someone stick up for you? Maybe they walked right into the middle of your conflict and took your side. Awesome! Did you ever have someone decide to do more than watch when you were up against a challenge? They cared enough to get involved, to actually stick their neck out and speak up for you.

It's an incredible feeling to have someone help you fight your fight. All of a sudden you feel stronger, the enemy seems weaker, and your confidence gets a boost. God is ready to fight for you. He is on your side, ready to intervene and do battle. You are not fighting alone. The God of the universe is right beside you. So look ahead with hope and assurance that the strongest Warrior fights for you.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// 2 Chronicles 13:10–12; Zephaniah 2:7; Zechariah 10:5

Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

HEZEKIAH'S WEALTH AND HONOR

27 Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. And he made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items; 28 storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks.[a] 29 Moreover he provided cities for himself, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very much property. 30 This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon, and brought the water by tunnel[a] to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah prospered in all his works.

31 However, *regarding* the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was *done* in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all *that was* in his heart.

DEATH OF HEZEKIAH

32 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, indeed they *are* written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, *and* in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 33 So Hezekiah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper tombs of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

MANASSEH REIGNS IN JUDAH

33 Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. 2 But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; and he worshiped all the host of heaven[a] and served them. 4 He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem shall My name be forever." 5 And he built altars for all the host

32:28 [a]Following Septuagint and Vulgate; Arabic and Syriac omit *folds for flocks;* Masoretic Text reads *flocks for sheepfolds.* **32:30** [a]Literally *brought it straight* (compare 2 Kings 20:20)
33:3 [a]The gods of the Assyrians

of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 7He even set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers—only if they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses." 9So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

ABORTION
What does God think about killing children?
2 Chronicles 33:6

2 Chronicles 33:6, 7
Apparently, Manasseh was determined to disobey as many of God's laws as he possibly could. Sorcery and witchcraft had been banned since the Law of Moses was handed down. Human sacrifice was detested by God. Putting an idol in the temple was like a slap in the face to the Lord.

MANASSEH RESTORED AFTER REPENTANCE

10And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. 11Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks,[a] bound him with bronze *fetters,* and carried him off to Babylon. 12Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD *was* God.

14After this he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate; and *it* enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. 15He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem; and he cast *them* out of the city. 16He also repaired the altar of the LORD, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. 17Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, *but* only to the LORD their God.

DEATH OF MANASSEH

18Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, indeed they *are written* in the book[a] of the kings of Israel. 19Also his prayer and *how God* received his entreaty, and all his sin and trespass, and the sites where he built high places and set up wooden images and carved images, before he was humbled, indeed they *are* written among the sayings of Hozai.[a] 20So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

AMON'S REIGN AND DEATH

21Amon *was* twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done; for Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and served them. 23And he did not humble himself before the LORD, as his father Manasseh had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more.

24Then his servants conspired against him, and killed him in his own house. 25But

33:11 [a]That is, nose hooks (compare 2 Kings 19:28) **33:18** [a]Literally *words* **33:19** [a]Septuagint reads *the seers.*

the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

JOSIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

34 Josiah *was* eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; *he* did *not* turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

3For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images. 4They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which *were* above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered *it* on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. 5He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 6And *so he did* in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali and all around, with axes.[a] 7When he had broken down the altars and the wooden images, had beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

HILKIAH FINDS THE BOOK OF THE LAW

8In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the temple,[a] he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. 9When they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites who kept the doors had gathered from the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, from all the remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin, and *which* they had brought back to Jerusalem. 10Then they put *it* in the hand of the foremen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they gave it to the workmen who worked in the house of the LORD, to repair and restore the house. 11They gave *it* to the craftsmen and builders to buy hewn stone and timber for beams, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. 12And the men did the work faithfully. Their overseers *were* Jahath and Obadiah the Levites, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to supervise. *Others of* the Levites, all of whom were skillful with instruments of music, 13*were* over the burden bearers and *were* overseers of all who did work in any kind of service. And *some* of the Levites *were* scribes, officers, and gatekeepers.

14Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD *given* by Moses. 15Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. 16So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "All that was committed to your servants they are doing. 17And they have gathered the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen." 18Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

2 Chronicles 34:15

The book Hilkiah found may have been Deuteronomy or it may have been the entire Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. The book may have been hidden when earlier kings tried to get Israel to worship idols.

19Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes. 20Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon[a] the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying,

34:6 [a]Literally *swords* **34:8** [a]Literally *house*
34:20 [a]*Achbor the son of Michaiah* in 2 Kings 22:12

21"Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and
for those who are left in Israel and Judah,
concerning the words of the book that is
found; for great *is* the wrath of the LORD
that is poured out on us, because our fa-
thers have not kept the word of the LORD,
to do according to all that is written in this
book."

22So Hilkiah and those the king *had ap-
pointed* went to Huldah the prophetess, the
wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath,[a] the son
of Hasrah,[b] keeper of the wardrobe. (She
dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.)
And they spoke to her to that *effect.*

23Then she answered them, "Thus says
the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who
sent you to Me, 24"Thus says the LORD: 'Be-
hold, I will bring calamity on this place and
on its inhabitants, all the curses that are
written in the book which they have read
before the king of Judah, 25because they
have forsaken Me and burned incense to
other gods, that they might provoke Me
to anger with all the works of their hands.
Therefore My wrath will be poured out on
this place, and not be quenched.'"' 26But as
for the king of Judah, who sent you to in-
quire of the LORD, in this manner you shall
speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of
Israel: "*Concerning* the words which you
have heard— 27because your heart was
tender, and you humbled yourself before
God when you heard His words against
this place and against its inhabitants, and
you humbled yourself before Me, and you
tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also
have heard *you,*" says the LORD. 28"Surely
I will gather you to your fathers, and you
shall be gathered to your grave in peace;
and your eyes shall not see all the calam-
ity which I will bring on this place and its
inhabitants."'" So they brought back word
to the king.

JOSIAH RESTORES TRUE WORSHIP

29Then the king sent and gathered all the
elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30The king
went up to the house of the LORD, with
all the men of Judah and the inhabitants
of Jerusalem—the priests and the Levites,
and all the people, great and small. And
he read in their hearing all the words of
the Book of the Covenant which had been
found in the house of the LORD. 31Then
the king stood in his place and made a
covenant before the LORD, to follow the
LORD, and to keep His commandments
and His testimonies and His statutes with
all his heart and all his soul, to perform the
words of the covenant that were written
in this book. 32And he made all who were
present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a
stand. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did
according to the covenant of God, the God
of their fathers. 33Thus Josiah removed all
the abominations from all the country that
belonged to the children of Israel, and made
all who were present in Israel diligently
serve the LORD their God. All his days they
did not depart from following the LORD
God of their fathers.

BIBLE
How hard should we try to obey the Bible?
2 Chronicles 34:31

JOSIAH KEEPS THE PASSOVER

35 Now Josiah kept a Passover to
the LORD in Jerusalem, and
they slaughtered the Passover
lambs on the fourteenth *day* of the first
month. 2And he set the priests in their du-
ties and encouraged them for the service
of the house of the LORD. 3Then he said to
the Levites who taught all Israel, who were
holy to the LORD: "Put the holy ark in the
house which Solomon the son of David,
king of Israel, built. *It shall* no longer *be* a
burden on *your* shoulders. Now serve the
LORD your God and His people Israel. 4Pre-
pare *yourselves* according to your fathers'
houses, according to your divisions, fol-
lowing the written instruction of David
king of Israel and the written instruction
of Solomon his son. 5And stand in the holy
place according to the divisions of the
fathers' houses of your brethren the *lay*
people, and *according to* the division of the
father's house of the Levites. 6So slaughter
the Passover *offerings,* consecrate your-
selves, and prepare *them* for your brethren,
that *they* may do according to the word of
the LORD by the hand of Moses."

7Then Josiah gave the *lay* people lambs

34:22 [a]Spelled *Tikvah* in 2 Kings 22:14 [b]Spelled *Harhas* in 2 Kings 22:14

and young goats from the flock, all for Passover *offerings* for all who were present, to the number of thirty thousand, as well as three thousand cattle; these *were* from the king's possessions. 8And his leaders gave willingly to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover *offerings* two thousand six hundred *from the flock,* and three hundred cattle. 9Also Conaniah, his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave to the Levites for Passover *offerings* five thousand *from the flock* and five hundred cattle.

10So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their places, and the Levites in their divisions, according to the king's command. 11And they slaughtered the Passover *offerings;* and the priests sprinkled *the blood* with their hands, while the Levites skinned *the animals.* 12Then they removed the burnt offerings that *they* might give them to the divisions of the fathers' houses of the *lay* people, to offer to the LORD, as *it is* written in the Book of Moses. And so *they did* with the cattle. 13Also they roasted the Passover *offerings* with fire according to the ordinance; but the *other* holy *offerings* they boiled in pots, in caldrons, and in pans, and divided *them* quickly among all the *lay* people. 14Then afterward they prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, *were busy* in offering burnt offerings and fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron. 15And the singers, the sons of Asaph, *were* in their places, according to the command of David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer. Also the gatekeepers were at each gate; they did not have to leave their position, because their brethren the Levites prepared portions for them.

16So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah. 17And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. 18There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 19In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept.

JOSIAH DIES IN BATTLE

20After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates; and Josiah went out against him. 21But he sent messengers to him, saying, "What have I to do with you, king of Judah? *I have* not *come* against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain *from meddling with* God, who *is* with me, lest He destroy you." 22Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo.

23And the archers shot King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am severely wounded." 24His servants therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had, and they brought him to Jerusalem. So he died, and was buried in *one of* the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

25Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they *are* written in the Laments.

26Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and his goodness, according to *what was* written in the Law of the LORD, 27and his deeds from first to last, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

THE REIGN AND CAPTIVITY OF JEHOAHAZ

36 Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem. 2Jehoahaz[a] *was*

36:2 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Joahaz.*

twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. 3Now the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. 4Then the king of Egypt made *Jehoahaz's*[a] brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz[b] his brother and carried him off to Egypt.

THE REIGN AND CAPTIVITY OF JEHOIAKIM

5Jehoiakim *was* twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD his God. 6Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him, and bound him in bronze *fetters* to carry him off to Babylon. 7Nebuchadnezzar also carried off *some* of the articles from the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. 8Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, the abominations which he did, and what was found against him, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

> ***2 Chronicles 36:6***
> The attack described here was the first of three by Nebuchadnezzar's forces that eventually resulted in the destruction of the temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the kingdom of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar deported scores of Israelites to other regions of his empire, using them as slave labor for various construction projects.

THE REIGN AND CAPTIVITY OF JEHOIACHIN

9Jehoiachin *was* eight[a] years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 10At the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar summoned *him* and took him to Babylon, with the costly articles from the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah, *Jehoiakim's*[a] brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

ZEDEKIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

11Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. 12He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God, *and* did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, *who spoke* from the mouth of the LORD. 13And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear *an oath* by God; but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel. 14Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, *according* to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the LORD which He had consecrated in Jerusalem.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

15And the LORD God of their fathers sent *warnings* to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending *them,* because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. 16But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till *there was* no remedy.

> ***2 Chronicles 36:22***
> After Cyrus's Persian army defeated the Babylonians in 539 B.C., his nation became the most powerful empire in the ancient world. Surprisingly, Cyrus maintained his reputation as a wise and tolerant ruler. In fact, he even allowed the Jewish captives to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple. Though Cyrus may not have believed in Israel's God, he is praised in the Bible for his role in God's plan.

17Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on

36:4 [a]Literally *his* [b]Masoretic Text reads *Joahaz.* **36:9** [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and 2 Kings 24:8 read *eighteen.* **36:10** [a]Literally *his* (compare 2 Kings 24:17)

the aged or the weak; He gave *them* all into his hand. 18And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all *these* he took to Babylon. 19Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. 20And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, 21to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

THE PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS

22Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying,

23Thus says Cyrus king of Persia:
All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD
God of heaven has given me. And He
has commanded me to build Him a
house at Jerusalem which is in Judah.
Who *is* among you of all His people?
May the LORD his God *be* with him,
and let him go up!

Ezra

DATE OF WRITING: 457–444 B.C.
AUTHOR: PROBABLY EZRA
THEME: THE EXILES RETURN TO JERUSALEM AND BEGIN RESTORING THE TEMPLE
PURPOSE: GOD KEEPS THE PROMISES HE MAKES TO ISRAEL, AND HE KEEPS HIS PROMISES TO US.

OUTLINE

1:1—2:70 ..... The Jews Return Home from Exile
3:1—4:5 ..... The Altar Is Rebuilt, and Work on the Temple Begins
4:6–24 ..... Later Trouble Rebuilding Jerusalem
5:1—6:22 ..... The Temple Is Rebuilt
7:1—8:36 ..... Ezra Leads Many Jews Back to Jerusalem
9:1—10:44 ..... Ezra Forces Men to Divorce Their Gentile Wives

KEY VERSE:

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel (Ezra 7:10).

THEN /// Imagine . . . seventy years ago your parents and grandparents were dragged away from their homeland and resettled into a new country. You were born there, grew up and raised your kids there. Now your kids are grown and you've got grandchildren there. One day, you get the news that a new king has taken over and he has offered you the opportunity to move back to the land your parents left behind. You can move back home.

Home?

That was the dilemma that Ezra and his people faced in Babylon. Only a few of them made the choice to actually return to their hometown, Jerusalem. When they did, they found their city in ruins. All they could do was start over. They started rebuilding the temple. They started rebuilding their homes. They started figuring out their cultural heritage.

Ezra returned to Jerusalem after the temple was rebuilt but before the people had renewed their relationship with God. He helped them see that the condition of the place of worship is important, but not as important as the condition of the hearts of the worshipers.

NOW /// God's faithfulness provides the light that illuminates the true story of the Book of Ezra. God had promised that even though great destruction was coming to Jerusalem, one day great restoration would come as well. In Ezra we see the fulfillment of that promise. God brought His people home, and He was still their God.

We serve that same God today. He still keeps His promises. He will always restore His people when they come back to Him, just like He did in Ezra's day, and just like He does for us.

REALITY CHECK /// Restoring the temple was one of the biggest tasks facing the exiles who had returned to Jerusalem. If you look back through the history of the Hebrews, you'll see that the way they treated the temple almost *always* ran parallel with the respect they had for God. In the days before their exile to Babylon, getting the temple back in shape after one of their irreligious "benders" wasn't as big of a deal. But by the time Ezra returned to Jerusalem, the temple wasn't just in disrepair—it had been destroyed! This mirrored the faith of Ezra's people; their faith had also been in disrepair, and even destroyed, and it broke his heart.

So when the people of Israel set about to rebuild the temple, they were also setting about to restore their faith in and their relationship with God.

This can give us hope for the times when our spiritual lives seem to be in shambles. We can rebuild our faith and our relationship with God because He is forever faithful. When we return to Him, He will heal and restore us.

END OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king
of Persia, that the word of the LORD
by the mouth of Jeremiah might be
fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of
Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a
proclamation throughout all his kingdom,
and also *put it* in writing, saying,

2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia:
All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD
God of heaven has given me. And He
has commanded me to build Him a
house at Jerusalem which *is* in Judah.
3 Who *is* among you of all His people?
May his God be with him, and let him
go up to Jerusalem which *is* in Judah,
and build the house of the LORD
God of Israel (He *is* God), which *is* in
Jerusalem. 4 And whoever is left in any
place where he dwells, let the men of
his place help him with silver and gold,
with goods and livestock, besides the
freewill offerings for the house of God
which *is* in Jerusalem.

5 Then the heads of the fathers' *houses* of
Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and

the Levites, with all whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem. 6And all those who *were* around them encouraged them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with precious things, besides all *that* was willingly offered.

Ezra 1:2, 3

King Cyrus was killed in battle around 530 B.C. after a pretty successful career as ruler of Persia. Among the accomplishments that might have been included in his obituary was his conquering of the Medes, the Lydians, and the Babylonians. Unlike other ancient kings, Cyrus allowed the people he defeated to worship their own gods.

7King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods; 8and Cyrus king of Persia brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. 9This *is* the number of them: thirty gold platters, one thousand silver platters, twenty-nine knives, 10thirty gold basins, four hundred and ten silver basins of a similar *kind, and* one thousand other articles. 11All the articles of gold and silver *were* five thousand four hundred. All *these* Sheshbazzar took with the captives who were brought from Babylon to Jerusalem.

THE CAPTIVES WHO RETURNED TO JERUSALEM

2 Now[a] these *are* the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his *own* city.

2*Those* who came with Zerubbabel *were* Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar,[a] Bigvai, Rehum,[b] *and* Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel: 3the people of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two; 4the people of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two; 5the people of Arah, seven hundred and seventy-five; 6the people of Pahath-Moab, of the people of Jeshua *and* Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve; 7the people of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; 8the people of Zattu, nine hundred and forty-five; 9the people of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty; 10the people of Bani,[a] six hundred and forty-two; 11the people of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-three; 12the people of Azgad, one thousand two hundred and twenty-two; 13the people of Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-six; 14the people of Bigvai, two thousand and fifty-six; 15the people of Adin, four hundred and fifty-four; 16the people of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-eight; 17the people of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-three; 18the people of Jorah,[a] one hundred and twelve; 19the people of Hashum, two hundred and twenty-three; 20the people of Gibbar,[a] ninety-five; 21the people of Bethlehem, one hundred and twenty-three; 22the men of Netophah, fifty-six; 23the men of Anathoth, one hundred and twenty-eight; 24the people of Azmaveth,[a] forty-two; 25the people of Kirjath Arim,[a] Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three; 26the people of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one; 27the men of Michmas, one hundred and twenty-two; 28the men of Bethel and Ai, two hundred and twenty-three; 29the people of Nebo, fifty-

Ezra 2:1

From 597 to 586 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was a royal pain to the people of Judah and its capital city of Jerusalem. The Babylonian king led several attacks on the region. He looted and burned the temple, after stealing most of the treasures and furnishings inside. For an encore, he took thousands of Jewish people captive.

2:1 [a]Compare this chapter with Nehemiah 7:6–73. **2:2** [a]Spelled *Mispereth* in Nehemiah 7:7 [b]Spelled *Nehum* in Nehemiah 7:7 **2:10** [a]Spelled *Binnui* in Nehemiah 7:15 **2:18** [a]Called *Hariph* in Nehemiah 7:24 **2:20** [a]Called *Gibeon* in Nehemiah 7:25 **2:24** [a]Called *Beth Azmaveth* in Nehemiah 7:28 **2:25** [a]Called *Kirjath Jearim* in Nehemiah 7:29

two; 30the people of Magbish, one hundred and fifty-six; 31the people of the other Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; 32the people of Harim, three hundred and twenty; 33the people of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-five; 34the people of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five; 35the people of Senaah, three thousand six hundred and thirty.

36The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three; 37the sons of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two; 38the sons of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven; 39the sons of Harim, one thousand and seventeen.

40The Levites: the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the sons of Hodaviah,[a] seventy-four.

41The singers: the sons of Asaph, one hundred and twenty-eight.

42The sons of the gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, and the sons of Shobai, one hundred and thirty-nine *in* all.

43The Nethinim: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, 44the sons of Keros, the sons of Siaha,[a] the sons of Padon, 45the sons of Lebanah, the sons of Hagabah, the sons of Akkub, 46the sons of Hagab, the sons of Shalmai, the sons of Hanan, 47the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Reaiah, 48the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, the sons of Gazzam, 49the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, the sons of Besai, 50the sons of Asnah, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephusim,[a] 51the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur, 52the sons of Bazluth,[a] the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, 53the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Tamah, 54the sons of Neziah, and the sons of Hatipha.

55The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Peruda,[a] 56the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, 57the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth of Zebaim, and the sons of Ami.[a] 58All the Nethinim and the children of Solomon's servants were three hundred and ninety-two.

59And these *were* the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addan,[a] and Immer; but they could not identify their father's house or their genealogy,[b] whether they *were* of Israel: 60the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, and the sons of Nekoda, six hundred and fifty-two; 61and of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Koz,[a] and the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name. 62These sought their listing *among* those who were registered by genealogy, but they were not found; therefore they *were excluded* from the priesthood as defiled. 63And the governor[a] said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim.

Ezra 2:59–63

Because God had chosen the tribe of Levi to be priests and because ancient priests had no need for real estate, the Levites were not able to inherit land like the other tribes. Instead, they were supported by the gifts they received at the temple.

64The whole assembly together *was* forty-two thousand three hundred *and* sixty, 65besides their male and female servants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred men and women singers. 66Their horses *were* seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, 67their camels four hundred and thirty-five, and *their* donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

68*Some* of the heads of the fathers' *houses,* when they came to the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God, to erect it in its place: 69According to their ability, they gave to the treasury for the work sixty-one thousand

2:40 [a]Spelled *Hodevah* in Nehemiah 7:43
2:44 [a]Spelled *Sia* in Nehemiah 7:47
2:50 [a]Spelled *Nephishesim* in Nehemiah 7:52
2:52 [a]Spelled *Bazlith* in Nehemiah 7:54
2:55 [a]Spelled *Perida* in Nehemiah 7:57
2:57 [a]Spelled *Amon* in Nehemiah 7:59
2:59 [a]Spelled *Addon* in Nehemiah 7:61
[b]Literally *seed* **2:61** [a]Or *Hakkoz* **2:63** [a]Hebrew *Tirshatha*

gold drachmas, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priestly garments.

70So the priests and the Levites, *some* of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

Ezra 3:7

Lebanon was famous for its large, beautiful cedar trees. The wood from these trees was used to build everything from palaces and ships to coffins and musical instruments. Tyre and Sidon were Mediterranean port cities in Lebanon. After being cut down, the trees probably were taken to Tyre and Sidon, loaded onto rafts, and floated to Joppa. From there, they probably were hauled across land for the remaining thirty-five miles to Jerusalem.

WORSHIP RESTORED AT JERUSALEM

3 And when the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem. 2Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak[a] and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as *it is* written in the Law of Moses the man of God. 3Though fear *had come* upon them because of the people of those countries, they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, *both* the morning and evening burnt offerings. 4They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as *it is* written, and *offered* the daily burnt offerings in the number required by ordinance for each day. 5Afterwards *they offered* the regular burnt offering, and *those* for New Moons and for all the appointed feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and *those* of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the LORD. 6From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, although the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid. 7They also gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.

RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE BEGINS

8Now in the second month of the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Jeshua the son of Jozadak,[a] and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem, began *work* and appointed the Levites from twenty years old and above to oversee the work of the house of the LORD. 9Then Jeshua *with* his sons and brothers, Kadmiel *with* his sons, and the sons of Judah,[a] arose as one to oversee those working on the house of God: the sons of Henadad *with* their sons and their brethren the Levites.

10When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood[a] in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel. 11And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD:

"For *He is* good,
For His mercy *endures* forever toward Israel."[a]

Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

MERCY

How long does God's mercy last?

Ezra 3:11

12But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' *houses,* old men

3:2 [a]Spelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14
3:8 [a]Spelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14
3:9 [a]Or *Hodaviah* (compare 2:40)
3:10 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *they stationed the priests.*
3:11 [a]Compare Psalm 136:1

MIR MAKING IT REAL // EZRA 3:11

God Is Good "Good" can be a fleeting thing for us. Some days we think we have it, and sometimes it's hard to hold on to. A misunderstanding can turn really good friends into enemies overnight. We can have a good attitude toward one person and be totally rude to the next. Your favorite ice cream may taste really good, but after six scoops, it's gross. People can even get so confused that they believe that wrong and sinful things are good—like drugs, premarital sex, and pornography.

But God is nothing like we are—He doesn't change His mind, He never misunderstands, and He never loses His goodness. He is all good, all the time. You can't get too much of His goodness. Let these words about God's goodness remind you that everything He does is to help you, never to hurt you. If you find it hard to hold on to good things, grab hold of God—and He'll never let go of you. (See also: 2 Sam. 7:28; Ps. 31:19; 100:5.)

Words to Live By

Endures: The Hebrew word for "endures" is *amad* (aw-mad'). It means "to take a stand and refuse to be moved." To endure is to remain constant and never end. How incredible is it that God's mercy toward us is never ending. God has taken a stand on our behalf and refuses to be moved from our side.

who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, [13]so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.

RESISTANCE TO REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

4 Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the LORD God of Israel, [2]they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' *houses,* and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you *do;* and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here." [3]But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' *houses* of Israel said to them, "You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us." [4]Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, [5]and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Ezra 4:2

When the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria in 722 B.C., many Israelites were taken captive. At the same time, foreigners from many different regions were brought to live in Israel. The Israelites who remained in the land began to mingle with their new neighbors, eventually marrying them and adopting their idol worship. As a result, they were no longer a distinct people—either physically or spiritually.

REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM OPPOSED

[6]In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

Ezra 4:8–10

The Assyrians were particularly good at the non-violent prevention of rebellion in the territories they conquered. They accomplished this by deporting most of the native citizens of the region and bringing in foreigners from several other countries. By maintaining an even mixture of ethnic groups, the Assyrians prevented any one group from becoming powerful enough to revolt. As it turned out, Osnapper (who reigned from 669 to 627 B.C.) was the last powerful king of Assyria.

7In the days of Artaxerxes also, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabel, and the rest of their companions wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the letter *was* written in Aramaic script, and translated into the Aramaic language. 8Rehum[a] the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes in this fashion:

9From[a] Rehum the commander,
Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of
their companions—*representatives*
of the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites,
the Tarpelites, the people of Persia
and Erech and Babylon and Shushan,[b]
the Dehavites, the Elamites, 10and the
rest of the nations whom the great
and noble Osnapper took captive and
settled in the cities of Samaria and the
remainder beyond the River[a]—and so
forth.[b]

11(This *is* a copy of the letter that they sent him)

To King Artaxerxes from your
servants, the men *of the region* beyond
the River, and so forth:[a]

12Let it be known to the king that
the Jews who came up from you
have come to us at Jerusalem, and
are building the rebellious and evil
city, and are finishing *its* walls and
repairing the foundations. 13Let it
now be known to the king that, if this
city is built and the walls completed,
they will not pay tax, tribute, or
custom, and the king's treasury will
be diminished. 14Now because we
receive support from the palace, it
was not proper for us to see the king's
dishonor; therefore we have sent and
informed the king, 15that search may
be made in the book of the records of
your fathers. And you will find in the
book of the records and know that
this city *is* a rebellious city, harmful
to kings and provinces, and that they
have incited sedition within the city in
former times, for which cause this city
was destroyed.

16We inform the king that if this city is
rebuilt and its walls are completed,
the result will be that you will have no
dominion beyond the River.

17The king sent an answer:

To Rehum the commander, *to*
Shimshai the scribe, *to* the rest of their
companions who dwell in Samaria,
and *to* the remainder beyond the
River:

Peace, and so forth.[a]

18The letter which you sent to us has
been clearly read before me. 19And
I gave the command, and a search
has been made, and it was found
that this city in former times has
revolted against kings, and rebellion
and sedition have been fostered in it.
20There have also been mighty kings
over Jerusalem, who have ruled over
all *the region* beyond the River; and
tax, tribute, and custom were paid
to them. 21Now give the command to
make these men cease, that this city
may not be built until the command is
given by me.

22Take heed now that you do not fail to
do this. Why should damage increase
to the hurt of the kings?

4:8 [a]The original language of Ezra 4:8 through 6:18 is Aramaic. **4:9** [a]Literally *Then* [b]Or *Susa* **4:10** [a]That is, the Euphrates [b]Literally *and now* **4:11** [a]Literally *and now* **4:17** [a]Literally *and now*

[23]Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter *was* read before Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem against the Jews, and by force of arms made them cease. [24]Thus the work of the house of God which *is* at Jerusalem ceased, and it was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE RESUMED

5 Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who *were* in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, *who was* over them. [2]So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak[a] rose up and began to build the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God *were* with them, helping them.

[3]At the same time Tattenai the governor of *the region* beyond the River[a] and Shethar-Boznai and their companions came to them and spoke thus to them: "Who has commanded you to build this temple and finish this wall?" [4]Then, accordingly, we told them the names of the men who were constructing this building. [5]But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, so that they could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius. Then a written answer was returned concerning this *matter.* [6]This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai sent:

> The governor of *the region* beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and his companions, the Persians who *were in the region* beyond the River, to Darius the king.

[7](They sent a letter to him, in which was written thus)

> To Darius the king:
>
> All peace.
>
> [8]Let it be known to the king that we went into the province of Judea, to the temple of the great God, which is being built with heavy stones, and timber is being laid in the walls; and this work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands.
>
> [9]Then we asked those elders, *and* spoke thus to them: "Who commanded you to build this temple and to finish these walls?" [10]We also asked them their names to inform you, that we might write the names of the men who *were* chief among them.
>
> [11]And thus they returned us an answer, saying: "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and completed. [12]But because our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, *who* destroyed this temple and carried the people away to Babylon. [13]However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God. [14]Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple that *was* in Jerusalem and carried into the temple of Babylon—those King Cyrus took from the temple of Babylon, and they were given to one named Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor. [15]And he said to him, 'Take these articles; go, carry them to the temple *site* that *is* in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its former site.' [16]Then the same Sheshbazzar came *and* laid the foundation of the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem; but from that time even until now it has been under construction, and it is not finished."
>
> [17]Now therefore, if *it seems* good to the king, let a search be made in the king's treasure house, which *is* there in Babylon, whether it is *so* that a decree was issued by King Cyrus to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send us his pleasure concerning this *matter.*

5:2 [a]Spelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14
5:3 [a]That is, the Euphrates

THE DECREE OF DARIUS

6 Then King Darius issued a decree, and a search was made in the archives,[a] where the treasures were stored in Babylon. [2]And at Achmetha,[a] in the palace that *is* in the province of Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record *was* written thus:

[3]In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem: "Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits *and* its width sixty cubits, [4]*with* three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber. Let the expenses be paid from the king's treasury. [5]Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which *is* in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which *is* in Jerusalem, *each* to its place; and deposit *them* in the house of God"—

[6]Now *therefore,* Tattenai, governor of *the region* beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and your companions the Persians who *are* beyond the River, keep yourselves far from there. [7]Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God on its site.

[8]Moreover I issue a decree *as to* what you shall do for the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God: Let the cost be paid at the king's expense from taxes *on the region* beyond the River; this is to be given immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered. [9]And whatever they need—young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the request of the priests who *are* in Jerusalem—let it be given them day by day without fail, [10]that they may offer sacrifices of sweet aroma to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons.

[11]Also I issue a decree that whoever alters this edict, let a timber be pulled from his house and erected, and let him be hanged on it; and let his house be made a refuse heap because of this. [12]And may the God who causes His name to dwell there destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem. I Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently.

Ezra 6:15

The new temple was completed in 516 B.C., seventy years after Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the original. Cyrus had given the okay to rebuild the temple in 539 B.C., but the construction was delayed for fifteen years by the Samaritans, who opposed the rebuilding project. The new temple was much smaller and less impressive than the original. What's more, many of the original furnishings, including the ark of the covenant, were never found.

THE TEMPLE COMPLETED AND DEDICATED

[13]Then Tattenai, governor of *the region* beyond the River, Shethar-Boznai, and their companions diligently did according to what King Darius had sent. [14]So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished *it,* according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. [15]Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. [16]Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy. [17]And they offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of God, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all

6:1 [a]Literally *house of the scrolls* **6:2** [a]Probably *Ecbatana,* the ancient capital of Media

Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 18They assigned the priests to their divisions and the Levites to their divisions, over the service of God in Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses.

THE PASSOVER CELEBRATED

19And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month. 20For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them *were ritually* clean. And they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. 21Then the children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the LORD God of Israel. 22And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for the LORD made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

> ***Ezra 7:1–6***
> The fact that Ezra was able to trace his family tree back to Aaron, the brother of Moses and the first high priest, gave him authority in the eyes of the Israelites. Genealogies were extremely important in ancient Israel. As far as the Israelites were concerned, Ezra's family background gave him the right to teach and preach the Law of Moses.

THE ARRIVAL OF EZRA

7 Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, 2the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, 3the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, 4the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, 5the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest— 6this Ezra came up from Babylon; and he *was* a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. 7*Some* of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. 8And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which *was* in the seventh year of the king. 9On the first *day* of the first month he began *his* journey from Babylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. 10For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do *it,* and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

THE LETTER OF ARTAXERXES TO EZRA

11This *is* a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of His statutes to Israel:

12Artaxerxes,[a] king of kings,

To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven:

Perfect *peace,* and so forth.[b]

13I issue a decree that all those of the people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you. 14And whereas you are being sent by the king and his seven counselors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, with regard to the Law of your God which *is* in your hand; 15and *whereas you are* to carry the silver and gold which the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling *is* in Jerusalem; 16and *whereas* all the silver and gold that you may find in all the province of Babylon, along with the freewill offering of the people and the priests, *are to be* freely offered for the house of their God in Jerusalem— 17now therefore, be careful to buy with

7:12 [a]The original language of Ezra 7:12–26 is Aramaic. [b]Literally *and now*

this money bulls, rams, and lambs,
with their grain offerings and their
drink offerings, and offer them on
the altar of the house of your God in
Jerusalem.

18And whatever seems good to you and
your brethren to do with the rest of the
silver and the gold, do it according to
the will of your God. 19Also the articles
that are given to you for the service of
the house of your God, deliver in full
before the God of Jerusalem. 20And
whatever more may be needed for the
house of your God, which you may
have occasion to provide, pay *for it*
from the king's treasury.

21And I, *even* I, Artaxerxes the king,
issue a decree to all the treasurers
who *are in the region* beyond the
River, that whatever Ezra the priest,
the scribe of the Law of the God of
heaven, may require of you, let it be
done diligently, 22up to one hundred
talents of silver, one hundred kors of
wheat, one hundred baths of wine,
one hundred baths of oil, and salt
without prescribed limit. 23Whatever
is commanded by the God of heaven,
let it diligently be done for the house
of the God of heaven. For why should
there be wrath against the realm of the
king and his sons?

24Also we inform you that it shall not
be lawful to impose tax, tribute, or
custom on any of the priests, Levites,
singers, gatekeepers, Nethinim, or
servants of this house of God. 25And
you, Ezra, according to your God-
given wisdom, set magistrates and
judges who may judge all the people
who *are in the region* beyond the River,
all such as know the laws of your God;
and teach those who do not know
them. 26Whoever will not observe
the law of your God and the law of
the king, let judgment be executed
speedily on him, whether *it be* death,
or banishment, or confiscation of
goods, or imprisonment.

27Blessed *be* the LORD God of our fa-
thers, who has put *such a thing* as this in
the king's heart, to beautify the house of
the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem, 28and has
extended mercy to me before the king and
his counselors, and before all the king's
mighty princes.

So I was encouraged, as the hand of the
LORD my God *was* upon me; and I gathered
leading men of Israel to go up with me.

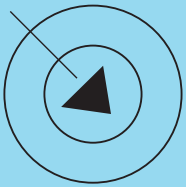
HEADS OF FAMILIES WHO RETURNED WITH EZRA

8 These *are* the heads of their fathers'
houses, and *this is* the genealogy of
those who went up with me from
Babylon, in the reign of King Artaxerxes: 2of
the sons of Phinehas, Gershom; of the sons
of Ithamar, Daniel; of the sons of David,
Hattush; 3of the sons of Shecaniah, of the
sons of Parosh, Zechariah; and registered
with him *were* one hundred and fifty males;
4of the sons of Pahath-Moab, Eliehoenai
the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hun-
dred males; 5of the sons of Shechaniah,[a]
Ben-Jahaziel, and with him three hundred
males; 6of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of
Jonathan, and with him fifty males; 7of the
sons of Elam, Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah,
and with him seventy males; 8of the sons of
Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael,
and with him eighty males; 9of the sons of
Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with
him two hundred and eighteen males; 10of
the sons of Shelomith,[a] Ben-Josiphiah, and
with him one hundred and sixty males; 11of
the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of
Bebai, and with him twenty-eight males;
12of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son
of Hakkatan, and with him one hundred
and ten males; 13of the last sons of Adoni-
kam, whose names *are* these—Eliphelet,
Jeiel, and Shemaiah—and with them sixty
males; 14also of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai
and Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

SERVANTS FOR THE TEMPLE

15Now I gathered them by the river that
flows to Ahava, and we camped there three
days. And I looked among the people and
the priests, and found none of the sons of
Levi there. 16Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel,

8:5 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *the sons of Zatho, Shechaniah.*
8:10 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *the sons of Banni, Shelomith.*



PROMISE

God promises to take care of those who truly seek Him.

"The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him" (Ezra 8:22b).

Are you a genuine seeker? When you're with other people who are worshiping the Lord, where is your heart? In other words, do you *worship* when you worship? Is your mind participating in the things that are being said? Or are you just pretending: eyes closed, mind wandering? Bible open, words blurry? Singing songs because you know them, not because you mean them? Don't answer these questions out loud, and don't start feeling guilty if you know that all the answers are yes in your life. God already knows the condition of your heart.

The point is that God takes care of everyone who truly worships Him. Do you long to be cared for by God? Then worship Him from your heart. Even if you don't feel super-spiritual, tell Him what you think and how you feel. Think about how awesome He is, and then tell Him about it. When you sing a song, really pay attention to the words and sing them as if you believe them. Talk to God consistently. Read the Bible so you can get to know God better.

The more real He is to you, the more true your worship will be. Don't be lazy or distracted. No one can take care of you the way God can. Just be a genuine seeker.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Jeremiah 29:13; John 4:23, 24

Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, leaders; also for Joiarib and Elnathan, men of understanding. 17And I gave them a command for Iddo the chief man at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say to Iddo *and* his brethren[a] the Nethinim at the place Casiphia—that they should bring us servants for the house of our God. 18Then, by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, with his sons and brothers, eighteen men; 19and Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and their sons, twenty men; 20also of the Nethinim, whom David and the leaders had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinim. All of them were designated by name.

FASTING AND PRAYER FOR PROTECTION

21Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. 22For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God *is* upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath *are* against all those who forsake Him." 23So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.

GIFTS FOR THE TEMPLE

24And I separated twelve of the leaders of the priests—Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them— 25and weighed out to them the silver, the gold, and the articles, the offering for the house of our God which the king and his counselors and his princes, and all Israel *who were* present, had offered. 26I weighed into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, silver articles *weighing* one

8:17 [a]Following Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *to Iddo his brother;* Septuagint reads *to their brethren.*

hundred talents, one hundred talents of gold, 27twenty gold basins *worth* a thousand drachmas, and two vessels of fine polished bronze, precious as gold. 28And I said to them, "You *are* holy to the LORD; the articles *are* holy also; and the silver and the gold *are* a freewill offering to the LORD God of your fathers. 29Watch and keep *them* until you weigh *them* before the leaders of the priests and the Levites and heads of the fathers' *houses* of Israel in Jerusalem, *in* the chambers of the house of the LORD." 30So the priests and the Levites received the silver and the gold and the articles by weight, to bring *them* to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

THE RETURN TO JERUSALEM

31Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. And the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the road. 32So we came to Jerusalem, and stayed there three days.

Ezra 8:31–35
Most of the tribes of Israel were not able to return to Jerusalem after the northern kingdom was conquered in 722 B.C. The two tribes that were able to make the trip back were Judah and Benjamin, who offered sacrifices on behalf of the missing tribes.

33Now on the fourth day the silver and the gold and the articles were weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest, and with him *was* Eleazar the son of Phinehas; with them *were* the Levites, Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui, 34with the number *and* weight of everything. All the weight was written down at that time.

35The children of those who had been carried away captive, who had come from the captivity, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve male goats *as* a sin offering. All *this was* a burnt offering to the LORD.

36And they delivered the king's orders to the king's satraps and the governors *in the region* beyond the River. So they gave support to the people and the house of God.

INTERMARRIAGE WITH PAGANS

9 When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. 2For they have taken some of their daughters *as wives* for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of *those* lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass." 3So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. 4Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

LEADERSHIP
Can leaders' morals affect their people?
Ezra 9:2

SIN
What should be our attitude when we realize we've sinned?
Ezra 9:6

5At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God. 6And I said: "O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than *our* heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens. 7Since the days of our fathers to this day we *have been* very guilty, and for our iniquities we, our kings, *and* our priests have been delivered into the hand

of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as *it is* this day. 8And now for a little while grace has been *shown* from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage. 9For we *were* slaves. Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but He extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to revive us, to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. 10And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments, 11which You commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land, with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from one end to another with their impurity. 12Now therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons; and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land, and leave *it* as an inheritance to your children forever.' 13And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, since You our God have punished us less than our iniquities *deserve,* and have given us *such* deliverance as this, 14should we again break Your commandments, and join in marriage with the people *committing* these abominations? Would You not be angry with us until You had consumed *us,* so that *there would be* no remnant or survivor? 15O LORD God of Israel, You *are* righteous, for we are left as a remnant, as *it is* this day. Here we *are* before You, in our guilt, though no one can stand before You because of this!"

CONFESSION OF IMPROPER MARRIAGES

10 Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly. 2And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, "We have trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this. 3Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. 4Arise, for *this* matter *is* your *responsibility.* We also *are* with you. Be of good courage, and do *it.*"

HOPE
Will God still love us even if we sin?
Ezra 10:2

Ezra 10:2

"Peoples of the land" were not necessarily those of another race, but were any who worshiped "foreign" gods—any persons who worshiped a deity or deities other than the Lord God of Israel.

5Then Ezra arose, and made the leaders of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel swear an oath that they would do according to this word. So they swore an oath. 6Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib; and *when* he came there, he ate no bread and drank no water, for he mourned because of the guilt of those from the captivity.

7And they issued a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the descendants of the captivity, that they must gather at Jerusalem, 8and that whoever would not come within three days, according to the instructions of the leaders and elders, all his property would be confiscated, and he himself would be separated from the assembly of those from the captivity.

9So all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered at Jerusalem within three days. It *was* the ninth month, on the twentieth of the month; and all the people sat in the open square of the house of God, trembling because of *this* matter and because of

heavy rain. 10Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have transgressed and have taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel. 11Now therefore, make confession to the LORD God of your fathers, and do His will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the pagan wives."

12Then all the assembly answered and said with a loud voice, "Yes! As you have said, so we must do. 13But *there are* many people; *it is* the season for heavy rain, and we are not able to stand outside. Nor *is this* the work of one or two days, for *there are* many of us who have transgressed in this matter. 14Please, let the leaders of our entire assembly stand; and let all those in our cities who have taken pagan wives come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of their cities, until the fierce wrath of our God is turned away from us in this matter." 15Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah opposed this, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite gave them support.

16Then the descendants of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, *with* certain heads of the fathers' *households,* were set apart by the fathers' households, each of them by name; and they sat down on the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. 17By the first day of the first month they finished *questioning* all the men who had taken pagan wives.

PAGAN WIVES PUT AWAY

18And among the sons of the priests who had taken pagan wives *the following* were found of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak,[a] and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. 19And they gave their promise that they would put away their wives; and *being* guilty, *they presented* a ram of the flock as their trespass offering.

20Also of the sons of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah; 21of the sons of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziah; 22of the sons of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

23Also of the Levites: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (the same *is* Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24Also of the singers: Eliashib; and of the gatekeepers: Shallum, Telem, and Uri.

25And others of Israel: of the sons of Parosh: Ramiah, Jeziah, Malchiah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malchijah, and Benaiah; 26of the sons of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Eliah; 27of the sons of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza; 28of the sons of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, *and* Athlai; 29of the sons of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, *and* Ramoth;[a] 30of the sons of Pahath-Moab: Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh; 31*of* the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, 32Benjamin, Malluch, *and* Shemariah; 33of the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, *and* Shimei; 34of the sons of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel, 35Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluh,[a] 36Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, 37Mattaniah, Mattenai, Jaasai,[a] 38Bani, Binnui, Shimei, 39Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, 40Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, 41Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, 42Shallum, Amariah, *and* Joseph; 43of the sons of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai,[a] Joel, *and* Benaiah.

44All these had taken pagan wives, and *some* of them had wives *by whom* they had children.

10:18 [a]Spelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14
10:29 [a]Or *Jeremoth* **10:35** [a]Or *Cheluhi,* or *Cheluhu* **10:37** [a]Or *Jaasu* **10:43** [a]Or *Jaddu*

Nehemiah

DATE OF WRITING: 457–444 B.C.
AUTHOR: LIKELY NEHEMIAH
THEME: A LOOK AT GODLY LEADERSHIP, COOPERATION, AND OPPOSITION TO SUCCESS
PURPOSE: LEADERS WITH VISION AND COURAGE CAN SET THE DIRECTION OF A SOCIETY.

OUTLINE

1:1—2:10 ..... King Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem
2:11—4:23 ..... Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem
5:1–19 ..... Nehemiah's Concern for the Poor
6:1—7:3 ..... The Wall Is Finished, in Spite of Enemy Plots
7:4–73 ..... Exiles Who Returned
8:1–18 ..... Ezra Reads God's Law to the People, and They Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths)
9:1–37 ..... The People Confess Their Sins
9:38—10:39 ..... The People Sign an Agreement to Obey the Lord
11:1–36 ..... The People Who Settled in Jerusalem and Judah
12:1–26 ..... Priests and Levites Who Returned from Exile
12:27–47 ..... Nehemiah Dedicates the City Wall
13:1–31 ..... Changes Nehemiah Made

KEY VERSE:

So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading (Nehemiah 8:8).

THEN /// Nehemiah was the administrative assistant and *wine taster* for the king. That means one of his job responsibilities was to taste the king's wine to make sure it wasn't poisoned.

Short of the possible poisoning scenario, Nehemiah really did have a lot of authority and prestige in his position as a government official. He asked for a leave of absence, though, to travel back home to Jerusalem. The temple was already rebuilt, but the city wall was still in ruins. Nehemiah wanted to help. Amazingly enough, the king let him go.

The Book of Nehemiah is famous for its down-to-earth story about organization. Nehemiah and his workers finished the wall in fifty-two days. That was a huge feat considering the wall encircled the entire city and was wide enough for the workmen to walk all the way around the city on top of it. It was even more of a feat considering they had to do a lot of the work with a tool in one hand and a weapon in the other.

NOW /// The completion of the walls around Jerusalem is not the whole story of Nehemiah. As a leader, Nehemiah faced fierce opposition from enemies that surrounded him. They tried to intimidate him and trick him, but he continued to trust in God and never gave in. This shows us a strong picture of godly leadership that we can follow today.

After the walls were built around Jerusalem, there was still more restoration to come. The city of Jerusalem was repopulated, and the people continued to be restored to God. He sent prophets and leaders to teach, motivate, and guide them toward righteousness. In spite of all their mess-ups, mistakes, and unfaithfulness, God accomplished His will. He does the same thing today. He calls godly leaders to teach, motivate, and guide us. In spite of our mess-ups, He forgives and restores us. His faithfulness is sure and He will always accomplish His will.

REALITY CHECK /// Sometimes we think that God will use only people whose job is in the church or in a foreign country as a missionary.

That's not true at all. God uses people who have faith in Him, wherever they are. Nehemiah is a great example of this. Nehemiah was a government official. God did change Nehemiah's place of operation from a palace to a city in the course of using him, but He didn't change him into a prophet or a priest.

Regardless the location of Nehemiah's job, his gift was the gift of organization. God used that gift for His glory whether Nehemiah was serving a king or serving His people.

Even if it doesn't feel like you are in a place where you can accomplish much for God, the truth is that He can use you and the specific gifts He's given you regardless where you are. Then, just like He did with Nehemiah, He will use you to bring about some pretty amazing things for His glory.

NEHEMIAH PRAYS FOR HIS PEOPLE

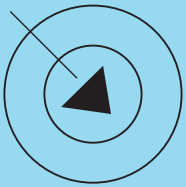
1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.

It came to pass in the month of Chislev, *in* the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan[a] the citadel, 2that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province *are* there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem *is* also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."

4So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *for many* days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

5And I said: "I pray, LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, *You* who keep *Your* covenant and mercy with those who love You[a] and observe Your[b] commandments, 6please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before

1:1 [a]Or *Susa* **1:5** [a]Literally *Him* [b]Literally *His*



PROMISE

God promises you can always return to Him.

"Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name'" (Neh. 1:8, 9).

So you haven't spoken to God in a long time. Okay, a really long time. You made this big commitment, told all your family and friends, started going to church, went on a few retreats, sang around a campfire, and bought a Bible with your name on it—the full deal. But then you never followed through. You put the Bible in a drawer, slept in on Sundays, stopped talking to God, and eventually you just turned your back and walked away.

It's been a long time—months or even years. The yearning that drew you to God is back, but even bigger, and now there's guilt—the guilt that comes from meeting the Maker of the universe and then trying to live as if He doesn't exist. Is God disappointed? Probably. Has He given up on you? Nope. So what's next? Return to God. He is kind and compassionate. He will welcome you home. Don't delay—every day lived apart from God is a totally wasted day.

SEE FOR YOURSELF // Joel 2:12, 13; Romans 3:23–26

Nehemiah 1:1

Nehemiah was a servant of the king of Persia. At the beginning of the story, he was in Shushan (in what is now Iran), where Persian kings went for the winter. Nehemiah was stationed almost a thousand miles away from his homeland.

EMOTIONS

Should we admit our true feelings to God?

Nehemiah 1:4

You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. 7We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. 8Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, '*If* you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations;[a] 9but *if* you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, *yet* I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.'[a] 10Now these *are* Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. 11O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."

For I was the king's cupbearer.

NEHEMIAH SENT TO JUDAH

2 And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, *when* wine *was* before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before. 2Therefore the king said to me,

1:8 [a]Leviticus 26:33 **1:9** [a]Deuteronomy 30:2–5

"Why *is* your face sad, since you *are* not sick? This *is* nothing but sorrow of heart."

So I became dreadfully afraid, 3and said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, *lies* waste, and its gates are burned with fire?"

PRAYER
When we pray, should we always kneel?
Nehemiah 2:3–5

4Then the king said to me, "What do you request?"

So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it."

6Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), "How long will your journey be? And when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

7Furthermore I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors *of the region* beyond the River,[a] that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah, 8and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which *pertains* to the temple,[a] for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy." And the king granted *them* to me according to the good hand of my God upon me.

9Then I went to the governors *in the region* beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. 10When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official[a] heard *of it,* they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.

NEHEMIAH VIEWS THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

11So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. 12Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode. 13And I went out by night through the Valley Gate to the Serpent Well and the Refuse Gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were burned with fire. 14Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but *there was* no room for the animal under me to pass. 15So I went up in the night by the valley, and viewed the wall; then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. 16And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the others who did the work.

17Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lies* waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach." 18And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me.

So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to *this* good *work.*

19But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard *of it,* they laughed at us and despised us, and said, "What *is* this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?"

Nehemiah 2:10
A devastating Assyrian attack in 722 B.C. led to the fall of Samaria. The Assyrians took many Israelites captive and brought in many foreigners to live in Canaan. The Israelites left behind started marrying, having kids with the foreigners, and they also adopted their idol worship. This mingling continued generation after generation until the distinction between the Israelites and the foreigners disappeared altogether. The descendants of these mixed marriages were known as Samaritans.

2:7 [a]That is, the Euphrates, and so elsewhere in this book **2:8** [a]Literally *house* **2:10** [a]Literally *servant,* and so elsewhere in this book

[20]So I answered them, and said to them, "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem."

REBUILDING THE WALL

3 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests and built the Sheep Gate; they consecrated it and hung its doors. They built as far as the Tower of the Hundred,[a] *and* consecrated it, then as far as the Tower of Hananel. [2]Next to *Eliashib*[a] the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.

[3]Also the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors with its bolts and bars. [4]And next to them Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz,[a] made repairs. Next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs. Next to them Zadok the son of Baana made repairs. [5]Next to them the Tekoites made repairs; but their nobles did not put their shoulders[a] to the work of their Lord.

[6]Moreover Jehoiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors, with its bolts and bars. [7]And next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite, Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, repaired the residence[a] of the governor *of the region* beyond the River. [8]Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs. Also next to him Hananiah, one[a] of the perfumers, made repairs; and they fortified Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. [9]And next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, leader of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs. [10]Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph made repairs in front of his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabniah made repairs.

[11]Malchijah the son of Harim and Hashub the son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section, as well as the Tower of the Ovens. [12]And next to him was Shallum the son of Hallohesh, leader of half the district of Jerusalem; he and his daughters made repairs.

[13]Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They built it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and *repaired* a thousand cubits of the wall as far as the Refuse Gate.

[14]Malchijah the son of Rechab, leader of the district of Beth Haccerem, repaired the Refuse Gate; he built it and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

[15]Shallun the son of Col-Hozeh, leader of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate; he built it, covered it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and repaired the wall of the Pool of Shelah by the King's Garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David. [16]After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, leader of half the district of Beth Zur, made repairs as far as *the place* in front of the tombs[a] of David, to the man-made pool, and as far as the House of the Mighty.

[17]After him the Levites, *under* Rehum the son of Bani, made repairs. Next to him Hashabiah, leader of half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district. [18]After him their brethren, *under* Bavai[a] the son of Henadad, leader of the *other* half of the district of Keilah, made repairs. [19]And next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, the leader of Mizpah, repaired another section in front of the Ascent to the Armory at the buttress. [20]After him Baruch the son of Zabbai[a] carefully repaired the other section, from the buttress to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. [21]After him Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz,[a] repaired another section, from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib.

[22]And after him the priests, the men of the plain, made repairs. [23]After him Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs opposite their house. After them Azariah the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, made repairs by his house. [24]After him Binnui the son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah to the buttress, even as far as the corner. [25]Palal the son of

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3:1 [a]Hebrew *Hammeah,* also at 12:39
3:2 [a]Literally *On his hand* **3:4** [a]Or *Hakkoz*
3:5 [a]Literally *necks* **3:7** [a]Literally *throne*
3:8 [a]Literally *the son* **3:16** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *tomb.* **3:18** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Syriac read *Binnui* (compare verse 24). **3:20** [a]A few Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Zaccai.*
3:21 [a]Or *Hakkoz*

Uzai *made repairs* opposite the buttress, and on the tower which projects from the king's upper house that *was* by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh *made repairs.*

26Moreover the Nethinim who dwelt in Ophel *made repairs* as far as *the place* in front of the Water Gate toward the east, and on the projecting tower. 27After them the Tekoites repaired another section, next to the great projecting tower, and as far as the wall of Ophel.

28Beyond the Horse Gate the priests made repairs, each in front of his *own* house. 29After them Zadok the son of Immer made repairs in front of his *own* house. After him Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, made repairs. 30After him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah made repairs in front of his dwelling. 31After him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the Nethinim and of the merchants, in front of the Miphkad[a] Gate, and as far as the upper room at the corner. 32And between the upper room at the corner, as far as the Sheep Gate, the goldsmiths and the merchants made repairs.

THE WALL DEFENDED AGAINST ENEMIES

4 But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. 2And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—*stones* that are burned?"

3Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up *on it,* he will break down their stone wall."

4Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! 5Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked *You* to anger before the builders.

6So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its *height,* for the people had a mind to work.

7Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, 8and all of them conspired together to come *and* attack Jerusalem and create confusion. 9Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

> ***Nehemiah 4:7***
> Jerusalem was literally surrounded by enemies: Sanballat was from Samaria, which was north of Jerusalem; Tobiah was an Ammonite whose tribe lived east of Jerusalem; the Ashdodites were a Philistine tribe from west of Jerusalem; and the Arabs were natives of the region south of Jerusalem.

10Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and *there is* so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall."

11And our adversaries said, "They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease."

12So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times, "From whatever place you turn, *they will be* upon us."

> ENEMIES
> ***Should we be afraid of our enemies?***
> Nehemiah 4:14

13Therefore I positioned *men* behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. 14And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your

3:31 [a]Literally *Inspection* or *Recruiting*

sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses."

15And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and *that* God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work. 16So it was, from that time on, *that* half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and *wore* armor; and the leaders *were* behind all the house of Judah. 17Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. 18Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet *was* beside me.

19Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, "The work *is* great and extensive, and we are separated far from one another on the wall. 20Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."

21So we labored in the work, and half of *the men*[a] held the spears from daybreak until the stars appeared. 22At the same time I also said to the people, "Let each man and his servant stay at night in Jerusalem, that they may be our guard by night and a working party by day." 23So neither I, my brethren, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me took off our clothes, *except* that everyone took them off for washing.

NEHEMIAH DEALS WITH OPPRESSION

5 And there was a great outcry of the people and their wives against their Jewish brethren. 2For there were those who said, "We, our sons, and our daughters *are* many; therefore let us get grain, that we may eat and live."

3There were also *some* who said, "We have mortgaged our lands and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain because of the famine."

4There were also those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax *on* our lands and vineyards. 5Yet now our flesh *is* as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and *some* of our daughters have been brought into slavery. *It is* not in our power *to redeem them,* for other men have our lands and vineyards."

6And I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. 7After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, "Each of you is exacting usury from his brother." So I called a great assembly against them. 8And I said to them, "According to our ability we have redeemed our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brethren? Or should they be sold to us?"

ENCOURAGEMENT
Should we stand strong for people who need help?
Nehemiah 5:7–11

Then they were silenced and found nothing *to say.* 9Then I said, "What you are doing *is* not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies? 10I also, *with* my brethren and my servants, am lending them money and grain. Please, let us stop this usury! 11Restore now to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also a hundredth of the money and the grain, the new wine and the oil, that you have charged them."

12So they said, "We will restore *it,* and will require nothing from them; we will do as you say."

Then I called the priests, and required an oath from them that they would do according to this promise. 13Then I shook out the fold of my garment[a] and said, "So may God shake out each man from his house, and from his property, who does not perform this promise. Even thus may he be shaken out and emptied."

And all the assembly said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD. Then the people did according to this promise.

THE GENEROSITY OF NEHEMIAH

14Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land

4:21 [a]Literally *them* **5:13** [a]Literally *my lap*

of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor's provisions. 15But the former governors who *were* before me laid burdens on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people, but I did not do so, because of the fear of God. 16Indeed, I also continued the work on this wall, and we[a] did not buy any land. All my servants *were* gathered there for the work.

17And at my table *were* one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. 18Now *that* which was prepared daily *was* one ox *and* six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of wine. Yet in spite of this I did not demand the governor's provisions, because the bondage was heavy on this people.

19Remember me, my God, for good, *according to* all that I have done for this people.

CONSPIRACY AGAINST NEHEMIAH

6 Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and *that* there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), 2that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm.

3So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

4But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.

5Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. 6In it *was* written:

> It is reported among the nations, and Geshem[a] says, *that* you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king. 7And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, "*There is* a king in Judah!" Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together.

8Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart."

9For they all *were trying to* make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done."

Now therefore, *O God,* strengthen my hands.

10Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who *was* a secret informer; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you."

11And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who *is there* such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!" 12Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced *this* prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. 13For this reason he *was* hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so *that* they might have *cause* for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

Nehemiah 6:11–13

Why didn't Nehemiah hide in the temple? Only priests, the descendants of the tribe of Levi, were allowed in the temple. Nehemiah wasn't a priest, so hiding in the temple would have been a violation of God's law. Nehemiah was trying to lead the people back to following God's ways and he refused to break the law himself.

14My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would have made me afraid.

5:16 [a]Following Masoretic Text; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *I.* **6:6** [a]Hebrew *Gashmu*

THE WALL COMPLETED

15So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth *day* of Elul, in fifty-two days. 16And it happened, when all our enemies heard *of it,* and all the nations around us saw *these things,* that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

17Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and *the letters of* Tobiah came to them. 18For many in Judah were pledged to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. 19Also they reported his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him. Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.

7 Then it was, when the wall was built and I had hung the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, 2that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the leader of the citadel, for he *was* a faithful man and feared God more than many.

3And I said to them, "Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they stand *guard,* let them shut and bar the doors; and appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, one at his watch station and another in front of his own house."

THE CAPTIVES WHO RETURNED TO JERUSALEM

4Now the city *was* large and spacious, but the people in it *were* few, and the houses *were* not rebuilt. 5Then my God put it into my heart to gather the nobles, the rulers, and the people, that they might be registered by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of those who had come up in the first *return,* and found written in it:

6These[a] *are* the people of the province
who came back from the captivity,
of those who had been carried away,
whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of
Babylon had carried away, and who
returned to Jerusalem and Judah,
everyone to his city.

7Those who came with Zerubbabel
were Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah,
Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan,
Mispereth,[a] Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah.

The number of the men of the people of
Israel: 8the sons of Parosh, two thousand
one hundred and seventy-two;
9the sons of Shephatiah, three hundred
and seventy-two;
10the sons of Arah, six hundred and
fifty-two;
11the sons of Pahath-Moab, of the sons
of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight
hundred and eighteen;
12the sons of Elam, one thousand two
hundred and fifty-four;
13the sons of Zattu, eight hundred and
forty-five;
14the sons of Zaccai, seven hundred and
sixty;
15the sons of Binnui,[a] six hundred and
forty-eight;
16the sons of Bebai, six hundred and
twenty-eight;
17the sons of Azgad, two thousand three
hundred and twenty-two;
18the sons of Adonikam, six hundred
and sixty-seven;
19the sons of Bigvai, two thousand and
sixty-seven;
20the sons of Adin, six hundred and
fifty-five;
21the sons of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-
eight;
22the sons of Hashum, three hundred
and twenty-eight;
23the sons of Bezai, three hundred and
twenty-four;
24the sons of Hariph,[a] one hundred and
twelve;
25the sons of Gibeon,[a] ninety-five;
26the men of Bethlehem and Netophah,
one hundred and eighty-eight;
27the men of Anathoth, one hundred
and twenty-eight;
28the men of Beth Azmaveth,[a] forty-two;
29the men of Kirjath Jearim, Chephirah,
and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-
three;
30the men of Ramah and Geba, six
hundred and twenty-one;

7:6 [a]Compare verses 6–72 with Ezra 2:1–70
7:7 [a]Spelled *Mispar* in Ezra 2:2 **7:15** [a]Spelled *Bani* in Ezra 2:10 **7:24** [a]Called *Jorah* in Ezra 2:18 **7:25** [a]Called *Gibbar* in Ezra 2:20
7:28 [a]Called *Azmaveth* in Ezra 2:24

31the men of Michmas, one hundred and
twenty-two;
32the men of Bethel and Ai, one hundred
and twenty-three;
33the men of the other Nebo, fifty-two;
34the sons of the other Elam, one
thousand two hundred and fifty-four;
35the sons of Harim, three hundred and
twenty;
36the sons of Jericho, three hundred and
forty-five;
37the sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven
hundred and twenty-one;
38the sons of Senaah, three thousand
nine hundred and thirty.

39The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, of the
house of Jeshua, nine hundred and
seventy-three;
40the sons of Immer, one thousand and
fifty-two;
41the sons of Pashhur, one thousand two
hundred and forty-seven;
42the sons of Harim, one thousand and
seventeen.

43The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, of
Kadmiel, *and* of the sons of Hodevah,[a]
seventy-four.
44The singers: the sons of Asaph, one
hundred and forty-eight.

45The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum,
the sons of Ater,
the sons of Talmon,
the sons of Akkub,
the sons of Hatita,
the sons of Shobai, one hundred and
thirty-eight.

46The Nethinim: the sons of Ziha,
the sons of Hasupha,
the sons of Tabbaoth,
47the sons of Keros,
the sons of Sia,[a]
the sons of Padon,
48the sons of Lebana,[a]
the sons of Hagaba,[b]
the sons of Salmai,[c]
49the sons of Hanan,
the sons of Giddel,
the sons of Gahar,
50the sons of Reaiah,
the sons of Rezin,
the sons of Nekoda,
51the sons of Gazzam,
the sons of Uzza,
the sons of Paseah,
52the sons of Besai,
the sons of Meunim,
the sons of Nephishesim,[a]
53the sons of Bakbuk,
the sons of Hakupha,
the sons of Harhur,
54the sons of Bazlith,[a]
the sons of Mehida,
the sons of Harsha,
55the sons of Barkos,
the sons of Sisera,
the sons of Tamah,
56the sons of Neziah,
and the sons of Hatipha.

57The sons of Solomon's servants: the
sons of Sotai,
the sons of Sophereth,
the sons of Perida,[a]
58the sons of Jaala,
the sons of Darkon,
the sons of Giddel,
59the sons of Shephatiah,
the sons of Hattil,
the sons of Pochereth of Zebaim,
and the sons of Amon.[a]
60All the Nethinim, and the sons of
Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred
and ninety-two.

61And these *were* the ones who came up
from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub,
Addon,[a] and Immer, but they could not
identify their father's house nor their
lineage, whether they *were* of Israel:
62the sons of Delaiah,
the sons of Tobiah,
the sons of Nekoda, six hundred and
forty-two;
63and of the priests: the sons of Habaiah,
the sons of Koz,[a]

7:43 [a]Spelled *Hodaviah* in Ezra 2:40
7:47 [a]Spelled *Siaha* in Ezra 2:44
7:48 [a]Masoretic Text reads *Lebanah.*
[b]Masoretic Text reads *Hogabah.* [c]Or *Shalmai,*
or *Shamlai* **7:52** [a]Spelled *Nephusim* in Ezra
2:50 **7:54** [a]Spelled *Bazluth* in Ezra 2:52
7:57 [a]Spelled *Peruda* in Ezra 2:55 **7:59** [a]Spelled
Ami in Ezra 2:57 **7:61** [a]Spelled *Addan* in Ezra
2:59 **7:63** [a]Or *Hakkoz*

the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name.
64These sought their listing *among* those who were registered by genealogy, but it was not found; therefore they were excluded from the priesthood as defiled.
65And the governor[a] said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim.

66Altogether the whole assembly *was* forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, 67besides their male and female servants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five men and women singers.
68Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, 69*their* camels four hundred and thirty-five, *and* donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

70And some of the heads of the fathers' *houses* gave to the work. The governor[a] gave to the treasury one thousand gold drachmas, fifty basins, and five hundred and thirty priestly garments.
71Some of the heads of the fathers' *houses* gave to the treasury of the work twenty thousand gold drachmas, and two thousand two hundred silver minas. 72And that which the rest of the people gave *was* twenty thousand gold drachmas, two thousand silver minas, and sixty-seven priestly garments.

73So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, *some* of the people, the Nethinim, and all Israel dwelt in their cities.

EZRA READS THE LAW

When the seventh month came, the children of Israel *were* in their cities.

8 Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel. 2So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who *could* hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. 3Then he read from it in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* to the Book of the Law.

4So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, *and* Meshullam.
5And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was *standing* above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. 6And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God.

Then all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

7Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people *stood* in their place. 8So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

BIBLE
Is it important to have others help us understand the Bible?
Nehemiah 8:8

9And Nehemiah, who *was* the governor,[a] Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day *is* holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

10Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is

7:65 [a]Hebrew *Tirshatha* **7:70** [a]Hebrew *Tirshatha* **8:9** [a]Hebrew *Tirshatha*

prepared; for *this* day *is* holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

11So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day *is* holy; do not be grieved." 12And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

13Now on the second day the heads of the fathers' *houses* of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand the words of the Law. 14And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, 15and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as *it is* written."

> ***Nehemiah 8:14***
> The Feast of Booths was a yearly harvest celebration. The people made temporary shelters out of leafy tree branches and then lived in those shelters for a short time. The Feast was intended to remind the Israelites of how their ancestors wandered homeless in the desert after Moses led them out of Egypt.

16Then the people went out and brought *them* and made themselves booths, each one on the roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. 17So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness. 18Also day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day *there was* a sacred assembly, according to the *prescribed* manner.

THE PEOPLE CONFESS THEIR SINS

9 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads.[a] 2Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. 3And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God *for one*–fourth of the day; and *for another* fourth they confessed and worshiped the LORD their God.

4Then Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, *and* Chenani stood on the stairs of the Levites and cried out with a loud voice to the LORD their God. 5And the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, said:

"Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God
Forever and ever!

"Blessed be Your glorious name,
Which is exalted above all blessing
and praise!
6You alone *are* the LORD;
You have made heaven,
The heaven of heavens, with all their
host,
The earth and everything on it,
The seas and all that is in them,
And You preserve them all.
The host of heaven worships You.

7"You *are* the LORD God,
Who chose Abram,
And brought him out of Ur of the
Chaldeans,
And gave him the name Abraham;
8You found his heart faithful before
You,
And made a covenant with him
To give the land of the Canaanites,
The Hittites, the Amorites,
The Perizzites, the Jebusites,
And the Girgashites—
To give *it* to his descendants.

9:1 [a]Literally *earth on them*

MAKING IT REAL // NEHEMIAH 9:6

Life Preserver God spoke everything you see into existence. He made you and every person who has ever lived before you. He didn't copy someone else's idea. He didn't improve on an old design. The earth and the heavens and all things in them are totally original and straight from the mind of God. What a huge concept to process!

Because of His place as Creator, God deserves your respect and your honor. You don't just get physical life from Him; you get spiritual life from Him. He is the Source of the things that make you so alive—the ability to enjoy life, the capacity for love, laughter, peace, joy, work, play, and rest. You can go to Him and get replenished when you run low. He *is* your Life Preserver—life flows freely forever in Him. (See also: Gen. 1:1; Ps. 95:3–7; 148:5, 6; Jer. 51:15, 16; John 1:1, 2.)

Words to Live By

Preserve: The word translated in Nehemiah 9:6 as "preserve" is the Hebrew word *chayah* (khaw-yaw'). It means "to keep alive, restore, and revive." At its very root, *chayah* means "to live." According to Deuteronomy 8:3, life is not just a physical experience. It is a spiritual one that is kept alive by the Word of God.

You have performed Your words,
For You *are* righteous.

9 "You saw the affliction of our fathers in
Egypt,
And heard their cry by the Red Sea.
10 You showed signs and wonders
against Pharaoh,
Against all his servants,
And against all the people of his land.
For You knew that they acted proudly
against them.
So You made a name for Yourself, as *it*
is this day.
11 And You divided the sea before them,
So that they went through the midst of
the sea on the dry land;
And their persecutors You threw into
the deep,
As a stone into the mighty waters.
12 Moreover You led them by day with a
cloudy pillar,
And by night with a pillar of fire,
To give them light on the road
Which they should travel.

13 "You came down also on Mount Sinai,
And spoke with them from heaven,
And gave them just ordinances and
true laws,
Good statutes and commandments.
14 You made known to them Your holy
Sabbath,
And commanded them precepts,
statutes and laws,
By the hand of Moses Your servant.

BIBLE
Where did the Bible come from?
Nehemiah 9:14

15 You gave them bread from heaven for
their hunger,
And brought them water out of the
rock for their thirst,
And told them to go in to possess the
land
Which You had sworn to give them.

16 "But they and our fathers acted
proudly,
Hardened their necks,
And did not heed Your
commandments.
17 They refused to obey,
And they were not mindful of Your
wonders
That You did among them.
But they hardened their necks,

MIR MAKING IT REAL // NEHEMIAH 9:17

Endangered Virtue Patience should be put on an "endangered character trait" list. You rarely see patience anymore. Maybe everyone has already used up all their patience. No one wants to wait for anything—ever. Overnight mail moved too slowly, so someone invented the fax machine. But sometimes it takes a while for the fax to get through; so, thank goodness, someone invented e-mail. Now, even e-mail is too slow and everyone is a texting addict. One push of a button and your friend immediately has your message. Who knows what's next? Maybe think-mail, where you just have to think and your thoughts are instantly processed around the world. It's safe to say that we may have forgotten the true value of patience, but God has not.

To say that God is "slow to anger" means He's patient with us—and we do try His patience! This is not to say that God is outdated in our fast-paced, we-need-it-now society. He's not. It's just that in our rush to know more and do more we have forgotten how to wait. God models the virtue for us. He is very patient, especially about important things, like waiting for the people He loves to come to love Him. (See also: Neh. 9:30; Ps. 145:8; 2 Pet. 3:9.)

Words to Live By

Abundant: The word translated as "abundant" in Nehemiah 9:17 is the Hebrew word *rab* (rab). This is the same word used in Numbers 20:11 to explain how much water God provided for the millions of Israelites Moses led through the wilderness. It doesn't just mean "enough," it means "an exceedingly great amount." God's kindness toward us is as limitless as His love and pours freely toward anyone who needs His help.

And in their rebellion[a]
They appointed a leader
To return to their bondage.
But You *are* God,
Ready to pardon,
Gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger,
Abundant in kindness,
And did not forsake them.

FORGIVENESS
What qualities are a part of God's nature?
Nehemiah 9:17

18 "Even when they made a molded calf
for themselves,
And said, 'This *is* your god
That brought you up out of Egypt,'
And worked great provocations,
19 Yet in Your manifold mercies
You did not forsake them in the
wilderness.
The pillar of the cloud did not depart
from them by day,
To lead them on the road;
Nor the pillar of fire by night,
To show them light,
And the way they should go.
20 You also gave Your good Spirit to
instruct them,
And did not withhold Your manna
from their mouth,
And gave them water for their
thirst.

FOLLOWING GOD
Who will teach us to follow God?
Nehemiah 9:20

21 Forty years You sustained them in the
wilderness;

9:17 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *in Egypt*.

They lacked nothing;
Their clothes did not wear out[a]
And their feet did not swell.

22"Moreover You gave them kingdoms
and nations,
And divided them into districts.[a]
So they took possession of the land of
Sihon,
The land of[b] the king of Heshbon,
And the land of Og king of Bashan.
23You also multiplied their children as
the stars of heaven,
And brought them into the land
Which You had told their fathers
To go in and possess.
24So the people went in
And possessed the land;
You subdued before them the
inhabitants of the land,
The Canaanites,
And gave them into their hands,
With their kings
And the people of the land,
That they might do with them as they
wished.
25And they took strong cities and a rich
land,
And possessed houses full of all goods,
Cisterns *already* dug, vineyards, olive
groves,
And fruit trees in abundance.
So they ate and were filled and grew
fat,
And delighted themselves in Your
great goodness.

26"Nevertheless they were disobedient
And rebelled against You,
Cast Your law behind their backs
And killed Your prophets, who
testified against them
To turn them to Yourself;
And they worked great provocations.

EMOTIONS
Does God care when we hurt?
Nehemiah 9:27

27Therefore You delivered them into the
hand of their enemies,
Who oppressed them;
And in the time of their trouble,
When they cried to You,
You heard from heaven;
And according to Your abundant
mercies
You gave them deliverers who saved
them
From the hand of their enemies.

28"But after they had rest,
They again did evil before You.
Therefore You left them in the hand of
their enemies,
So that they had dominion over them;
Yet when they returned and cried out
to You,
You heard from heaven;
And many times You delivered them
according to Your mercies,
29And testified against them,
That You might bring them back to
Your law.
Yet they acted proudly,
And did not heed Your
commandments,
But sinned against Your judgments,
'Which if a man does, he shall live by
them.'[a]
And they shrugged their shoulders,
Stiffened their necks,
And would not hear.
30Yet for many years You had patience
with them,
And testified against them by Your
Spirit in Your prophets.
Yet they would not listen;
Therefore You gave them into the hand
of the peoples of the lands.
31Nevertheless in Your great mercy
You did not utterly consume them nor
forsake them;
For You *are* God, gracious and
merciful.

32"Now therefore, our God,
The great, the mighty, and awesome
God,
Who keeps covenant and mercy:
Do not let all the trouble seem small
before You
That has come upon us,
Our kings and our princes,

9:21 [a]Compare Deuteronomy 29:5
9:22 [a]Literally *corners* [b]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint omits *The land of.*
9:29 [a]Leviticus 18:5

Our priests and our prophets,
Our fathers and on all Your people,
From the days of the kings of Assyria
until this day.
33 However You *are* just in all that has
befallen us;
For You have dealt faithfully,
But we have done wickedly.
34 Neither our kings nor our princes,
Our priests nor our fathers,
Have kept Your law,
Nor heeded Your commandments and
Your testimonies,
With which You testified against them.
35 For they have not served You in their
kingdom,
Or in the many good *things* that You
gave them,
Or in the large and rich land which
You set before them;
Nor did they turn from their wicked
works.

36 "Here we *are,* servants today!
And the land that You gave to our
fathers,
To eat its fruit and its bounty,
Here we *are,* servants in it!
37 And it yields much increase to the kings
You have set over us,
Because of our sins;
Also they have dominion over our
bodies and our cattle
At their pleasure;
And we *are* in great distress.

38 "And because of all this,
We make a sure *covenant* and write *it;*
Our leaders, our Levites, *and* our
priests seal *it.*"

THE PEOPLE WHO SEALED THE COVENANT

10 Now those who placed *their* seal on *the document were:*
Nehemiah the governor, the son of Hacaliah, and Zedekiah, 2 Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, 3 Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah, 4 Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, 5 Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, 6 Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, 7 Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, 8 Maaziah, Bilgai, *and* Shemaiah. These *were* the priests.
9 The Levites: Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, *and* Kadmiel.
10 Their brethren: Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, 11 Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah, 12 Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, 13 Hodijah, Bani, *and* Beninu.
14 The leaders of the people: Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, 15 Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, 16 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, 17 Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, 18 Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai, 19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, 20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, 21 Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, 22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, 23 Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, 24 Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, 25 Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, 26 Ahijah, Hanan, Anan, 27 Malluch, Harim, *and* Baanah.

THE COVENANT THAT WAS SEALED

28 Now the rest of the people—the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Nethinim, and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding—
29 these joined with their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes: 30 We would not give our daughters as wives to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons;
31 *if* the peoples of the land brought wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day; and we would forego the seventh year's *produce* and the exacting of every debt.
32 Also we made ordinances for ourselves, to exact from ourselves yearly one-third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: 33 for the showbread, for the regular grain offering, for the regular burnt offering of the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the set feasts; for the holy things, for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and all the work of the house of our God. 34 We cast lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for bringing the wood offering into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at the appointed times year by year, to burn on the

altar of the LORD our God as *it is* written in the Law.

35And *we made ordinances* to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, to the house of the LORD; 36to bring the firstborn of our sons and our cattle, as *it is* written in the Law, and the firstborn of our herds and our flocks, to the house of our God, to the priests who minister in the house of our God; 37to bring the firstfruits of our dough, our offerings, the fruit from all kinds of trees, *the* new wine and oil, to the priests, to the storerooms of the house of our God; and to bring the tithes of our land to the Levites, for the Levites should receive the tithes in all our farming communities. 38And the priest, the descendant of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive tithes; and the Levites shall bring up a tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to the rooms of the storehouse.

Nehemiah 10:38

The Levites didn't have their own land or means of income. The rest of the Israelites supported them by giving them one-tenth of every harvest. The Levites, in turn, supported the priests by giving them one-tenth of everything they received. If this one-tenth stuff sounds familiar, it should. This system, called tithing, was established in the Law of Moses.

39For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the grain, of the new wine and the oil, to the storerooms where the articles of the sanctuary *are, where* the priests who minister and the gatekeepers and the singers *are;* and we will not neglect the house of our God.

THE PEOPLE DWELLING IN JERUSALEM

11 Now the leaders of the people dwelt at Jerusalem; the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city, and nine-tenths *were to dwell* in *other* cities. 2And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

3These *are* the heads of the province who dwelt in Jerusalem. (But in the cities of Judah everyone dwelt in his own possession in their cities—Israelites, priests, Levites, Nethinim, and descendants of Solomon's servants.) 4Also in Jerusalem dwelt *some* of the children of Judah and of the children of Benjamin.

Nehemiah 11:4–6

Only two of the twelve tribes of Israel—Judah and Benjamin—made it back to their homeland intact following the Babylonian captivity. The Levites were not counted as a tribe, even though they were descendants of one of Jacob's (or Israel's) sons. To replace Levi in the count, Joseph was divided into two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim.

The children of Judah: Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalalel, of the children of Perez; 5and Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-Hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni. 6All the sons of Perez who dwelt at Jerusalem *were* four hundred and sixty-eight valiant men.

7And these are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jeshaiah; 8and after him Gabbai *and* Sallai, nine hundred and twenty-eight. 9Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer, and Judah the son of Senuah[a] *was* second over the city.

10Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, and Jachin; 11Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* the leader of the house of God. 12Their brethren who did the work of the house *were* eight hundred and twenty-two; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah, 13and his brethren, heads of the fathers'

11:9 [a]Or *Hassenuah*

houses, were two hundred and forty-two; and Amashai the son of Azarel, the son of Ahzai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, 14and their brethren, mighty men of valor, *were* one hundred and twenty-eight. Their overseer *was* Zabdiel the son of *one of* the great men.[a]

15Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; 16Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the heads of the Levites, *had* the oversight of the business outside of the house of God; 17Mattaniah the son of Micha,[a] the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, the leader *who* began the thanksgiving with prayer; Bakbukiah, the second among his brethren; and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. 18All the Levites in the holy city *were* two hundred and eighty-four.

19Moreover the gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren who kept the gates, *were* one hundred and seventy-two.

20And the rest of Israel, of the priests *and* Levites, *were* in all the cities of Judah, everyone in his inheritance. 21But the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel. And Ziha and Gishpa *were* over the Nethinim.

22Also the overseer of the Levites at Jerusalem *was* Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha, of the sons of Asaph, the singers in charge of the service of the house of God. 23For *it was* the king's command concerning them that a certain portion should be for the singers, a quota day by day. 24Pethahiah the son of Meshezabel, of the children of Zerah the son of Judah, *was* the king's deputy[a] in all matters concerning the people.

THE PEOPLE DWELLING OUTSIDE JERUSALEM

25And as for the villages with their fields, *some* of the children of Judah dwelt in Kirjath Arba and its villages, Dibon and its villages, Jekabzeel and its villages; 26in Jeshua, Moladah, Beth Pelet, 27Hazar Shual, and Beersheba and its villages; 28in Ziklag and Meconah and its villages; 29in En Rimmon, Zorah, Jarmuth, 30Zanoah, Adullam, and their villages; in Lachish and its fields; in Azekah and its villages. They dwelt from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

31Also the children of Benjamin from Geba *dwelt* in Michmash, Aija, and Bethel, and their villages; 32in Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah; 33in Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim; 34in Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat; 35in Lod, Ono, *and* the Valley of Craftsmen. 36Some of the Judean divisions of Levites *were* in Benjamin.

THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES

12 Now these *are* the priests and the Levites who came up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, 2Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, 3Shechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, 4Iddo, Ginnethoi,[a] Abijah, 5Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, 6Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, 7Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, *and* Jedaiah.

These *were* the heads of the priests and their brethren in the days of Jeshua.

8Moreover the Levites *were* Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, *and* Mattaniah *who led* the thanksgiving *psalms,* he and his brethren. 9Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, *stood* across from them in *their* duties.

10Jeshua begot Joiakim, Joiakim begot Eliashib, Eliashib begot Joiada, 11Joiada begot Jonathan, and Jonathan begot Jaddua.

12Now in the days of Joiakim, the priests, the heads of the fathers' *houses were:* of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; 13of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; 14of Melichu,[a] Jonathan; of Shebaniah,[b] Joseph; 15of Harim,[a] Adna; of Meraioth,[b] Helkai; 16of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; 17of Abijah, Zichri; *the son* of Minjamin;[a] of Moadiah,[b] Piltai; 18of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; 19of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; 20of Sallai,[a] Kallai; of Amok, Eber; 21of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; *and* of Jedaiah, Nethanel.

22During the reign of Darius the Persian, a record *was also kept* of the Levites and priests *who had been* heads of their fathers'

11:14 [a]Or *the son of Haggedolim* **11:17** [a]Or *Michah* **11:24** [a]Literally *at the king's hand* **12:4** [a]Or *Ginnethon* (compare verse 16) **12:14** [a]Or *Malluch* (compare verse 2) [b]Or *Shechaniah* (compare verse 3) **12:15** [a]Or *Rehum* (compare verse 3) [b]Or *Meremoth* (compare verse 3) **12:17** [a]Or *Mijamin* (compare verse 5) [b]Or *Maadiah* (compare verse 5) **12:20** [a]Or *Sallu* (compare verse 7)

houses in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua. 23The sons of Levi, the heads of the fathers' *houses* until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib, *were* written in the book of the chronicles.

24And the heads of the Levites *were* Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brothers across from them, to praise *and* give thanks, group alternating with group, according to the command of David the man of God. 25Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub *were* gatekeepers keeping the watch at the storerooms of the gates. 26These *lived* in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak,[a] and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.

NEHEMIAH DEDICATES THE WALL

27Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings and singing, *with* cymbals and stringed instruments and harps. 28And the sons of the singers gathered together from the countryside around Jerusalem, from the villages of the Netophathites, 29from the house of Gilgal, and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth; for the singers had built themselves villages all around Jerusalem. 30Then the priests and Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, the gates, and the wall.

VICTORY
When we find victory in life, who deserves the praise?
Nehemiah 12:27

31So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. *One* went to the right hand on the wall toward the Refuse Gate. 32After them went Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah, 33and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, 34Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, 35and some of the priests' sons with trumpets—Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, 36and his brethren, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, *and* Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe *went* before them. 37By the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the City of David, on the stairway of the wall, beyond the house of David, as far as the Water Gate eastward.

38The other thanksgiving choir went the opposite *way,* and I *was* behind them with half of the people on the wall, going past the Tower of the Ovens as far as the Broad Wall, 39and above the Gate of Ephraim, above the Old Gate, above the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate; and they stopped by the Gate of the Prison.

40So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God, likewise I and the half of the rulers with me; 41and the priests, Eliakim, Maaseiah, Minjamin,[a] Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, *and* Hananiah, with trumpets; 42also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers sang loudly with Jezrahiah the director.

43Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.

TEMPLE RESPONSIBILITIES

44And at the same time some were appointed over the rooms of the storehouse for the offerings, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions specified by the Law for the priests and Levites; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and Levites who ministered. 45Both the singers and the gatekeepers kept the charge of their God and the charge of the purification, according to the command of David *and* Solomon his son. 46For in the days of David and Asaph of old *there were* chiefs of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. 47In the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah all Israel gave the portions for the singers and the gatekeepers, a portion for each day. They also consecrated *holy*

12:26 [a]Spelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14
12:41 [a]Or *Mijamin* (compare verse 5)

things for the Levites, and the Levites consecrated *them* for the children of Aaron.

PRINCIPLES OF SEPARATION

13 On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people, and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever come into the assembly of God, 2because they had not met the children of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them. However, our God turned the curse into a blessing. 3So it was, when they had heard the Law, that they separated all the mixed multitude from Israel.

THE REFORMS OF NEHEMIAH

4Now before this, Eliashib the priest, having authority over the storerooms of the house of our God, *was* allied with Tobiah. 5And he had prepared for him a large room, where previously they had stored the grain offerings, the frankincense, the articles, the tithes of grain, the new wine and oil, which were commanded *to be given* to the Levites and singers and gatekeepers, and the offerings for the priests. 6But during all this I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Then after certain days I obtained leave from the king, 7and I came to Jerusalem and discovered the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, in preparing a room for him in the courts of the house of God. 8And it grieved me bitterly; therefore I threw all the household goods of Tobiah out of the room. 9Then I commanded them to cleanse the rooms; and I brought back into them the articles of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense.

10I also realized that the portions for the Levites had not been given *them;* for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field. 11So I contended with the rulers, and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together and set them in their place. 12Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse. 13And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouse Shelemiah the priest and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah; and next to them *was* Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah; for they were considered faithful, and their task *was* to distribute to their brethren.

14Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for its services!

15In those days I saw *people* in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all *kinds of* burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned *them* about the day on which they were selling provisions. 16Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold *them* on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 13:15

According to the Law of Moses, the last day of the week—the Sabbath day—was to be set aside for rest and worship. The pattern of working six days and resting one was based on God's schedule at creation. For six days He created and on the seventh day He rested.

17Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing *is* this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? 18Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

19So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted *some* of my servants at the gates, *so that* no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day. 20Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of wares lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice.

21Then I warned them, and said to them, "Why do you spend the night around the wall? If you do *so* again, I will lay hands on you!" From that time on they came no *more* on the Sabbath. 22And I commanded

the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day.

Remember me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!

23In those days I also saw Jews *who* had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, *and* Moab. 24And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people.

25So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, *saying,* "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. 26Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. 27Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?"

28And *one* of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, *was* a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I drove him from me.

29Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

30Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan. I also assigned duties to the priests and the Levites, each to his service, 31and *to bringing* the wood offering and the firstfruits at appointed times.

Remember me, O my God, for good!

Esther

DATE OF WRITING: 464–435 B.C.
AUTHOR: AN UNKNOWN, DEVOUTLY JEWISH WRITER
THEME: A LOOK AT TEAMWORK THAT SHAPED A NATION
PURPOSE: GOD WORKS QUIETLY THROUGH CAUSE AND EFFECT TO ACHIEVE HIS PURPOSES IN HISTORY AND IN OUR LIVES.

OUTLINE

1:1—2:23.....Esther Becomes Queen
3:1–15.....Haman's Plot to Destroy the Jews
4:1–17.....Mordecai Asks for Esther's Help
5:1—6:14.....Mordecai Is Honored, Not Killed
7:1–10.....Haman Is Put to Death
8:1—9:19.....The Jews Defend Themselves and Kill Their Enemies
9:20–32.....The Feast of Purim
10:1–3.....The Greatness of Ahasuerus and Mordecai

KEY VERSE:

"For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).

THEN /// The story of Esther is a spy-thriller if ever there was one. Think about it. A young woman changes her name. She then hides the fact that she is a part of a minority group treated with extreme prejudice in her culture. She enters a yearlong beauty contest in which the winner will become queen of the nation. She actually becomes the king's favorite and wins the contest. Then just when things are looking really good, she faces a situation in which she has to reveal her identity to the king (risking her life) in order to catch a villain and save her people from destruction.

If you add in a high-tech gadget and maybe an explosion or two, you've got a movie script! But the important thing about Esther's story isn't the intrigue. The important thing is that God used Esther because she was willing to trust Him and take some risks. Esther knew that God put her where she was for a reason, so when she saw the opportunity to make a difference she took it.

As it turned out, Esther did save her people. She also saved the life of a family member and saw that the bad guy was punished. There's nothing like a story with a happy ending, is there?

NOW /// Esther's role as queen gave her a platform. It gave her a place where her voice could be heard and she could make a difference. She didn't know it, though, until God asked her to speak up.

Has God given you a platform? Are you a leader in a group? Do you have younger brothers and sisters who listen to you? Do you help with younger kids at church or at school? Wherever you are, God can say something through your life. That is the platform that God has built for you.

Sometimes we don't know that we can do something that matters until God asks us to speak up. Then He uses us. Don't underestimate your opportunities to make a difference.

REALITY CHECK /// Haman was the bad guy in the story of Esther. He was a bigot—he hated a group of people because of their race. He hated the Jews. Haman was also power hungry and deceitful. He used people to make himself look good. There was one Jew that Haman really had it in for: Mordecai, Esther's cousin. Haman couldn't stand Mordecai because Mordecai had the one thing Haman didn't, people's respect.

If you like a story in which the bad guy gets it in the end, read about Haman. He built gallows where he could hang his enemy Mordecai, but in the end, Haman was hanged from those gallows and justice was done.

When circumstances seem to be at their worst, and it looks like evil may win the battle over good, don't lose heart. That can be the time that God is about to do something unexpectedly amazing to bring about His ultimate victory!

THE KING DETHRONES QUEEN VASHTI

Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus[a] (this *was* the Ahasuerus who reigned over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, from India to Ethiopia), [2]in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which *was* in Shushan[a] the citadel, [3]*that* in the third year of his reign he made a feast for all his officials and servants—the powers of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces *being* before him— [4]when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty for many days, one hundred and eighty days *in all.*

[5]And when these days were completed, the king made a feast lasting seven days for all the people who were present in Shushan the citadel, from great to small, in the court of the garden of the king's palace. [6]*There were* white and blue linen *curtains*

1:1 [a]Generally identified with Xerxes I (485–464 B.C.) **1:2** [a]Or *Susa,* and so throughout this book

Esther 1:1

Ahasuerus (you may know him better as Xerxes) became king of Persia after the death of his father, Darius. Under Darius's reign, the Jewish people (who had been held captive for over a century) were allowed to return to their homeland. Surprisingly, not all of the Jews wanted to return to Jerusalem. Some of the ones who had been born in captivity wanted to stay in Persia, the only home they had ever known. As a result, there were thousands of Jewish people living in Persia during the reign of Ahasuerus.

fastened with cords of fine linen and purple on silver rods and marble pillars; *and the* couches *were* of gold and silver on a *mosaic* pavement of alabaster, turquoise, and white and black marble. 7And they served drinks in golden vessels, each vessel being different from the other, with royal wine in abundance, according to the generosity of the king. 8In accordance with the law, the drinking was not compulsory; for so the king had ordered all the officers of his household, that they should do according to each man's pleasure.

9Queen Vashti also made a feast for the women *in* the royal palace which *belonged* to King Ahasuerus.

10On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus, 11to bring Queen Vashti before the king, *wearing* her royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she *was* beautiful to behold. 12But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command *brought* by *his* eunuchs; therefore the king was furious, and his anger burned within him.

13Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times (for this *was* the king's manner toward all who knew law and justice, 14those closest to him *being* Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, who had access to the king's presence, *and* who ranked highest in the kingdom): 15"What *shall we* do to Queen Vashti, according to law, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus *brought to her* by the eunuchs?"

16And Memucan answered before the king and the princes: "Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, but also all the princes, and all the people who *are* in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. 17For the queen's behavior will become known to all women, so that they will despise their husbands in their eyes, when they report, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.' 18This very day the *noble* ladies of Persia and Media will say to all the king's officials that they have heard of the behavior of the queen. Thus *there will be* excessive contempt and wrath. 19If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she. 20When the king's decree which he will make is proclaimed throughout all his empire (for it is great), all wives will honor their husbands, both great and small."

21And the reply pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan. 22Then he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script, and to every people in their own language, that each man should be master in his own house, and speak in the language of his own people.

ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

2 After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what had been decreed against her. 2Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king; 3and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the citadel, into the women's quarters, under the custody of Hegai[a] the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty

2:3 [a]Hebrew *Hege*



PROFILE
ESTHER

It can be very frustrating when other people make choices that affect your life. Esther most likely understood that frustration. Most of the important decisions in her life—where she would live, who would raise her, whom she would marry, how she would be treated—were all made by others. She was Jewish but grew up in a foreign land. Because she was an orphan, she was raised by a cousin. She was forced into a beauty contest, won it, and found herself married to a pagan king. Even as queen, surrounded by luxury, Esther had little control over her life. Her life was ruled by her husband, the king of Persia.

But there was one decision that belonged only to Esther: how she would respond to the situations in her life and really impact her world for good.

Esther didn't have to look for an opportunity to make a difference—it came looking for her. A man named Haman hated the Jewish people and decided to wipe them out. He managed to convince the king that Jews should be destroyed. Suddenly, Esther became the central figure in a life-and-death struggle. Her cousin reminded her, "Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esth. 4:14).

With her courage and wisdom, Esther turned the tables on Haman. She risked everything, but by making the most of her situation as queen, she gave her people a fighting chance. Haman ended up suffering the very fate he planned for the Jewish people. Esther did not choose the size or the shape of the biggest challenge in her life, but she chose her response well. Her choice made a difference for her people.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Most of us will, at some time, find ourselves feeling surrounded and crushed by the decisions others have made. We may find trouble knocking at our door. But we can still make a difference! In fact, we all will make a difference—good or bad. How you respond to life and the choices you make will impact other lives and determine aspects of the future.

Only God knows what the future holds. Ask Him to help you make choices that will positively impact your world. Rely on Him for all your decisions in life. No matter what happens, God can sort it all out and lead you on the right path. He will make a difference so you can make the right kind of difference with your life.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read the Book of Esther. It's got all the elements of a great, dramatic movie!

Esther was a real woman with real problems. Her life made a real difference. Yours can, too!

preparations be given *them.* [4]Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti."

This thing pleased the king, and he did so.

[5]In Shushan the citadel there was a certain Jew whose name *was* Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite. [6]*Kish*[a] had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with Jeconiah[b] king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. [7]And *Mordecai* had brought up Hadassah, that *is,* Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither

2:6 [a]Literally *Who* [b]Same as *Jehoiachin,* 2 Kings 24:6 and elsewhere

father nor mother. The young woman *was* lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

Esther 2:6

Once was not enough for Nebuchadnezzar when it came to attacking Jerusalem. The first time his army invaded, they captured the king of Judah and took him back to Babylon. The second and third times the Babylonian army showed up, they took all wealthy people captive and destroyed the temple.

8So it was, when the king's command and decree were heard, and when many young women were gathered at Shushan the citadel, *under* the custody of Hegai, that Esther also was taken to the king's palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women. 9Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favor; so he readily gave beauty preparations to her, besides her allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best *place* in the house of the women.

10Esther had not revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal *it.* 11And every day Mordecai paced in front of the court of the women's quarters, to learn of Esther's welfare and what was happening to her.

FAMILY

What's a good example of love for family?

Esther 2:11

12Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women. 13Thus *prepared, each* young woman went to the king, and she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the women's quarters to the king's palace. 14In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and called for her by name.

15Now when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her. 16So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which *is* the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 17The king loved Esther more than all the *other* women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. 18Then the king made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the generosity of a king.

MORDECAI DISCOVERS A PLOT

19When virgins were gathered together a second time, Mordecai sat within the king's gate. 20*Now* Esther had not revealed her family and her people, just as Mordecai had charged her, for Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai as when she was brought up by him.

21In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. 22So the matter became known to Mordecai, who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name. 23And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

HAMAN'S CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE JEWS

3 After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and

advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who *were* with him. 2And all the king's servants who *were* within the king's gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage. 3Then the king's servants who *were* within the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the king's command?" 4Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told *it* to Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for *Mordecai* had told them that he *was* a Jew. 5When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was filled with wrath. 6But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, Haman sought to destroy all the Jews who *were* throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.

7In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur (that *is,* the lot), before Haman to determine the day and the month,[a] until *it fell on the* twelfth *month,*[b] which *is* the month of Adar.

8Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws *are* different from all *other* people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it *is* not fitting for the king to let them remain. 9If it pleases the king, let *a decree* be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring *it* into the king's treasuries."

10So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 11And the king said to Haman, "The money and the people *are* given to you, to do with them as seems good to you."

12Then the king's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and *a decree* was written according to all that Haman commanded—to the king's satraps, to the governors who *were* over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province according to its script, and to every people in their language. In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king's signet ring. 13And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions.[a] 14A copy of the document was to be issued as law in every province, being published for all people, that they should be ready for that day. 15The couriers went out, hastened by the king's command; and the decree was proclaimed in Shushan the citadel. So the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

Esther 3:10

Authority figures in the ancient Middle East each wore a unique signet ring. The rings were fashioned with a raised design (name or symbol) that could make an impression in moist clay or wet wax. A bit of wax or clay was used to seal a written communication. An impression of the signet ring's design in the seal was similar to signing one's name today. Ahasuerus allowed Haman to use his ring; this signified his approval of the plan.

ESTHER AGREES TO HELP THE JEWS

4 When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. 2He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one *might* enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. 3And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, *there was* great mourning among the Jews,

3:7 [a]Septuagint adds *to destroy the people of Mordecai in one day;* Vulgate adds *the nation of the Jews should be destroyed.* [b]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *and the lot fell on the fourteenth of the month.*
3:13 [a]Septuagint adds the text of the letter here.



WORLD APP

Genocide / Esther 3:13

Esther 3:13 is one of the most shocking verses in the Bible. An order was issued for an entire race of people to be utterly destroyed. There is no misunderstanding that this decree was an act of genocide against the entire Jewish population in the Persian Empire.

Genocide is "the deliberate destruction of an entire race or nation." What could possibly make someone want to perpetrate such an act of evil? In this case, it started with a long-standing hatred between the Amalekites and the Jews. In the third chapter of Esther we see a Jewish man (Mordecai) refusing to bow to a descendant of the Amalekites (Haman). With the ethnic hatred already existing in Haman, the personal slight was more than he would tolerate (Esth. 3:1–6). So he hatched a plan to destroy all the Jews in Persia.

In this story, God used a courageous Jewish woman to stop the genocide of her people. But sadly, the act of genocide has not disappeared. Throughout history, certain groups of people have believed in their superiority over others and with arrogant hatred sought to destroy them. It happened again to the Jews in Nazi Germany when Hitler initiated the Holocaust. But there are even more recent examples of attempted genocide that still affect our world today. In places like Darfur, Rwanda, and Bosnia, genocide or "ethnic cleansing" has been, or is still being, attempted.

God is not unmoved by all the genocidal acts in our world. He is a God of love and of justice, and we are His children. Even though we may be far removed physically from these heinous acts, we can still do our part to end genocide before it injures any more people groups. We can educate ourselves as to what's going on in the world and we can commit to pray for people in harm's way. Pray that the Lord would strengthen us, as the body of Christ, to stand against any persecution or intended destruction of any race of people.

with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept *them.* 5Then Esther called Hathach, *one* of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this *was.* 6So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that *was* in front of the king's gate. 7And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews. 8He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people. 9So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

10Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: 11"All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, *he has* but one law: put *all* to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days." 12So they told Mordecai Esther's words.

FUTURE
Does God put us in situations to make a difference?
Esther 4:14

13And Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. 14For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?"

15Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai: 16"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which *is* against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"

17So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him.[a]

ESTHER'S BANQUET

5 Now it happened on the third day that Esther put on *her* royal *robes* and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the house.[a] 2So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, *that* she found favor in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that *was* in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter.

3And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What *is* your request? It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!"

4So Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

5Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, that he may do as Esther has said." So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6At the banquet of wine the king said to Esther, "What *is* your petition? It shall be granted you. What *is* your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

7Then Esther answered and said, "My petition and request *is this:* 8If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

HAMAN'S PLOT AGAINST MORDECAI

9So Haman went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw

4:17 [a]Septuagint adds a prayer of Mordecai here. **5:1** [a]Septuagint adds many extra details in verses 1 and 2.

Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai. 10Nevertheless Haman restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh. 11Then Haman told them of his great riches, the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the officials and servants of the king.

12Moreover Haman said, "Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king. 13Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

Esther 5:14

There were no ropes involved in a Persian hanging. Instead, the person was nailed to a stake. After death, the corpse remained hanging for public viewing.

14Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet."

And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made.

THE KING HONORS MORDECAI

6 That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. 2And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. 3Then the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?"

And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

4So the king said, "Who *is* in the court?" Now Haman had *just* entered the outer court of the king's palace to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5The king's servants said to him, "Haman is there, standing in the court."

And the king said, "Let him come in."

6So Haman came in, and the king asked him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?" 7And Haman answered the king, "*For* the man whom the king delights to honor, 8let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal crest placed on its head. 9Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then parade him on horseback through the city square, and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!' "

10Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken."

11So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"

12Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered. 13When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him."

14While they *were* still talking with him, the king's eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet which Esther had prepared.

HAMAN HANGED INSTEAD OF MORDECAI

7 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther. 2And on the second day, at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, "What *is* your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted

you. And what *is* your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

3Then Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. 4For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king's loss."

5So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?"

6And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman!"

So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

7Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine *and went* into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king. 8When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther *was.* Then the king said, "Will he also assault the queen while I *am* in the house?"

As the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. 9Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing at the house of Haman."

Then the king said, "Hang him on it!"

10So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath subsided.

ESTHER SAVES THE JEWS

8 On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he *was related* to her. 2So the king took off his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3Now Esther spoke again to the king, fell down at his feet, and implored him with tears to counteract the evil of Haman the Agagite, and the scheme which he had devised against the Jews. 4And the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king, 5and said, "If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight and the thing *seems* right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who *are* in all the king's provinces. 6For how can I endure to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?"

7Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he *tried to* lay his hand on the Jews. 8You yourselves write *a decree* concerning the Jews, as you please, in the king's name, and seal *it* with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."

Esther 8:8–12

Thanks to Persian law, a king could not legally revoke or change a law once it was established. Knowing that he couldn't undo the law that called for the slaughter of the Jewish people, the quick-thinking king passed a new law that allowed Jews to defend themselves and even take revenge on their enemies.

9So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which *is* the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third *day;* and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces *in all,* to every province in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language. 10And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed *it* with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback,

riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds.[a]

11By these letters the king permitted the Jews who *were* in every city to gather together and protect their lives—to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, *both* little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, 12on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month of Adar.[a] 13A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province and published for all people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. 14The couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king's command. And the decree was issued in Shushan the citadel.

15So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. 16The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor. 17And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

THE JEWS DESTROY THEIR TORMENTORS

9 Now in the twelfth month, that *is,* the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, *the time* came for the king's command and his decree to be executed. On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them. 2The Jews gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could withstand them, because fear of them fell upon all people. 3And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and all those doing the king's work, helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. 4For Mordecai *was* great in the king's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for this man Mordecai became increasingly prominent. 5Thus the Jews defeated all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they pleased with those who hated them.

6And in Shushan the citadel the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. 7Also Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, 8Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, 9Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha— 10the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews—they killed; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

11On that day the number of those who were killed in Shushan the citadel was brought to the king. 12And the king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the citadel, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what *is* your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what *is* your further request? It shall be done."

13Then Esther said, "If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who *are* in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows."

14So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

15And the Jews who *were* in Shushan gathered together again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed three hundred men at Shushan; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

16The remainder of the Jews in the king's provinces gathered together and protected their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder. 17*This was* on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. And on the fourteenth of *the month*[a] they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

THE FEAST OF PURIM

18But the Jews who *were* at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth *day,* as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of *the month*[a] they rested, and made it a

8:10 [a]Literally *sons of the swift horses*
8:12 [a]Septuagint adds the text of the letter here.
9:17 [a]Literally *it* **9:18** [a]Literally *it*

day of feasting and gladness. [19]Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwalled towns celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar *with* gladness and feasting, as a holiday, and for sending presents to one another.

[20]And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who *were* in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, [21]to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, [22]as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor. [23]So the Jews accepted the custom which they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them, [24]because Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to annihilate them, and had cast Pur (that *is,* the lot), to consume them and destroy them; [25]but when *Esther*[a] came before the king, he commanded by letter that this[b] wicked plot which *Haman* had devised against the Jews should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

Esther 9:32

Queen Esther's letter made the Festival of Purim an official Jewish holiday. Today Purim is observed in the month before Passover. Celebrations usually include a reading from the Book of Esther, gift-giving, and general merriment.

[26]So they called these days Purim, after the name Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them, [27]the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who would join them, that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year, according to the written *instructions* and according to the *prescribed* time, [28]*that* these days *should be* remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail *to be observed* among the Jews, and *that* the memory of them should not perish among their descendants.

[29]Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter about Purim. [30]And *Mordecai* sent letters to all the Jews, to the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *with* words of peace and truth, [31]to confirm these days of Purim at their *appointed* time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants concerning matters of their fasting and lamenting. [32]So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.

LEADERSHIP

What should be the focus of a leader?

Esther 10:3

MORDECAI'S ADVANCEMENT

10 And King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the land and *on* the islands of the sea. [2]Now all the acts of his power and his might, and the account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? [3]For Mordecai the Jew *was* second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by the multitude of his brethren, seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his countrymen.[a]

9:25 [a]Literally *she* or *it* [b]Literally *his*
10:3 [a]Literally *seed*. Septuagint and Vulgate add a dream of Mordecai here; Vulgate adds six more chapters.

Job

DATE OF WRITING: UNCERTAIN
AUTHOR: UNCERTAIN
THEME: THE SUFFERING OF THE GODLY AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD
PURPOSE: WE ARE TO TRUST GOD'S WISDOM AND HIS LOVE WHEN TROUBLES COME.

OUTLINE

1:1–5 .....Righteous Job and His Family in Uz
1:6–12 .....Satan Attacks Job's Character
1:13—2:13.....Job Loses His Wealth, Family, and Health
3:1–26 .....Job Curses the Day of His Birth
4:1—14:22.....The First Round of the Debate
15:1—21:34 .....The Second Round of the Debate
22:1—26:14 .....The Third Round of the Debate
27:1—30:31 .....Job's Closing Statements
31:1–40.....Job Swears That He Is Innocent
32:1—37:24 .....Elihu's Speeches
38:1—39:30 .....God's First Speech
40:1—42:6.....God's Second Speech and Job's Responses
42:7–17.....The Lord Again Blesses Job with Wealth, Family, and Health

KEY VERSE:

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him" (Job 13:15).

THEN /// The Book of Job is a really famous story about a man who suffered . . . *a lot*. He lost all his family except his discouraged wife. He lost his wealth, his health, and his place in society. To make it worse, his three friends came to "console" him and ended up kicking him when he was down.

Job couldn't figure out why he was suffering. The more his friends told him he must be sinning and bringing it on himself, the more he insisted that wasn't the case. He knew he wasn't perfect, but he was also sure he hadn't committed a level of sin that would bring about these consequences.

In the middle of all this suffering and chaos, he also held strong to his belief in the righteous authority of God. Job wanted a chance to plead his case before God. But when he got that chance, he was overwhelmed by the reality of God's greatness, and realized he had been talking about things that were over his head and beyond his understanding.

NOW /// Job is a story about the most difficult questions we face in life. Why do good people have bad things happen to them? If God sometimes intervenes in our lives, why doesn't He *always* intervene? If God is good, then why is there bad? If we obey God, why aren't we always rewarded for it? If something bad happens, does that mean we are being punished?

Job was a man who didn't just say "God is good" when good things happened. Instead, he said, "God is good and life is hard, but God is still good." That's pretty amazing isn't it? The Book of Job reminds us that just because we can't always figure life out doesn't mean God is not who He says He is.

REALITY CHECK /// Job was at the end of his rope. His wife knew it, and his friends knew it.

Job's friends heard about his troubles and did what friends do. They came to help. At first they did a pretty good job; but then, they started trying to fix the situation. They were convinced that Job had brought his troubles on himself. In the end they made him feel worse about it all because they tried to tell him it was all his fault. These friends give us a great example of what not to do. Sometimes it's okay to just sit with a friend in silent support instead of trying to pretend we have answers we don't really have.

Job listened to his friends' long-winded speeches, but he just didn't believe that they were right. So even though he was miserable and worn out, he stood his ground. Sometimes friends are the hardest people to stand up to. Job gives us a great example of how to stand our ground in similar situations.

JOB AND HIS FAMILY IN UZ

1 There was a man in the land of Uz,
whose name *was* Job; and that man
was blameless and upright, and one
who feared God and shunned evil. 2And
seven sons and three daughters were born
to him. 3Also, his possessions were seven
thousand sheep, three thousand camels,
five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred
female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of
all the people of the East.

4And his sons would go and feast *in their*
houses, each on his *appointed* day, and
would send and invite their three sisters to
eat and drink with them. 5So it was, when
the days of feasting had run their course,
that Job would send and sanctify them,
and he would rise early in the morning and
offer burnt offerings *according to* the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that
my sons have sinned and cursed[a] God in
their hearts." Thus Job did regularly.

INTEGRITY
Who is a good model of integrity?
Job 1:1

1:5 [a]Literally *blessed,* but used here in the evil sense, and so in verse 11 and 2:5, 9

SATAN ATTACKS JOB'S CHARACTER

6Now there was a day when the sons of
God came to present themselves before the
LORD, and Satan[a] also came among them.
7And the LORD said to Satan, "From where
do you come?"

So Satan answered the LORD and said,
"From going to and fro on the earth, and
from walking back and forth on it."

8Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have
you considered My servant Job, that *there*
is none like him on the earth, a blameless
and upright man, one who fears God and
shuns evil?"

9So Satan answered the LORD and said,
"Does Job fear God for nothing? 10Have
You not made a hedge around him, around
his household, and around all that he has
on every side? You have blessed the work
of his hands, and his possessions have in-
creased in the land. 11But now, stretch out
Your hand and touch all that he has, and he
will surely curse You to Your face!"

12And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold,
all that he has *is* in your power; only do not
lay a hand on his *person*."

So Satan went out from the presence of
the LORD.

> ***Job 1:15–17***
> The Sabeans and Chaldeans weren't the kind of people you would want as neighbors. They made their living by raiding villages and farms, feeding themselves on crops and livestock that were raised by other people. Centuries later, the Chaldeans dominated the land of Babylon.

JOB LOSES HIS PROPERTY AND CHILDREN

13Now there was a day when his sons and
daughters *were* eating and drinking wine
in their oldest brother's house; 14and a
messenger came to Job and said, "The
oxen were plowing and the donkeys feed-
ing beside them, 15when the Sabeans[a]
raided *them* and took them away—indeed
they have killed the servants with the edge
of the sword; and I alone have escaped to
tell you!"

16While he *was* still speaking, another
also came and said, "The fire of God fell
from heaven and burned up the sheep and
the servants, and consumed them; and I
alone have escaped to tell you!"

17While he *was* still speaking, another
also came and said, "The Chaldeans
formed three bands, raided the camels
and took them away, yes, and killed the
servants with the edge of the sword; and I
alone have escaped to tell you!"

18While he *was* still speaking, another
also came and said, "Your sons and daugh-
ters *were* eating and drinking wine in their
oldest brother's house, 19and suddenly a
great wind came from across[a] the wilder-
ness and struck the four corners of the
house, and it fell on the young people, and
they are dead; and I alone have escaped to
tell you!"

> MONEY
> ***What should be our attitude toward money and possessions?***
> Job 1:21, 22

20Then Job arose, tore his robe, and
shaved his head; and he fell to the ground
and worshiped. 21And he said:

"Naked I came from my mother's
womb,
And naked shall I return there.
The LORD gave, and the LORD has
taken away;
Blessed be the name of the LORD."

22In all this Job did not sin nor charge
God with wrong.

SATAN ATTACKS JOB'S HEALTH

2 Again there was a day when the sons
of God came to present themselves
before the LORD, and Satan came
also among them to present himself before
the LORD. 2And the LORD said to Satan,
"From where do you come?"

Satan answered the LORD and said,

1:6 [a]Literally *the Adversary,* and so throughout this book **1:15** [a]Literally *Sheba* (compare 6:19)
1:19 [a]Septuagint omits *across.*

"From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."

3Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."

4So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

6And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he *is* in your hand, but spare his life."

7So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes.

9Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

10But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

FRIENDSHIP

What should we do to help hurting friends?

Job 2:11

JOB'S THREE FRIENDS

11Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him. 12And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. 13So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

JOB DEPLORES HIS BIRTH

3 After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth.*2And Job spoke, and said:

3"May the day perish on which I was born,
And the night *in which* it was said,
'A male child is conceived.'
4May that day be darkness;
May God above not seek it,
Nor the light shine upon it.
5May darkness and the shadow of death claim it;
May a cloud settle on it;
May the blackness of the day terrify it.
6*As for* that night, may darkness seize it;
May it not rejoice[a] among the days of the year,
May it not come into the number of the months.
7Oh, may that night be barren!
May no joyful shout come into it!
8May those curse it who curse the day,
Those who are ready to arouse Leviathan.
9May the stars of its morning be dark;
May it look for light, but *have* none,
And not see the dawning of the day;
10Because it did not shut up the doors of my *mother's* womb,
Nor hide sorrow from my eyes.

11"Why did I not die at birth?
Why did I *not* perish when I came from the womb?
12Why did the knees receive me?
Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?
13For now I would have lain still and been quiet,
I would have been asleep;
Then I would have been at rest
14With kings and counselors of the earth,
Who built ruins for themselves,
15Or with princes who had gold,
Who filled their houses *with* silver;
16Or *why* was I not hidden like a stillborn child,
Like infants who never saw light?
17There the wicked cease *from* troubling,
And there the weary are at rest.

3:6 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *be joined.*

18 *There* the prisoners rest together;
They do not hear the voice of the
oppressor.
19 The small and great are there,
And the servant *is* free from his
master.

20 "Why is light given to him who is in
misery,
And life to the bitter of soul,
21 Who long for death, but it does not
come,
And search for it more than hidden
treasures;
22 Who rejoice exceedingly,
And are glad when they can find the
grave?
23 *Why is light given* to a man whose way
is hidden,
And whom God has hedged in?
24 For my sighing comes before I eat,[a]
And my groanings pour out like water.
25 For the thing I greatly feared has come
upon me,
And what I dreaded has happened
to me.
26 I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;
I have no rest, for trouble comes."

Job 4:1

Job's "conversation" with his friends followed a pattern of debate called "cycles." Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar took turns talking to Job in three different cycles. (Though, for some reason, Zophar chose not to say anything in the third cycle.) After each of their speeches, Job was given a chance to reply.

ELIPHAZ: JOB HAS SINNED

4 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "*If* one attempts a word with you, will
you become weary?
But who can withhold himself from
speaking?
3 Surely you have instructed many,
And you have strengthened weak
hands.
4 Your words have upheld him who was
stumbling,
And you have strengthened the feeble
knees;
5 But now it comes upon you, and you
are weary;
It touches you, and you are troubled.
6 *Is* not your reverence your confidence?
And the integrity of your ways your
hope?

7 "Remember now, who *ever* perished
being innocent?
Or where were the upright *ever* cut
off?
8 Even as I have seen,
Those who plow iniquity
And sow trouble reap the same.
9 By the blast of God they perish,
And by the breath of His anger they are
consumed.
10 The roaring of the lion,
The voice of the fierce lion,
And the teeth of the young lions are
broken.
11 The old lion perishes for lack of prey,
And the cubs of the lioness are
scattered.

12 "Now a word was secretly brought
to me,
And my ear received a whisper of it.
13 In disquieting thoughts from the
visions of the night,
When deep sleep falls on men,

Job 4:13

Dreams were very important to people in ancient times. Nighttime visions, like the one Eliphaz experienced, were thought to be messages from God. Sometimes those visions predicted the future; other times, they explained important truths to people like Eliphaz.

14 Fear came upon me, and trembling,
Which made all my bones shake.
15 Then a spirit passed before my face;
The hair on my body stood up.
16 It stood still,
But I could not discern its
appearance.
A form *was* before my eyes;

3:24 [a]Literally *my bread*

There was silence;
Then I heard a voice *saying:*
17 'Can a mortal be more righteous than God?
Can a man be more pure than his Maker?
18 If He puts no trust in His servants,
If He charges His angels with error,
19 How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Who are crushed before a moth?
20 They are broken in pieces from morning till evening;
They perish forever, with no one regarding.
21 Does not their own excellence go away?
They die, even without wisdom.'

ELIPHAZ: JOB IS CHASTENED BY GOD

5 "Call out now;
Is there anyone who will answer you?
And to which of the holy ones will you turn?
2 For wrath kills a foolish man,
And envy slays a simple one.
3 I have seen the foolish taking root,
But suddenly I cursed his dwelling place.
4 His sons are far from safety,
They are crushed in the gate,
And *there is* no deliverer.
5 Because the hungry eat up his harvest,
Taking it even from the thorns,[a]
And a snare snatches their substance.[b]
6 For affliction does not come from the dust,
Nor does trouble spring from the ground;
7 Yet man is born to trouble,
As the sparks fly upward.

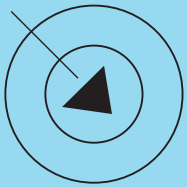
8 "But as for me, I would seek God,
And to God I would commit my cause—
9 Who does great things, and unsearchable,
Marvelous things without number.
10 He gives rain on the earth,
And sends waters on the fields.
11 He sets on high those who are lowly,
And those who mourn are lifted to safety.
12 He frustrates the devices of the crafty,
So that their hands cannot carry out their plans.
13 He catches the wise in their own craftiness,
And the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them.
14 They meet with darkness in the daytime,
And grope at noontime as in the night.
15 But He saves the needy from the sword,
From the mouth of the mighty,
And from their hand.
16 So the poor have hope,
And injustice shuts her mouth.

17 "Behold, happy *is* the man whom God corrects;
Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.

DISCIPLINE
Is God's discipline good?
Job 5:17

18 For He bruises, but He binds up;
He wounds, but His hands make whole.
19 He shall deliver you in six troubles,
Yes, in seven no evil shall touch you.
20 In famine He shall redeem you from death,
And in war from the power of the sword.
21 You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue,
And you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes.
22 You shall laugh at destruction and famine,
And you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth.
23 For you shall have a covenant with the stones of the field,
And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.

5:5 [a]Septuagint reads *They shall not be taken from evil men;* Vulgate reads *And the armed man shall take him by violence.* [b]Septuagint reads *The might shall draw them off;* Vulgate reads *And the thirsty shall drink up their riches.*



PROMISE

God promises to deliver you from harm time after time.

"He shall deliver you in six troubles, yes, in seven no evil shall touch you" (Job 5:19).

Only when we get to heaven might we know how many times God has rescued us from harm during our life on this earth. The list probably fills books: family car delayed in traffic to avoid three-car pile-up; grounded from the big sophomore party and kept from the lure of drugs and a police raid; army of angels sent to protect unsuspecting students from attempted mugging on campus. Sometimes we can look back and know that God put His hand on us, directed our steps, and protected us. But most of the time we walk around totally unaware of His divine intervention on our behalf. Time after time He keeps us safe from things we can see, and even the things we can't. Take a minute to thank Him for keeping watch over the big and the little things in your life and for guarding every move you make.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 7:10; Nahum 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:3

24 You shall know that your tent *is* in peace;
You shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss.

Job 5:25, 26

A large family and a long, healthy life were considered to be rewards from God for living in a way that pleased Him. You can imagine the kind of things that were said about people who lost their families and their health.

25 You shall also know that your descendants *shall be* many,
And your offspring like the grass of the earth.
26 You shall come to the grave at a full age,
As a sheaf of grain ripens in its season.
27 Behold, this we have searched out;
It *is* true.
Hear it, and know for yourself."

JOB: MY COMPLAINT IS JUST

6 Then Job answered and said:

2 "Oh, that my grief were fully weighed,
And my calamity laid with it on the scales!
3 For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea—
Therefore my words have been rash.
4 For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me;
My spirit drinks in their poison;
The terrors of God are arrayed against me.
5 Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass,
Or does the ox low over its fodder?
6 Can flavorless food be eaten without salt?
Or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg?
7 My soul refuses to touch them;
They *are* as loathsome food to me.

8 "Oh, that I might have my request,
That God would grant *me* the thing that I long for!
9 That it would please God to crush me,
That He would loose His hand and cut me off!
10 Then I would still have comfort;
Though in anguish I would exult,
He will not spare;
For I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

11 "What strength do I have, that I should
hope?
And what *is* my end, that I should
prolong my life?
12 *Is* my strength the strength of stones?
Or is my flesh bronze?
13 *Is* my help not within me?
And is success driven from me?

14 "To him who is afflicted, kindness
should be shown by his friend,
Even though he forsakes the fear of the
Almighty.
15 My brothers have dealt deceitfully like
a brook,
Like the streams of the brooks that
pass away,
16 Which are dark because of the ice,
And into which the snow vanishes.
17 When it is warm, they cease to flow;
When it is hot, they vanish from their
place.
18 The paths of their way turn aside,
They go nowhere and perish.
19 The caravans of Tema look,
The travelers of Sheba hope for them.
20 They are disappointed because they
were confident;
They come there and are confused.
21 For now you are nothing,
You see terror and are afraid.
22 Did I ever say, 'Bring *something* to me'?
Or, 'Offer a bribe for me from your
wealth'?
23 Or, 'Deliver me from the enemy's
hand'?
Or, 'Redeem me from the hand of
oppressors'?

24 "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue;
Cause me to understand wherein I
have erred.
25 How forceful are right words!
But what does your arguing prove?
26 Do you intend to rebuke *my* words,
And the speeches of a desperate one,
which are as wind?
27 Yes, you overwhelm the fatherless,
And you undermine your friend.
28 Now therefore, be pleased to look
at me;
For I would never lie to your face.
29 Yield now, let there be no injustice!
Yes, concede, my righteousness still
stands!
30 Is there injustice on my tongue?
Cannot my taste discern the
unsavory?

JOB: MY SUFFERING IS COMFORTLESS

7 "*Is there* not a time of hard service
for man on earth?
Are not his days also like the days of
a hired man?
2 Like a servant who earnestly desires
the shade,
And like a hired man who eagerly
looks for his wages,
3 So I have been allotted months of
futility,
And wearisome nights have been
appointed to me.
4 When I lie down, I say, 'When shall I
arise,
And the night be ended?'
For I have had my fill of tossing till
dawn.
5 My flesh is caked with worms and
dust,
My skin is cracked and breaks out
afresh.

6 "My days are swifter than a weaver's
shuttle,
And are spent without hope.

Job 7:6

Weaving involved a large frame (called a loom) with thread stretched across it. Using a shuttle (long, thin, tool), the weaver would pull pieces of thread crosswise through the frame. One thread at a time was added until a piece of fabric was formed.

7 Oh, remember that my life *is* a breath!
My eye will never again see good.
8 The eye of him who sees me will see
me no *more;*
While your eyes *are* upon me, I shall no
longer *be.*
9 *As* the cloud disappears and vanishes
away,
So he who goes down to the grave
does not come up.
10 He shall never return to his house,
Nor shall his place know him anymore.

MAKING IT REAL // JOB 8:9

Listen and Learn Have you ever had anyone say, "You think you know everything"? They were probably being sarcastic, taking a jab at you. They were reminding you that your knowledge is limited. The Book of Job says the same thing—that you are only on this earth a short time and you know very little.

Though no one knows everything, the longer we live, the more we learn. You would be wise to listen to your parents and grandparents and learn from them. They've lived longer and they have quite a few things figured out. Because of their age, you might assume they couldn't possibly contribute anything to your generation or your life—they just don't get it. Not true. It would be foolish to believe they haven't felt the emotions you deal with or struggled to make hard decisions. Whatever road you're on, they've probably walked there before you. So lay down your stereotypes, listen to the older generations, and learn from their understanding. You just might find they understand more than you ever dreamed. (See also: Prov. 1:7–9; 14:10–13; 23:12.)

Words to Live By

Know: The word translated as "know" in Job 8:9 is the Hebrew word *yada* (yawdah'). It means "to come to an understanding by watching and listening." One of the hardest things for a lot of people to say is, "I don't know." When you think of it, it's really kind of silly to feel that way. How can you learn anything unless you first admit you don't know it? So admit you don't know it all. Watch those older than you closely, listen to what they say; don't be afraid to admit they know more than you. You may be surprised how much you can learn.

11 "Therefore I will not restrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
12 *Am* I a sea, or a sea serpent,
That You set a guard over me?
13 When I say, 'My bed will comfort me,
My couch will ease my complaint,'
14 Then You scare me with dreams
And terrify me with visions,
15 So that my soul chooses strangling
And death rather than my body.[a]
16 I loathe *my life;*
I would not live forever.
Let me alone,
For my days *are but* a breath.

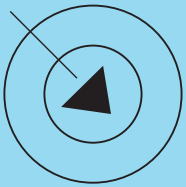
17 "What *is* man, that You should exalt him,
That You should set Your heart on him,
18 That You should visit him every morning,
And test him every moment?
19 How long?
Will You not look away from me,
And let me alone till I swallow my saliva?
20 Have I sinned?
What have I done to You, O watcher of men?
Why have You set me as Your target,
So that I am a burden to myself?[a]
21 Why then do You not pardon my transgression,
And take away my iniquity?
For now I will lie down in the dust,
And You will seek me diligently,
But I *will* no longer *be*."

BILDAD: JOB SHOULD REPENT

8 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 "How long will you speak these *things,*
And the words of your mouth *be like* a strong wind?

7:15 [a]Literally *my bones* **7:20** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Jewish tradition read *to You.*



PROMISE

God promises to give you joy and laughter.

"Behold, God will not cast away the blameless, nor will He uphold the evildoers. He will yet fill your mouth with laughing, and your lips with rejoicing" (Job 8:20, 21).

Are you a smiler or a frowner? Do you naturally notice happy things, or are you a walking, talking cloud of gloom? How about laughing? Do you remember the last time you laughed until your sides hurt, and your eyes watered, and you begged for mercy—you just couldn't laugh anymore? However long it's been, whatever your natural disposition, God promises to give you something to laugh about. He promises to give you joy. He can walk right into your most depressing day and turn things around. God didn't put you here to see how awful He could make you feel. He put you here to glorify Him and to enjoy life. So invite Him into your day and tell Him you really need something to laugh about. Watch Him do a miracle on your behalf. No heart is too hard, no day is too far gone when the Maker of laughter keeps His promise.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// 1 Samuel 2:1; Psalm 126:1–3

3 Does God subvert judgment?
Or does the Almighty pervert justice?
4 If your sons have sinned against Him,
He has cast them away for their transgression.
5 If you would earnestly seek God
And make your supplication to the Almighty,
6 If you *were* pure and upright,
Surely now He would awake for you,
And prosper your rightful dwelling place.
7 Though your beginning was small,
Yet your latter end would increase abundantly.

8 "For inquire, please, of the former age,
And consider the things discovered by their fathers;
9 For we *were born* yesterday, and know nothing,
Because our days on earth *are* a shadow.
10 Will they not teach you and tell you,
And utter words from their heart?

11 "Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh?
Can the reeds flourish without water?
12 While it *is* yet green *and* not cut down,
It withers before any *other* plant.
13 So *are* the paths of all who forget God;
And the hope of the hypocrite shall perish,
14 Whose confidence shall be cut off,
And whose trust *is* a spider's web.
15 He leans on his house, but it does not stand.
He holds it fast, but it does not endure.
16 He grows green in the sun,
And his branches spread out in his garden.
17 His roots wrap around the rock heap,
And look for a place in the stones.
18 If he is destroyed from his place,
Then *it* will deny him, *saying,* 'I have not seen you.'

19 "Behold, this is the joy of His way,
And out of the earth others will grow.

Job 8:11

The papyrus plant grows in the water of swamps and marshes. Papyrus stalks are about the thickness of a person's wrist and can reach as high as twelve feet. More than anything else, papyrus resembles an oversized blade of grass. The Egyptians used papyrus to make paper, blankets, sandals, and rafts.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // JOB 9:10, 11

God Is Near God is so far beyond our understanding that we can't even imagine how huge, how loving, how incredible He is. He is always at work in our lives—with miracles we never realize, creativity to bring all the pieces of our lives together into a beautiful picture, His fair and supreme justice making things right in His time. God is not some distant deity who watches as we struggle with life. He is closer than we can imagine and cares more deeply than we can conceive.

When life is messy and things seem to be falling apart, we can mistakenly believe that God is up there somewhere, far away, just looking down, never getting involved. He may seem remote and out of touch—distant. But God is never further away than your next breath. And He is moving and working in your life even when you are totally unaware. Are you willing to trust the One who is beside you to care for you and to love you? His presence is real. (See also: Ps. 119:151; 145:18.)

Words to Live By

Wonders: The Hebrew word translated here as "wonders" is *pala* (pah-lah). A *pala* is a supernatural deed that is beyond human ability to accomplish or even to understand. We can always trust God to work on our behalf and create a life filled with *pala* for us to enjoy.

20 Behold, God will not cast away the blameless,
Nor will He uphold the evildoers.
21 He will yet fill your mouth with laughing,
And your lips with rejoicing.
22 Those who hate you will be clothed with shame,
And the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing."[a]

JOB: THERE IS NO MEDIATOR

9 Then Job answered and said:

2 "Truly I know *it is* so,
But how can a man be righteous before God?
3 If one wished to contend with Him,
He could not answer Him one time out of a thousand.
4 *God is* wise in heart and mighty in strength.
Who has hardened *himself* against Him and prospered?
5 He removes the mountains, and they do not know
When He overturns them in His anger;
6 He shakes the earth out of its place,
And its pillars tremble;
7 He commands the sun, and it does not rise;
He seals off the stars;
8 He alone spreads out the heavens,
And treads on the waves of the sea;
9 He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,
And the chambers of the south;
10 He does great things past finding out,
Yes, wonders without number.
11 If He goes by me, I do not see *Him;*
If He moves past, I do not perceive Him;
12 If He takes away, who can hinder Him?

Job 9:9

If you know anything about astronomy, you know that the Bear and Orion are bright clusters of stars. You may even be able to find them on starry nights. Pleiades is a bit more difficult to spot. In fact, out of the hundreds of stars that form the constellation Pleiades, only six or seven are visible to the naked eye.

8:22 [a] Literally *will not be*

Who can say to Him, 'What are You doing?'
13 God will not withdraw His anger,
The allies of the proud[a] lie prostrate beneath Him.

14 "How then can I answer Him,
And choose my words *to reason* with Him?
15 For though I were righteous, I could not answer Him;
I would beg mercy of my Judge.
16 If I called and He answered me,
I would not believe that He was listening to my voice.
17 For He crushes me with a tempest,
And multiplies my wounds without cause.
18 He will not allow me to catch my breath,
But fills me with bitterness.
19 If *it is a matter* of strength, indeed *He is* strong;
And if of justice, who will appoint my day *in court?*
20 Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me;
Though I *were* blameless, it would prove me perverse.

21 "I am blameless, yet I do not know myself;
I despise my life.
22 It *is* all one *thing;*
Therefore I say, 'He destroys the blameless and the wicked.'
23 If the scourge slays suddenly,
He laughs at the plight of the innocent.
24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked.
He covers the faces of its judges.
If it is not *He,* who else could it be?

25 "Now my days are swifter than a runner;
They flee away, they see no good.
26 They pass by like swift ships,
Like an eagle swooping on its prey.
27 If I say, 'I will forget my complaint,
I will put off my sad face and wear a smile,'
28 I am afraid of all my sufferings;
I know that You will not hold me innocent.
29 *If* I am condemned,
Why then do I labor in vain?
30 If I wash myself with snow water,
And cleanse my hands with soap,
31 Yet You will plunge me into the pit,
And my own clothes will abhor me.

32 "For *He is* not a man, as I *am,*
That I may answer Him,
And that we should go to court together.
33 Nor is there any mediator between us,
Who may lay his hand on us both.
34 Let Him take His rod away from me,
And do not let dread of Him terrify me.
35 *Then* I would speak and not fear Him,
But it is not so with me.

JOB: I WOULD PLEAD WITH GOD

10 "My soul loathes my life;
I will give free course to my complaint,
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
2 I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me;
Show me why You contend with me.
3 *Does it* seem good to You that You should oppress,
That You should despise the work of Your hands,
And smile on the counsel of the wicked?
4 Do You have eyes of flesh?
Or do You see as man sees?
5 *Are* Your days like the days of a mortal man?
Are Your years like the days of a mighty man,
6 That You should seek for my iniquity
And search out my sin,
7 Although You know that I am not wicked,
And *there is* no one who can deliver from Your hand?

8 'Your hands have made me and fashioned me,
An intricate unity;
Yet You would destroy me.
9 Remember, I pray, that You have made me like clay.
And will You turn me into dust again?
10 Did You not pour me out like milk,
And curdle me like cheese,

9:13 [a]Hebrew *rahab*

11 Clothe me with skin and flesh,
And knit me together with bones and sinews?
12 You have granted me life and favor,
And Your care has preserved my spirit.

13 "And these *things* You have hidden in Your heart;
I know that this *was* with You:
14 If I sin, then You mark me,
And will not acquit me of my iniquity.
15 If I am wicked, woe to me;
Even *if* I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head.
I am full of disgrace;
See my misery!
16 If *my head* is exalted,
You hunt me like a fierce lion,
And again You show Yourself awesome against me.
17 You renew Your witnesses against me,
And increase Your indignation toward me;
Changes and war are *ever* with me.

18 "Why then have You brought me out of the womb?
Oh, that I had perished and no eye had seen me!
19 I would have been as though I had not been.
I would have been carried from the womb to the grave.
20 Are not my days few?
Cease! Leave me alone, that I may take a little comfort,

Job 10:21, 22

"The land of darkness and the shadow of death" refers to Sheol, the place of the dead, according to ancient Hebrew beliefs. Sheol was pictured as a dark and gloomy underground world where the souls of both good and bad people lived after death. Sheol was also the place where people were thought to receive their eternal punishment or reward, according to how they lived.

21 Before I go *to the place from which* I shall not return,
To the land of darkness and the shadow of death,
22 A land as dark as darkness *itself,*
As the shadow of death, without any order,
Where even the light *is* like darkness.'"

ZOPHAR URGES JOB TO REPENT

11 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

2 "Should not the multitude of words be answered?
And should a man full of talk be vindicated?
3 Should your empty talk make men hold their peace?
And when you mock, should no one rebuke you?
4 For you have said,
'My doctrine *is* pure,
And I am clean in your eyes.'
5 But oh, that God would speak,
And open His lips against you,
6 That He would show you the secrets of wisdom!
For *they would* double *your* prudence.
Know therefore that God exacts from you
Less than your iniquity *deserves.*

7 "Can you search out the deep things of God?
Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?
8 *They are* higher than heaven—what can you do?
Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?
9 Their measure *is* longer than the earth
And broader than the sea.

10 "If He passes by, imprisons, and gathers *to judgment,*
Then who can hinder Him?
11 For He knows deceitful men;
He sees wickedness also.
Will He not then consider *it?*

GOD
Does God see people sin?
Job 11:11

12 For an empty-headed man will be wise,
When a wild donkey's colt is born a man.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // JOB 11:7, 8

The Mystery of God To our limited human minds, God is mysterious. We will never fully understand Him. We don't understand how He creates or how He makes decisions. His timing seems slow to us. Heaven is a big mystery; and all those miracles, well, we just don't get it. There are so many aspects of God that we can't totally grasp. That's where Colossians 2:2, 3 comes in. Paul writes that Christ is the key to God's mystery. Jesus physically came to this earth and through His ministry began to unveil the mysteries of God. Paul also writes in 1 Corinthians 13:12 that "now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face." As you grow stronger in your relationship with the Lord, you'll begin to know Him more and more. But even when you're ninety years old and have walked with Him every day, there will still be magnificent mysteries about Him. He's that awesome and that far beyond anything else that exists. There is no end to the mysteries of God. (See also: Deut. 29:29; 1 Cor. 2:7; 13:12; Col. 2:2, 3.)

Words to Live By

Sheol: This word is translated from the Hebrew *sheowl* (sheh-ole') and is the name of the world of the dead. It is also translated as "grave" and "hell" in other places in the Old Testament. It is a place beyond this life about which we know little. According to some passages of Scripture, it is located far beneath the earth. Whether that means it is actually underground or that it exists in another dimension, we know it is not a place we can go while we live, nor do we want to when we die.

13 "If you would prepare your heart,
And stretch out your hands toward Him;
14 If iniquity *were* in your hand, *and you* put it far away,
And would not let wickedness dwell in your tents;
15 Then surely you could lift up your face without spot;
Yes, you could be steadfast, and not fear;
16 Because you would forget *your* misery,
And remember *it* as waters *that have* passed away,
17 And *your* life would be brighter than noonday.
Though you were dark, you would be like the morning.
18 And you would be secure, because there is hope;
Yes, you would dig *around you, and* take your rest in safety.
19 You would also lie down, and no one would make *you* afraid;
Yes, many would court your favor.
20 But the eyes of the wicked will fail,
And they shall not escape,
And their hope—loss of life!"

JOB ANSWERS HIS CRITICS

12 Then Job answered and said:

2 "No doubt you *are* the people,
And wisdom will die with you!
3 But I have understanding as well as you;
I *am* not inferior to you.
Indeed, who does not *know* such things as these?

4 "I am one mocked by his friends,
Who called on God, and He answered him,
The just and blameless *who is* ridiculed.
5 A lamp[a] is despised in the thought of one who is at ease;
It is made ready for those whose feet slip.
6 The tents of robbers prosper,
And those who provoke God are secure—
In what God provides by His hand.

12:5 [a]Or *disaster*

7 "But now ask the beasts, and they will
teach you;
And the birds of the air, and they will
tell you;
8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach
you;
And the fish of the sea will explain to
you.
9 Who among all these does not know
That the hand of the LORD has done
this,
10 In whose hand *is* the life of every living
thing,
And the breath of all mankind?
11 Does not the ear test words
And the mouth taste its food?
12 Wisdom *is* with aged men,
And with length of days,
understanding.

13 "With Him *are* wisdom and strength,
He has counsel and understanding.
14 If He breaks *a thing* down, it cannot be
rebuilt;
If He imprisons a man, there can be no
release.
15 If He withholds the waters, they
dry up;
If He sends them out, they overwhelm
the earth.
16 With Him *are* strength and prudence.
The deceived and the deceiver *are*
His.
17 He leads counselors away plundered,
And makes fools of the judges.
18 He loosens the bonds of kings,
And binds their waist with a belt.
19 He leads princes[a] away plundered,
And overthrows the mighty.
20 He deprives the trusted ones of
speech,
And takes away the discernment of
the elders.
21 He pours contempt on princes,
And disarms the mighty.
22 He uncovers deep things out of
darkness,
And brings the shadow of death to
light.
23 He makes nations great, and destroys
them;
He enlarges nations, and guides them.
24 He takes away the understanding[a] of
the chiefs of the people of the
earth,
And makes them wander in a pathless
wilderness.
25 They grope in the dark without light,
And He makes them stagger like a
drunken *man.*

13 "Behold, my eye has seen all
this,
My ear has heard and
understood it.
2 What you know, I also know;
I *am* not inferior to you.
3 But I would speak to the Almighty,
And I desire to reason with God.
4 But you forgers of lies,
You *are* all worthless physicians.
5 Oh, that you would be silent,
And it would be your wisdom!
6 Now hear my reasoning,
And heed the pleadings of my lips.
7 Will you speak wickedly for God,
And talk deceitfully for Him?
8 Will you show partiality for Him?
Will you contend for God?
9 Will it be well when He searches you
out?
Or can you mock Him as one mocks
a man?
10 He will surely rebuke you
If you secretly show partiality.
11 Will not His excellence make you
afraid,
And the dread of Him fall upon you?
12 Your platitudes *are* proverbs of ashes,
Your defenses are defenses of clay.

13 "Hold your peace with me, and let me
speak,
Then let come on me what *may!*
14 Why do I take my flesh in my teeth,
And put my life in my hands?
15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust
Him.
Even so, I will defend my own ways
before Him.
16 He also *shall* be my salvation,
For a hypocrite could not come before
Him.
17 Listen carefully to my speech,
And to my declaration with your ears.
18 See now, I have prepared *my* case,
I know that I shall be vindicated.

12:19 [a]Literally *priests,* but not in a technical sense **12:24** [a]Literally *heart*

19 Who *is* he *who* will contend with me?
If now I hold my tongue, I perish.

JOB'S DESPONDENT PRAYER

20 "Only two *things* do not do to me,
Then I will not hide myself from You:
21 Withdraw Your hand far from me,
And let not the dread of You make me afraid.
22 Then call, and I will answer;
Or let me speak, then You respond to me.
23 How many *are* my iniquities and sins?
Make me know my transgression and my sin.
24 Why do You hide Your face,
And regard me as Your enemy?
25 Will You frighten a leaf driven to and fro?
And will You pursue dry stubble?
26 For You write bitter things against me,
And make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.
27 You put my feet in the stocks,
And watch closely all my paths.
You set a limit[a] for the soles of my feet.

28 "*Man*[a] decays like a rotten thing,
Like a garment that is moth-eaten.

TRIALS
Will we all have problems in life?
Job 14:1

14 "Man *who is* born of woman
Is of few days and full of trouble.
2 He comes forth like a flower and fades away;
He flees like a shadow and does not continue.
3 And do You open Your eyes on such a one,
And bring me[a] to judgment with Yourself?
4 Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean?
No one!
5 Since his days *are* determined,
The number of his months *is* with You;
You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.
6 Look away from him that he may rest,
Till like a hired man he finishes his day.

7 "For there is hope for a tree,
If it is cut down, that it will sprout again,
And that its tender shoots will not cease.
8 Though its root may grow old in the earth,
And its stump may die in the ground,
9 *Yet* at the scent of water it will bud
And bring forth branches like a plant.
10 But man dies and is laid away;
Indeed he breathes his last
And where *is* he?
11 *As* water disappears from the sea,
And a river becomes parched and dries up,
12 So man lies down and does not rise.
Till the heavens *are* no more,
They will not awake
Nor be roused from their sleep.

13 "Oh, that You would hide me in the grave,
That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past,
That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!
14 If a man dies, shall he live *again?*
All the days of my hard service I will wait,
Till my change comes.
15 You shall call, and I will answer You;
You shall desire the work of Your hands.
16 For now You number my steps,
But do not watch over my sin.
17 My transgression *is* sealed up in a bag,
And You cover[a] my iniquity.

18 "But *as* a mountain falls *and* crumbles away,
And *as* a rock is moved from its place;
19 *As* water wears away stones,
And as torrents wash away the soil of the earth;
So You destroy the hope of man.
20 You prevail forever against him, and he passes on;

13:27 [a]Literally *inscribe a print* **13:28** [a]Literally *He* **14:3** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *him.* **14:17** [a]Literally *plaster over*

You change his countenance and send
him away.
21 His sons come to honor, and he does
not know *it;*
They are brought low, and he does not
perceive *it.*
22 But his flesh will be in pain over it,
And his soul will mourn over it."

ELIPHAZ ACCUSES JOB OF FOLLY

15 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "Should a wise man answer with empty
knowledge,
And fill himself with the east wind?
3 Should he reason with unprofitable
talk,
Or by speeches with which he can do
no good?
4 Yes, you cast off fear,
And restrain prayer before God.
5 For your iniquity teaches your mouth,
And you choose the tongue of the
crafty.
6 Your own mouth condemns you, and
not I;
Yes, your own lips testify against you.

7 "*Are* you the first man *who* was born?
Or were you made before the hills?
8 Have you heard the counsel of God?
Do you limit wisdom to yourself?
9 What do you know that we do not
know?
What do you understand that *is* not
in us?
10 Both the gray-haired and the aged *are*
among us,
Much older than your father.
11 *Are* the consolations of God too small
for you,
And the word *spoken* gently[a] with you?
12 Why does your heart carry you away,
And what do your eyes wink at,
13 That you turn your spirit against God,
And let *such* words go out of your
mouth?

14 "What *is* man, that he could be pure?
And *he who is* born of a woman, that
he could be righteous?
15 If *God* puts no trust in His saints,
And the heavens are not pure in His
sight,
16 How much less man, *who is*
abominable and filthy,
Who drinks iniquity like water!

17 "I will tell you, hear me;
What I have seen I will declare,
18 What wise men have told,
Not hiding *anything received* from
their fathers,
19 To whom alone the land was given,
And no alien passed among them:
20 The wicked man writhes with pain all
his days,
And the number of years is hidden
from the oppressor.
21 Dreadful sounds *are* in his ears;
In prosperity the destroyer comes
upon him.
22 He does not believe that he will return
from darkness,
For a sword is waiting for him.
23 He wanders about for bread, *saying,*
'Where *is it?*'
He knows that a day of darkness is
ready at his hand.
24 Trouble and anguish make him afraid;
They overpower him, like a king ready
for battle.
25 For he stretches out his hand against
God,
And acts defiantly against the
Almighty,
26 Running stubbornly against Him
With his strong, embossed shield.

27 "Though he has covered his face with
his fatness,
And made *his* waist heavy with fat,
28 He dwells in desolate cities,
In houses which no one inhabits,
Which are destined to become ruins.
29 He will not be rich,
Nor will his wealth continue,
Nor will his possessions overspread
the earth.
30 He will not depart from darkness;
The flame will dry out his branches,
And by the breath of His mouth he will
go away.
31 Let him not trust in futile *things,*
deceiving himself,
For futility will be his reward.
32 It will be accomplished before his
time,

15:11 [a]Septuagint reads *a secret thing.*

And his branch will not be green.
33 He will shake off his unripe grape like
a vine,
And cast off his blossom like an olive
tree.
34 For the company of hypocrites *will be*
barren,
And fire will consume the tents of
bribery.
35 They conceive trouble and bring forth
futility;
Their womb prepares deceit."

JOB REPROACHES HIS PITILESS FRIENDS

16 Then Job answered and said:

2 "I have heard many such
things;
Miserable comforters *are* you all!
3 Shall words of wind have an end?
Or what provokes you that you
answer?
4 I also could speak as you *do,*
If your soul were in my soul's place.
I could heap up words against you,
And shake my head at you;
5 *But* I would strengthen you with my
mouth,
And the comfort of my lips would
relieve *your grief.*

6 "Though I speak, my grief is not
relieved;
And *if* I remain silent, how am I eased?
7 But now He has worn me out;
You have made desolate all my
company.
8 You have shriveled me up,
And it is a witness *against me;*
My leanness rises up against me
And bears witness to my face.
9 He tears *me* in His wrath, and
hates me;
He gnashes at me with His teeth;
My adversary sharpens His gaze
on me.
10 They gape at me with their mouth,
They strike me reproachfully on the
cheek,
They gather together against me.
11 God has delivered me to the ungodly,
And turned me over to the hands of
the wicked.
12 I was at ease, but He has shattered me;
He also has taken *me* by my neck, and
shaken me to pieces;
He has set me up for His target,
13 His archers surround me.
He pierces my heart[a] and does not
pity;
He pours out my gall on the ground.
14 He breaks me with wound upon
wound;
He runs at me like a warrior.[a]

15 "I have sewn sackcloth over my skin,
And laid my head[a] in the dust.
16 My face is flushed from weeping,
And on my eyelids *is* the shadow of
death;
17 Although no violence *is* in my hands,
And my prayer *is* pure.

18 "O earth, do not cover my blood,
And let my cry have no *resting* place!
19 Surely even now my witness *is* in
heaven,
And my evidence *is* on high.
20 My friends scorn me;
My eyes pour out *tears* to God.
21 Oh, that one might plead for a man
with God,
As a man *pleads* for his neighbor!
22 For when a few years are finished,
I shall go the way of no return.

JOB PRAYS FOR RELIEF

17 "My spirit is broken,
My days are extinguished,
The grave *is ready* for me.
2 *Are* not mockers with me?
And does not my eye dwell on their
provocation?

3 "Now put down a pledge for me with
Yourself.
Who *is* he *who* will shake hands
with me?
4 For You have hidden their heart from
understanding;
Therefore You will not exalt *them.*
5 He who speaks flattery to *his* friends,
Even the eyes of his children will fail.

6 "But He has made me a byword of the
people,

16:13 [a]Literally *kidneys* **16:14** [a]Vulgate reads *giant.* **16:15** [a]Literally *horn*

And I have become one in whose face
men spit.
7 My eye has also grown dim because of
sorrow,
And all my members *are* like shadows.
8 Upright *men* are astonished at this,
And the innocent stirs himself up
against the hypocrite.
9 Yet the righteous will hold to his way,
And he who has clean hands will be
stronger and stronger.

10 "But please, come back again, all of
you,[a]
For I shall not find *one* wise *man*
among you.
11 My days are past,
My purposes are broken off,
Even the thoughts of my heart.
12 They change the night into day;
'The light *is* near,' *they say,* in the face of
darkness.
13 If I wait *for* the grave *as* my house,
If I make my bed in the darkness,
14 If I say to corruption, 'You *are* my
father,'
And to the worm, 'You *are* my mother
and my sister,'
15 Where then *is* my hope?
As for my hope, who can see it?
16 *Will* they go down to the gates of
Sheol?
Shall *we have* rest together in the
dust?"

BILDAD: THE WICKED ARE PUNISHED

18 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 "How long *till* you put an end to words?
Gain understanding, and afterward we
will speak.
3 Why are we counted as beasts,
And regarded as stupid in your sight?
4 You who tear yourself in anger,
Shall the earth be forsaken for you?
Or shall the rock be removed from its
place?

5 "The light of the wicked indeed goes
out,
And the flame of his fire does not
shine.
6 The light is dark in his tent,
And his lamp beside him is put out.
7 The steps of his strength are
shortened,
And his own counsel casts him down.
8 For he is cast into a net by his own
feet,
And he walks into a snare.
9 The net takes *him* by the heel,
And a snare lays hold of him.
10 A noose *is* hidden for him on the
ground,
And a trap for him in the road.
11 Terrors frighten him on every side,
And drive him to his feet.
12 His strength is starved,
And destruction *is* ready at his side.
13 It devours patches of his skin;
The firstborn of death devours his
limbs.
14 He is uprooted from the shelter of his
tent,
And they parade him before the king
of terrors.
15 They dwell in his tent *who are* none
of his;
Brimstone is scattered on his dwelling.
16 His roots are dried out below,
And his branch withers above.
17 The memory of him perishes from the
earth,
And he has no name among the
renowned.[a]
18 He is driven from light into darkness,
And chased out of the world.
19 He has neither son nor posterity
among his people,
Nor any remaining in his dwellings.
20 Those in the west are astonished at
his day,
As those in the east are frightened.
21 Surely such *are* the dwellings of the
wicked,
And this *is* the place *of him who* does
not know God."

JOB TRUSTS IN HIS REDEEMER

19 Then Job answered and said:

2 "How long will you torment
my soul,

17:10 [a]Following some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text and Targum read *all of them.* **18:17** [a]Literally *before the outside,* meaning distinguished, famous

And break me in pieces with words?
3 These ten times you have
reproached me;
You are not ashamed *that* you have
wronged me.[a]

Job 19:3
Job wasn't actually counting the number of times his friends made him feel bad. "Ten times" was an expression meaning "often."

4 And if indeed I have erred,
My error remains with me.
5 If indeed you exalt *yourselves*
against me,
And plead my disgrace against me,
6 Know then that God has wronged me,
And has surrounded me with His net.

7 "If I cry out concerning wrong, I am not
heard.
If I cry aloud, *there is* no justice.
8 He has fenced up my way, so that I
cannot pass;
And He has set darkness in my paths.
9 He has stripped me of my glory,
And taken the crown *from* my head.
10 He breaks me down on every side,
And I am gone;
My hope He has uprooted like a tree.
11 He has also kindled His wrath
against me,
And He counts me as *one of* His
enemies.
12 His troops come together
And build up their road against me;
They encamp all around my tent.

13 "He has removed my brothers far
from me,
And my acquaintances are completely
estranged from me.
14 My relatives have failed,
And my close friends have
forgotten me.
15 Those who dwell in my house, and my
maidservants,
Count me as a stranger;
I am an alien in their sight.
16 I call my servant, but he gives no
answer;
I beg him with my mouth.
17 My breath is offensive to my wife,
And I am repulsive to the children of
my own body.
18 Even young children despise me;
I arise, and they speak against me.
19 All my close friends abhor me,
And those whom I love have turned
against me.
20 My bone clings to my skin and to my
flesh,
And I have escaped by the skin of my
teeth.

21 "Have pity on me, have pity on me,
O you my friends,
For the hand of God has struck me!
22 Why do you persecute me as God *does*,
And are not satisfied with my flesh?

23 "Oh, that my words were written!
Oh, that they were inscribed in a
book!
24 That they were engraved on a rock
With an iron pen and lead, forever!
25 For I know *that* my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the
earth;
26 And after my skin is destroyed, this *I
know*,
That in my flesh I shall see God,

Job 19:26
Apparently Job believed his body would be resurrected at some point after his death. Like many others in his culture, Job probably believed God would one day rescue the souls of righteous people from Sheol, the place of the dead, and would then pair up those souls with their bodies and whisk them away to heaven.

27 Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not
another.
How my heart yearns within me!
28 If you should say, 'How shall we
persecute him?'—
Since the root of the matter is found
in me,
29 Be afraid of the sword for yourselves;

19:3 [a] A Jewish tradition reads *make yourselves strange to me.*

For wrath *brings* the punishment of
the sword,
That you may know *there is* a
judgment."

ZOPHAR'S SERMON ON THE WICKED MAN

20 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

2"Therefore my anxious thoughts make
me answer,
Because of the turmoil within me.
3I have heard the rebuke that
reproaches me,
And the spirit of my understanding
causes me to answer.

4"Do you *not* know this of old,
Since man was placed on earth,
5That the triumphing of the wicked is
short,
And the joy of the hypocrite is *but* for
a moment?
6Though his haughtiness mounts up to
the heavens,
And his head reaches to the clouds,
7*Yet* he will perish forever like his own
refuse;
Those who have seen him will say,
'Where is he?'
8He will fly away like a dream, and not
be found;
Yes, he will be chased away like a
vision of the night.
9The eye *that* saw him will *see him* no
more,
Nor will his place behold him
anymore.
10His children will seek the favor of the
poor,
And his hands will restore his wealth.
11His bones are full of his youthful vigor,
But it will lie down with him in the
dust.

12"Though evil is sweet in his mouth,
And he hides it under his tongue,
13*Though* he spares it and does not
forsake it,
But still keeps it in his mouth,
14*Yet* his food in his stomach turns sour;
It becomes cobra venom within him.
15He swallows down riches
And vomits them up again;
God casts them out of his belly.
16He will suck the poison of cobras;
The viper's tongue will slay him.
17He will not see the streams,
The rivers flowing with honey and
cream.

Job 20:17

Though it may sound like a disgusting drink, the biblical phrase "honey and cream" was a term used to infer wealth. Cream was a staple of everyday Hebrew life, a major food source for the Israelites. Honey, on the other hand, was considered a delicacy or a rare treat.

18He will restore that for which he
labored,
And will not swallow *it* down;
From the proceeds of business
He will get no enjoyment.
19For he has oppressed *and* forsaken
the poor,
He has violently seized a house which
he did not build.

20"Because he knows no quietness in his
heart,[a]
He will not save anything he desires.
21Nothing is left for him to eat;
Therefore his well-being will not last.
22In his self-sufficiency he will be in
distress;
Every hand of misery will come
against him.
23*When* he is about to fill his stomach,
God will cast on him the fury of His
wrath,
And will rain *it* on him while he is
eating.
24He will flee from the iron weapon;
A bronze bow will pierce him through.
25It is drawn, and comes out of the body;
Yes, the glittering *point comes* out of
his gall.
Terrors *come* upon him;
26Total darkness *is* reserved for his
treasures.
An unfanned fire will consume him;
It shall go ill with him who is left in
his tent.

20:20 [a]Literally *belly*

27 The heavens will reveal his iniquity,
And the earth will rise up against him.
28 The increase of his house will depart,
And his goods will flow away in the day
of His wrath.
29 This *is* the portion from God for a
wicked man,
The heritage appointed to him by
God."

JOB'S DISCOURSE ON THE WICKED

21 Then Job answered and said:

2 "Listen carefully to my speech,
And let this be your consolation.
3 Bear with me that I may speak,
And after I have spoken, keep
mocking.

4 "As for me, *is* my complaint against
man?
And if *it were,* why should I not be
impatient?
5 Look at me and be astonished;
Put *your* hand over *your* mouth.
6 Even when I remember I am
terrified,
And trembling takes hold of my
flesh.
7 Why do the wicked live *and* become
old,
Yes, become mighty in power?
8 Their descendants are established
with them in their sight,
And their offspring before their eyes.
9 Their houses *are* safe from fear,
Neither *is* the rod of God upon them.
10 Their bull breeds without failure;
Their cow calves without miscarriage.
11 They send forth their little ones like a
flock,
And their children dance.
12 They sing to the tambourine and harp,
And rejoice to the sound of the flute.
13 They spend their days in wealth,
And in a moment go down to the
grave.[a]
14 Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us,
For we do not desire the knowledge of
Your ways.
15 Who *is* the Almighty, that we should
serve Him?
And what profit do we have if we pray
to Him?'
16 Indeed their prosperity *is* not in their
hand;
The counsel of the wicked is far
from me.

17 "How often is the lamp of the wicked
put out?
How often does their destruction come
upon them,
The sorrows *God* distributes in His
anger?
18 They are like straw before the wind,
And like chaff that a storm carries
away.
19 *They say,* 'God lays up one's[a] iniquity
for his children';
Let Him recompense him, that he may
know *it.*
20 Let his eyes see his destruction,
And let him drink of the wrath of the
Almighty.
21 For what does he care about his
household after him,
When the number of his months is cut
in half?

GOD
Does God have perfect knowledge?
Job 21:22

22 "Can *anyone* teach God knowledge,
Since He judges those on high?
23 One dies in his full strength,
Being wholly at ease and secure;
24 His pails[a] are full of milk,
And the marrow of his bones is moist.
25 Another man dies in the bitterness of
his soul,
Never having eaten with pleasure.
26 They lie down alike in the dust,
And worms cover them.

27 "Look, I know your thoughts,
And the schemes *with which* you
would wrong me.
28 For you say,
'Where *is* the house of the prince?
And where *is* the tent,[a]

21:13 [a]Or *Sheol* **21:19** [a]Literally *his*
21:24 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *bowels;* Syriac reads *sides;* Targum reads *breasts.*
21:28 [a]Vulgate omits *the tent.*

The dwelling place of the wicked?'
29 Have you not asked those who travel the road?
And do you not know their signs?
30 For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom;
They shall be brought out on the day of wrath.
31 Who condemns his way to his face?
And who repays him *for what* he has done?
32 Yet he shall be brought to the grave,
And a vigil kept over the tomb.
33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet to him;
Everyone shall follow him,
As countless *have gone* before him.
34 How then can you comfort me with empty words,
Since falsehood remains in your answers?"

ELIPHAZ ACCUSES JOB OF WICKEDNESS

22 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "Can a man be profitable to God,
Though he who is wise may be profitable to himself?
3 *Is it* any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous?
Or *is it* gain *to Him* that you make your ways blameless?

4 "Is it because of your fear of Him that He corrects you,
And enters into judgment with you?
5 *Is* not your wickedness great,
And your iniquity without end?

Job 22:6–9

In ancient times, the wealthy were expected to take care of poor people, orphans, and widows, without demanding or expecting anything in return. Home owners were expected to welcome traveling guests and strangers alike, inviting them into their homes and treating them like family.

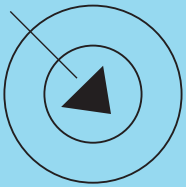
6 For you have taken pledges from your brother for no reason,
And stripped the naked of their clothing.
7 You have not given the weary water to drink,
And you have withheld bread from the hungry.
8 But the mighty man possessed the land,
And the honorable man dwelt in it.
9 You have sent widows away empty,
And the strength of the fatherless was crushed.
10 Therefore snares *are* all around you,
And sudden fear troubles you,
11 Or darkness *so that* you cannot see;
And an abundance of water covers you.

12 "Is not God in the height of heaven?
And see the highest stars, how lofty they are!
13 And you say, 'What does God know?
Can He judge through the deep darkness?
14 Thick clouds cover Him, so that He cannot see,
And He walks above the circle of heaven.'
15 Will you keep to the old way
Which wicked men have trod,
16 Who were cut down before their time,
Whose foundations were swept away by a flood?
17 They said to God, 'Depart from us!
What can the Almighty do to them?'[a]
18 Yet He filled their houses with good *things;*
But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

19 "The righteous see *it* and are glad,
And the innocent laugh at them:
20 'Surely our adversaries[a] are cut down,
And the fire consumes their remnant.'

21 "Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace;
Thereby good will come to you.
22 Receive, please, instruction from His mouth,
And lay up His words in your heart.
23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up;
You will remove iniquity far from your tents.

22:17 [a]Septuagint and Syriac read *us.*
22:20 [a]Septuagint reads *substance.*



PROMISE

God promises to hear and answer your prayers.

"You will make your prayer to Him, He will hear you, and you will pay your vows" (Job 22:27).

Some high school kids meet once a week before school to pray. Last week they prayed for a job for one of their dads, for a grandmother to be healed of cancer, and for a friend who had a hard exam coming up. This week they met and as soon as they got together, the reports began: "My dad got a job the very morning we prayed!" "My grandmother said she felt a lot of encouragement from all the prayers for her, and that God is continuing to give her strength." "Our friend thinks he did well on his exam and thanks you for praying." They all looked at each other in amazement and surprise. "Wow," someone said, "God really answered our prayers!"

Sure, God answers our prayers, but we sometimes pray with so much doubt that we're totally shocked when He does. Pray with assurance that God promises to answer. Expect Him to work and watch for His action. Remember that God will answer in one of three ways—yes, no, or wait. His answers may look different than you expect them to look. Praying is not holy manipulation. God will choose in His wisdom how to respond. But He will always hear and respond.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// 2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalms 28:6; 40:1–17

24 Then you will lay your gold in the dust,
And the *gold* of Ophir among the
stones of the brooks.
25 Yes, the Almighty will be your gold[a]
And your precious silver;
26 For then you will have your delight in
the Almighty,
And lift up your face to God.
27 You will make your prayer to Him,
He will hear you,
And you will pay your vows.
28 You will also declare a thing,
And it will be established for you;
So light will shine on your ways.
29 When they cast *you* down, and you say,
'Exaltation *will come!*'
Then He will save the humble *person.*
30 He will *even* deliver one who is not
innocent;
Yes, he will be delivered by the purity
of your hands."

JOB PROCLAIMS GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS

23 Then Job answered and said:

2 "Even today my complaint is
bitter;
My[a] hand is listless because of my
groaning.
3 Oh, that I knew where I might find
Him,
That I might come to His seat!
4 I would present *my* case before Him,
And fill my mouth with arguments.
5 I would know the words *which* He
would answer me,
And understand what He would say
to me.
6 Would He contend with me in His
great power?
No! But He would take *note* of me.
7 There the upright could reason with
Him,
And I would be delivered forever from
my Judge.

8 "Look, I go forward, but He is not *there,*
And backward, but I cannot perceive
Him;
9 When He works on the left hand, I
cannot behold *Him;*

22:25 [a]The ancient versions suggest *defense;* Hebrew reads *gold* as in verse 24.
23:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *His.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // JOB 23:9

Invisible Blessing Who blew the wind through your hair this morning? Who brought the sun over the horizon once again? Who changed the seasons while you weren't even looking? It was God! The One who is always at work. While you slept, He was preparing your day. While you haven't noticed, He has been ordering your life. He is strengthening your gifts and giving you ideas about what you really have to do. We have downtime, unproductive days, and mental blocks. We take vacations and naps, and spend time "chillaxing." We can go for days and not accomplish one thing. Not God. He is always at work—always creating, always protecting, and always loving. (See also: Ps. 121:3, 4; John 5:17.)

Words to Live By

Works: The word translated in Job 23:9 as "works" is the Hebrew word *asah* (aw-saw'). It means "to do or make; to execute, perform, maintain, accomplish, and even create." God is continually at work in your life, even when you aren't aware.

When He turns to the right hand, I
cannot see *Him.*

Job 23:10

After gold is mined, it must be refined. That means the ore must be heated to the point that the metal separates from the rock. People who bought gold in Job's day would test it first to see if the metal had been mixed with less valuable materials. They would have an expert metalsmith (or smelter) scrape, cut, and heat the gold as part of the testing process.

10 But He knows the way that I take;
When He has tested me, I shall come
forth as gold.

FOLLOWING GOD

How should we follow God?

Job 23:11, 12

11 My foot has held fast to His steps;
I have kept His way and not turned
aside.
12 I have not departed from the
commandment of His lips;
I have treasured the words of His mouth
More than my necessary *food.*
13 "But He *is* unique, and who can make
Him change?
And *whatever* His soul desires, *that* He
does.
14 For He performs *what is* appointed
for me,
And many such *things are* with Him.
15 Therefore I am terrified at His
presence;
When I consider *this,* I am afraid of
Him.
16 For God made my heart weak,
And the Almighty terrifies me;
17 Because I was not cut off from the
presence of darkness,
And He did *not* hide deep darkness
from my face.

JOB COMPLAINS OF VIOLENCE ON THE EARTH

24 "*Since* times are not hidden
from the Almighty,
Why do those who know Him
see not His days?

2 "*Some* remove landmarks;
They seize flocks violently and feed
on them;
3 They drive away the donkey of the
fatherless;
They take the widow's ox as a
pledge.
4 They push the needy off the road;

Job 24:2

In ancient times, stones were often used to mark the boundaries of an individual's property. Moving those stones in order to extend one's property was immoral and illegal.

All the poor of the land are forced to
hide.
5 Indeed, *like* wild donkeys in the desert,
They go out to their work, searching
for food.
The wilderness *yields* food for them
and for *their* children.
6 They gather their fodder in the field
And glean in the vineyard of the
wicked.
7 They spend the night naked, without
clothing,
And have no covering in the cold.
8 They are wet with the showers of the
mountains,
And huddle around the rock for want
of shelter.

9 "*Some* snatch the fatherless from the
breast,
And take a pledge from the poor.
10 They cause *the poor* to go naked,
without clothing;
And they take away the sheaves from
the hungry.
11 They press out oil within their walls,
And tread winepresses, yet suffer thirst.
12 The dying groan in the city,
And the souls of the wounded cry out;
Yet God does not charge *them* with
wrong.

13 "There are those who rebel against the
light;
They do not know its ways
Nor abide in its paths.
14 The murderer rises with the light;
He kills the poor and needy;
And in the night he is like a thief.
15 The eye of the adulterer waits for the
twilight,
Saying, 'No eye will see me';
And he disguises *his* face.
16 In the dark they break into houses
Which they marked for themselves in
the daytime;
They do not know the light.
17 For the morning is the same to them
as the shadow of death;
If *someone* recognizes *them,*
They are in the terrors of the shadow
of death.

18 "They *should be* swift on the face of the
waters,
Their portion *should be* cursed in the
earth,
So that no *one would* turn into the way
of their vineyards.
19 As drought and heat consume the
snow waters,
So the grave[a] *consumes those who* have
sinned.
20 The womb *should* forget him,
The worm *should* feed sweetly on him;
He *should* be remembered no more,
And wickedness *should* be broken like
a tree.
21 For he preys on the barren *who* do not
bear,
And does no good for the widow.

22 "But *God* draws the mighty away with
His power;
He rises up, but no *man* is sure of life.
23 He gives them security, and they rely
on it;
Yet His eyes *are* on their ways.
24 They are exalted for a little while,
Then they are gone.
They are brought low;
They are taken out of the way like all
others;
They dry out like the heads of grain.

25 "Now if *it is* not *so,* who will prove me
a liar,
And make my speech worth nothing?"

BILDAD: HOW CAN MAN BE RIGHTEOUS?

25 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 "Dominion and fear *belong* to Him;
He makes peace in His high places.
3 Is there any number to His armies?
Upon whom does His light not rise?

24:19 [a]Or *Sheol*

4 How then can man be righteous before God?
Or how can he be pure *who is* born of a woman?
5 If even the moon does not shine,
And the stars are not pure in His sight,
6 How much less man, *who is* a maggot,
And a son of man, *who is* a worm?"

HUMILITY
How do people compare to God?
Job 25:5, 6

JOB: MAN'S FRAILTY AND GOD'S MAJESTY

26 But Job answered and said:

2 "How have you helped *him who is* without power?
How have you saved the arm *that has* no strength?
3 How have you counseled *one who has* no wisdom?
And *how* have you declared sound advice to many?
4 To whom have you uttered words?
And whose spirit came from you?

5 "The dead tremble,
Those under the waters and those inhabiting them.
6 Sheol *is* naked before Him,
And Destruction has no covering.
7 He stretches out the north over empty space;
He hangs the earth on nothing.
8 He binds up the water in His thick clouds,
Yet the clouds are not broken under it.
9 He covers the face of *His* throne,
And spreads His cloud over it.
10 He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters,
At the boundary of light and darkness.
11 The pillars of heaven tremble,
And are astonished at His rebuke.
12 He stirs up the sea with His power,
And by His understanding He breaks up the storm.
13 By His Spirit He adorned the heavens;
His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
14 Indeed these *are* the mere edges of His ways,
And how small a whisper we hear of Him!
But the thunder of His power who can understand?"

JOB MAINTAINS HIS INTEGRITY

27 Moreover Job continued his discourse, and said:

2 "*As* God lives, *who* has taken away my justice,
And the Almighty, *who* has made my soul bitter,
3 As long as my breath *is* in me,
And the breath of God in my nostrils,
4 My lips will not speak wickedness,
Nor my tongue utter deceit.
5 Far be it from me
That I should say you are right;
Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.
6 My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go;
My heart shall not reproach *me* as long as I live.

7 "May my enemy be like the wicked,
And he who rises up against me like the unrighteous.
8 For what is the hope of the hypocrite,
Though he may gain *much,*
If God takes away his life?
9 Will God hear his cry
When trouble comes upon him?
10 Will he delight himself in the Almighty?
Will he always call on God?

11 "I will teach you about the hand of God;
What *is* with the Almighty I will not conceal.
12 Surely all of you have seen *it;*
Why then do you behave with complete nonsense?

13 "This is the portion of a wicked man with God,
And the heritage of oppressors, received from the Almighty:
14 If his children are multiplied, *it is* for the sword;
And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.

15 Those who survive him shall be buried
in death,
And their[a] widows shall not weep,
16 Though he heaps up silver like dust,
And piles up clothing like clay—
17 He may pile *it* up, but the just will
wear *it,*
And the innocent will divide the silver.
18 He builds his house like a moth,[a]
Like a booth *which* a watchman
makes.
19 The rich man will lie down,
But not be gathered *up;*[a]
He opens his eyes,
And he *is* no more.
20 Terrors overtake him like a flood;
A tempest steals him away in the
night.
21 The east wind carries him away, and
he is gone;
It sweeps him out of his place.
22 It hurls against him and does not
spare;
He flees desperately from its power.
23 *Men* shall clap their hands at him,
And shall hiss him out of his place.

JOB'S DISCOURSE ON WISDOM

28 "Surely there is a mine for
silver,
And a place *where* gold is
refined.
2 Iron is taken from the earth,
And copper *is* smelted *from* ore.
3 *Man* puts an end to darkness,
And searches every recess
For ore in the darkness and the
shadow of death.
4 He breaks open a shaft away from
people;
In places forgotten by feet
They hang far away from men;
They swing to and fro.
5 *As for* the earth, from it comes bread,
But underneath it is turned up as by
fire;
6 Its stones *are* the source of sapphires,
And it contains gold dust.
7 *That* path no bird knows,
Nor has the falcon's eye seen it.
8 The proud lions[a] have not trodden it,
Nor has the fierce lion passed over it.
9 He puts his hand on the flint;
He overturns the mountains at the
roots.
10 He cuts out channels in the rocks,
And his eye sees every precious thing.
11 He dams up the streams from
trickling;
What is hidden he brings forth to light.

12 "But where can wisdom be found?
And where *is* the place of
understanding?
13 Man does not know its value,
Nor is it found in the land of the
living.
14 The deep says, *'It is* not in me';
And the sea says, *'It is* not with me.'
15 It cannot be purchased for gold,
Nor can silver be weighed *for* its price.
16 It cannot be valued in the gold of
Ophir,
In precious onyx or sapphire.
17 Neither gold nor crystal can equal it,
Nor can it be exchanged for jewelry of
fine gold.
18 No mention shall be made of coral or
quartz,
For the price of wisdom *is* above
rubies.
19 The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it,
Nor can it be valued in pure gold.

20 "From where then does wisdom come?
And where *is* the place of
understanding?
21 It is hidden from the eyes of all living,
And concealed from the birds of the
air.
22 Destruction and Death say,
'We have heard a report about it with
our ears.'
23 God understands its way,
And He knows its place.
24 For He looks to the ends of the earth,
And sees under the whole heavens,
25 To establish a weight for the wind,
And apportion the waters by
measure.
26 When He made a law for the rain,
And a path for the thunderbolt,

27:15 [a]Literally *his* **27:18** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *spider* (compare 8:14); Targum reads *decay*. **27:19** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Syriac read *But shall not add* (that is, do it again); Vulgate reads *But take away nothing.* **28:8** [a]Literally *sons of pride,* figurative of the great lions



LIFE APP

Wisdom / Job 28

Job 28 takes us on a journey, searching for wisdom. Through Job's words, we search all over the planet to try and find it. We're taken into mines deep inside the earth, where not even animals have gone, to see what we can discover. There we find many treasures, but not wisdom. We search the depths of the sea, but still no wisdom. We learn that all the gold and silver and other precious stones we could find on earth could never buy us wisdom. True wisdom is a greater treasure than all these combined. No valuable thing on this earth can compare with the value of wisdom.

Our journey has shown us the value of wisdom, but we still don't know where it's found. It remains hidden from everyone—even the birds looking down from high above can't see it. Even the powers of Destruction and Death have only heard about it. Is there anyone who knows the way to wisdom? Yes! "God understands its way, and He knows its place" (Job 28:22).

God is the source of wisdom and its Master. He created everything in the world. He placed the precious stones deep within the earth's core and He fashioned everything within the oceans. And He created wisdom and set it in its place. Without God, we could journey forever and never find true wisdom.

But He wants us to find it. He has told us how: "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job 28:28). If we want to be filled with godly wisdom and have lives that show its value, we will seek the Lord and run away from all kinds of evil. As we maintain our focus on Him, we will grow closer to Him, and we will find deeper levels of His wisdom. Others who see our lives will be able to tell that we have found something priceless. When they ask us where we found it, we can lead them directly to our God so that they can also discover true wisdom that comes only from God.

27 Then He saw *wisdom*[a] and declared it;
He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out.
28 And to man He said,
'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom,
And to depart from evil *is* understanding.'"

JOB'S SUMMARY DEFENSE

29 Job further continued his discourse, and said:

2 "Oh, that I were as *in* months past,
As *in* the days *when* God watched over me;
3 When His lamp shone upon my head,
And when by His light I walked *through* darkness;
4 Just as I was in the days of my prime,
When the friendly counsel of God *was* over my tent;
5 When the Almighty *was* yet with me,
When my children *were* around me;
6 When my steps were bathed with cream,[a]
And the rock poured out rivers of oil for me!

7 "When I went out to the gate by the city,
When I took my seat in the open square,
8 The young men saw me and hid,
And the aged arose *and* stood;
9 The princes refrained from talking,
And put *their* hand on their mouth;
10 The voice of nobles was hushed,
And their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth.
11 When the ear heard, then it blessed me,
And when the eye saw, then it approved me;
12 Because I delivered the poor who cried out,
The fatherless and *the one who* had no helper.
13 The blessing of a perishing *man* came upon me,
And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
My justice *was* like a robe and a turban.
15 I *was* eyes to the blind,
And I *was* feet to the lame.
16 I *was* a father to the poor,
And I searched out the case *that* I did not know.
17 I broke the fangs of the wicked,
And plucked the victim from his teeth.

18 "Then I said, 'I shall die in my nest,
And multiply *my* days as the sand.
19 My root *is* spread out to the waters,
And the dew lies all night on my branch.
20 My glory *is* fresh within me,
And my bow is renewed in my hand.'

21 "*Men* listened to me and waited,
And kept silence for my counsel.
22 After my words they did not speak again,
And my speech settled on them *as dew.*
23 They waited for me *as* for the rain,
And they opened their mouth wide *as* for the spring rain.
24 *If* I mocked at them, they did not believe *it,*
And the light of my countenance they did not cast down.
25 I chose the way for them, and sat as chief;
So I dwelt as a king in the army,
As one *who* comforts mourners.

30 "But now they mock at me, *men* younger than I,
Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.
2 Indeed, what *profit* is the strength of their hands to me?
Their vigor has perished.
3 *They are* gaunt from want and famine,
Fleeing late to the wilderness, desolate and waste,
4 Who pluck mallow by the bushes,
And broom tree roots *for* their food.
5 They were driven out from among *men,*
They shouted at them as *at* a thief.
6 *They had* to live in the clefts of the valleys,
In caves of the earth and the rocks.

28:27 [a]Literally *it* **29:6** [a]Masoretic Text reads *wrath;* ancient versions and some Hebrew manuscripts read *cream* (compare 20:17).

7 Among the bushes they brayed,
Under the nettles they nestled.
8 *They were* sons of fools,
Yes, sons of vile men;
They were scourged from the land.

9 "And now I am their taunting song;
Yes, I am their byword.
10 They abhor me, they keep far from me;
They do not hesitate to spit in my face.
11 Because He has loosed my[a] bowstring and afflicted me,
They have cast off restraint before me.
12 At *my* right *hand* the rabble arises;
They push away my feet,
And they raise against me their ways of destruction.
13 They break up my path,
They promote my calamity;
They have no helper.
14 They come as broad breakers;
Under the ruinous storm they roll along.
15 Terrors are turned upon me;
They pursue my honor as the wind,
And my prosperity has passed like a cloud.

16 "And now my soul is poured out because of my *plight;*
The days of affliction take hold of me.
17 My bones are pierced in me at night,
And my gnawing pains take no rest.
18 By great force my garment is disfigured;
It binds me about as the collar of my coat.
19 He has cast me into the mire,
And I have become like dust and ashes.

20 "I cry out to You, but You do not answer me;
I stand up, and You regard me.
21 *But* You have become cruel to me;
With the strength of Your hand You oppose me.
22 You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride *on it;*
You spoil my success.
23 For I know *that* You will bring me *to* death,
And *to* the house appointed for all living.

24 "Surely He would not stretch out *His* hand against a heap of ruins,
If they cry out when He destroys *it.*
25 Have I not wept for him who was in trouble?
Has *not* my soul grieved for the poor?
26 But when I looked for good, evil came *to me;*
And when I waited for light, then came darkness.
27 My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest;
Days of affliction confront me.
28 I go about mourning, but not in the sun;
I stand up in the assembly *and* cry out for help.
29 I am a brother of jackals,
And a companion of ostriches.
30 My skin grows black and falls from me;
My bones burn with fever.
31 My harp is *turned* to mourning,
And my flute to the voice of those who weep.

LUST

How can we practice self-control?

Job 31:1

31 "I have made a covenant with my eyes;
Why then should I look upon a young woman?
2 For what *is* the allotment of God from above,
And the inheritance of the Almighty from on high?
3 *Is* it not destruction for the wicked,
And disaster for the workers of iniquity?
4 Does He not see my ways,
And count all my steps?

5 "If I have walked with falsehood,
Or if my foot has hastened to deceit,
6 Let me be weighed on honest scales,
That God may know my integrity.
7 If my step has turned from the way,
Or my heart walked after my eyes,
Or if any spot adheres to my hands,

30:11 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *His.*

LIFE APP

Self-image / Job 31:15

In a society obsessed with perfection, it's easy to be hyper-aware of your own imperfections. You may look at people around you who seem to have it all together; they look perfect; they have their choice of dates; everything they do turns out right. Comparing your perception of those people with your perception of yourself rarely works out in your favor. But that's an unfair comparison. Those other people aren't perfect. No one is. You may not see them, but everyone has their own faults and struggles. Deep down, they may even have days when they envy other people; they may envy you. The point is, when you leave it to this world to define your worth, you are setting yourself up for failure. Everyone is. The world is a poor judge of true value.

So where do you find your value and worth? Job 31:15 is a reminder that we are each created and designed by God. He knew exactly what He was doing when He designed you with your specific personality, traits, and gifts. When you think about yourself, you can praise God because you are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14). God knows exactly who you are and He loves you.

Not only did He design you as you are, He also designed you with a purpose. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that we are God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." When you've given your life to Christ, you know that you are His and you can live your life according to His design. That's where you find your value—in knowing that you are a rare and precious creation of the God you serve. You are worthy of respect, valuable beyond measure, and infinitely lovable because of the love and creativity of Almighty God. That's who you are. So the next time you start to envy someone else, look in the mirror, thank God for making you who you are, and ask Him to help you always remember to find your value and worth only in Him.

8 *Then* let me sow, and another eat;
Yes, let my harvest be rooted out.

Job 31:5–8

In the ancient Middle East, a person accused of a crime was required to take an oath of innocence. Job went one step further and submitted himself to the toughest polygraph test imaginable. He swore that he was innocent of all the accusations and called on God to punish him if he was lying.

9 "If my heart has been enticed by a woman,
Or *if* I have lurked at my neighbor's door,
10 *Then* let my wife grind for another,
And let others bow down over her.
11 For that *would be* wickedness;
Yes, it *would be* iniquity *deserving of* judgment.
12 For that *would be* a fire *that* consumes to destruction,
And would root out all my increase.

13 "If I have despised the cause of my male or female servant
When they complained against me,
14 What then shall I do when God rises up?
When He punishes, how shall I answer Him?
15 Did not He who made me in the womb make them?
Did not the same One fashion us in the womb?

16 "If I have kept the poor from *their* desire,
Or caused the eyes of the widow to fail,
17 Or eaten my morsel by myself,
So that the fatherless could not eat of it
18 (But from my youth I reared him as a father,
And from my mother's womb I guided *the widow*[a]);
19 If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing,
Or any poor *man* without covering;
20 If his heart[a] has not blessed me,
And *if* he was *not* warmed with the fleece of my sheep;
21 If I have raised my hand against the fatherless,
When I saw I had help in the gate;
22 *Then* let my arm fall from my shoulder,
Let my arm be torn from the socket.
23 For destruction *from* God *is* a terror to me,
And because of His magnificence I cannot endure.

24 "If I have made gold my hope,
Or said to fine gold, '*You are* my confidence';
25 If I have rejoiced because my wealth *was* great,
And because my hand had gained much;
26 If I have observed the sun[a] when it shines,
Or the moon moving *in* brightness,
27 So that my heart has been secretly enticed,
And my mouth has kissed my hand;
28 This also *would be* an iniquity *deserving of* judgment,
For I would have denied God *who is* above.

29 "If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me,
Or lifted myself up when evil found him
30 (Indeed I have not allowed my mouth to sin
By asking for a curse on his soul);
31 If the men of my tent have not said,
'Who is there that has not been satisfied with his meat?'
32 (*But* no sojourner had to lodge in the street,
For I have opened my doors to the traveler[a]);
33 If I have covered my transgressions as Adam,
By hiding my iniquity in my bosom,
34 Because I feared the great multitude,
And dreaded the contempt of families,

31:18 [a]Literally *her* (compare verse 16)
31:20 [a]Literally *loins* **31:26** [a]Literally *light*
31:32 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *road*.

So that I kept silence
And did not go out of the door—
35Oh, that I had one to hear me!
Here is my mark.
Oh, that the Almighty would answer me,
That my Prosecutor had written a book!
36Surely I would carry it on my shoulder,
And bind it on me *like* a crown;
37I would declare to Him the number of my steps;
Like a prince I would approach Him.

38"If my land cries out against me,
And its furrows weep together;
39If I have eaten its fruit[a] without money,
Or caused its owners to lose their lives;
40*Then* let thistles grow instead of wheat,
And weeds instead of barley."

The words of Job are ended.

ELIHU CONTRADICTS JOB'S FRIENDS

32 So these three men ceased answering Job, because he *was* righteous in his own eyes. 2Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he justified himself rather than God. 3Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and *yet* had condemned Job.

4Now because they *were* years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job.[a] 5When Elihu saw that *there was* no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused.

6So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said:

"I *am* young in years, and you *are* very old;
Therefore I was afraid,
And dared not declare my opinion to you.
7I said, 'Age[a] should speak,
And multitude of years should teach wisdom.'
8But *there is* a spirit in man,
And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.
9Great men[a] are not *always* wise,
Nor do the aged *always* understand justice.

10"Therefore I say, 'Listen to me,
I also will declare my opinion.'
11Indeed I waited for your words,
I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out what to say.
12I paid close attention to you;
And surely not one of you convinced Job,
Or answered his words—
13Lest you say,
'We have found wisdom';
God will vanquish him, not man.
14Now he has not directed *his* words against me;
So I will not answer him with your words.

15"They are dismayed and answer no more;
Words escape them.
16And I have waited, because they did not speak,
Because they stood still *and* answered no more.
17I also will answer my part,
I too will declare my opinion.
18For I am full of words;
The spirit within me compels me.
19Indeed my belly *is* like wine *that* has no vent;
It is ready to burst like new wineskins.
20I will speak, that I may find relief;
I must open my lips and answer.
21Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone;
Nor let me flatter any man.
22For I do not know how to flatter,
Else my Maker would soon take me away.

ELIHU CONTRADICTS JOB

33 "But please, Job, hear my speech,
And listen to all my words.
2Now, I open my mouth;
My tongue speaks in my mouth.
3My words *come* from my upright heart;

31:39 [a]Literally *its strength* **32:4** [a]Vulgate reads *till Job had spoken.* **32:7** [a]Literally *Days,* that is, years **32:9** [a]Or *Men of many years*

MAKING IT REAL // JOB 33:14

God Speaks God can speak to us in as many ways as He can imagine. He is very creative when it comes to getting our attention. He can whisper to us in quiet times, or shout to us in our busyness. We can read the Bible and know that He has just spoken directly to our situation. A teacher may teach from the Scripture and God speaks through him or her. He uses billboards, phone calls, hugs from friends, successes, failures, and ordinary, everyday experiences. He will do whatever it takes, intervene whenever necessary, to get you to look up and know that He is God. Do you have eyes to see? Do you have ears to hear God speaking to you? (See also: 1 Cor. 2:13; Rev. 2:7.)

Words to Live By

Perceive: The word translated as "perceive" in Job 33:14 is the Hebrew word *shuwr* (shoor). *Shuwr* goes beyond just seeing or hearing; to *shuwr* is to actually expect God to communicate; it is to wait for Him to speak, knowing He will. Do you expect to see God at work in your life? Do you expect Him to speak to you?

My lips utter pure knowledge.
4 The Spirit of God has made me,
And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
5 If you can answer me,
Set *your words* in order before me;
Take your stand.
6 Truly I *am* as your spokesman[a] before God;
I also have been formed out of clay.
7 Surely no fear of me will terrify you,
Nor will my hand be heavy on you.

8 "Surely you have spoken in my hearing,
And I have heard the sound of *your* words, *saying,*
9 'I *am* pure, without transgression;
I *am* innocent, and *there is* no iniquity in me.
10 Yet He finds occasions against me,
He counts me as His enemy;
11 He puts my feet in the stocks,
He watches all my paths.'

12 "Look, *in* this you are not righteous.
I will answer you,
For God is greater than man.
13 Why do you contend with Him?
For He does not give an accounting of any of His words.
14 For God may speak in one way, or in another,
Yet man does not perceive it.
15 In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falls upon men,
While slumbering on their beds,
16 Then He opens the ears of men,
And seals their instruction.
17 In order to turn man *from his* deed,
And conceal pride from man,
18 He keeps back his soul from the Pit,
And his life from perishing by the sword.

19 "*Man* is also chastened with pain on his bed,
And with strong *pain* in many of his bones,
20 So that his life abhors bread,
And his soul succulent food.
21 His flesh wastes away from sight,
And his bones stick out *which once* were not seen.
22 Yes, his soul draws near the Pit,
And his life to the executioners.

23 "If there is a messenger for him,
A mediator, one among a thousand,
To show man His uprightness,
24 Then He is gracious to him, and says,
'Deliver him from going down to the Pit;
I have found a ransom';
25 His flesh shall be young like a child's,

33:6 [a]Literally *as your mouth*

He shall return to the days of his
youth.
26 He shall pray to God, and He will
delight in him,
He shall see His face with joy,
For He restores to man His
righteousness.
27 Then he looks at men and says,
'I have sinned, and perverted *what was*
right,
And it did not profit me.'
28 He will redeem his[a] soul from going
down to the Pit,
And his[b] life shall see the light.

29 "Behold, God works all these *things,*
Twice, *in fact,* three *times* with a
man,
30 To bring back his soul from the Pit,
That he may be enlightened with the
light of life.

31 "Give ear, Job, listen to me;
Hold your peace, and I will speak.
32 If you have anything to say,
answer me;
Speak, for I desire to justify you.
33 If not, listen to me;
Hold your peace, and I will teach you
wisdom."

ELIHU PROCLAIMS GOD'S JUSTICE

34 Elihu further answered and said:

2 "Hear my words, you wise *men;*
Give ear to me, you who have
knowledge.
3 For the ear tests words
As the palate tastes food.
4 Let us choose justice for ourselves;
Let us know among ourselves what *is*
good.

5 "For Job has said, 'I am righteous,
But God has taken away my justice;
6 Should I lie concerning my right?
My wound *is* incurable, *though I am*
without transgression.'
7 What man *is* like Job,
Who drinks scorn like water,
8 Who goes in company with the
workers of iniquity,
And walks with wicked men?
9 For he has said, 'It profits a man
nothing
That he should delight in God.'

10 "Therefore listen to me, you men of
understanding:
Far be it from God *to do* wickedness,
And *from* the Almighty to *commit*
iniquity.
11 For He repays man *according to* his
work,
And makes man to find a reward
according to *his* way.
12 Surely God will never do wickedly,
Nor will the Almighty pervert justice.
13 Who gave Him charge over the earth?
Or who appointed *Him over* the whole
world?
14 If He should set His heart on it,
If He should gather to Himself His
Spirit and His breath,
15 All flesh would perish together,
And man would return to dust.

16 "If *you have* understanding, hear this;
Listen to the sound of my words:
17 Should one who hates justice govern?
Will you condemn *Him who is* most
just?
18 *Is it fitting* to say to a king, '*You are*
worthless,'
And to nobles, '*You are* wicked'?
19 Yet He is not partial to princes,
Nor does He regard the rich more than
the poor;
For they *are* all the work of His hands.
20 In a moment they die, in the middle of
the night;
The people are shaken and pass away;
The mighty are taken away without a
hand.

21 "For His eyes *are* on the ways of man,
And He sees all his steps.
22 There is no darkness nor shadow of
death
Where the workers of iniquity may
hide themselves.
23 For He need not further consider a
man,
That he should go before God in
judgment.
24 He breaks in pieces mighty men
without inquiry,

33:28 [a]Or *my* (Kethib) [b]Or *my* (Kethib)

MIR MAKING IT REAL // JOB 34:19

No Favorites Imagine everyone different—but equal: no rich, no poor; no one more beautiful; no one more popular; everyone accepted the same; everyone loved completely. It's hard for us to imagine, but that's exactly the way it is with God. He loves the kid you can't stand just as much as He loves you. He loves you as much as He loves the most popular kid in your school. The world gives awards and titles and considers some people as better than others. God is not impressed and He doesn't play favorites. He made each one of us different and unique, and He loves us all the same—completely and unconditionally. (See also: Luke 15:4, 5; Gal. 2:6.)

Words to Live By

Regard: The word translated in Job 34:19 as "regard" is the Hebrew word *nakar* (naw-kar'). It means "to know, recognize, pay attention to, and be acquainted with." It also implies respect. God does not give greater attention to anyone, regardless of who they are or what they have done. He considers everyone equal in His sight and in His love.

And sets others in their place.
25 Therefore He knows their works;
He overthrows *them* in the night,
And they are crushed.
26 He strikes them as wicked *men*
In the open sight of others,
27 Because they turned back from Him,
And would not consider any of His ways,
28 So that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him;
For He hears the cry of the afflicted.
29 When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?
And when He hides *His* face, who then can see Him,
Whether *it is* against a nation or a man alone?—
30 That the hypocrite should not reign,
Lest the people be ensnared.

31 "For has *anyone* said to God,
'I have borne *chastening;*
I will offend no more;
32 Teach me *what* I do not see;
If I have done iniquity, I will do no more'?
33 Should He repay *it* according to your *terms,*
Just because you disavow it?
You must choose, and not I;
Therefore speak what you know.
34 "Men of understanding say to me,
Wise men who listen to me:
35 'Job speaks without knowledge,
His words *are* without wisdom.'
36 Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost,
Because *his* answers *are like* those of wicked men!
37 For he adds rebellion to his sin;
He claps *his hands* among us,
And multiplies his words against God."

ELIHU CONDEMNS SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

35 Moreover Elihu answered and said:

2 "Do you think this is right?
Do you say,
'My righteousness is more than God's'?
3 For you say,
'What advantage will it be to You?
What profit shall I have, more than *if* I had sinned?'

4 "I will answer you,
And your companions with you.
5 Look to the heavens and see;
And behold the clouds—
They are higher than you.
6 If you sin, what do you accomplish against Him?

Or, *if* your transgressions are multiplied,
what do you do to Him?
7 If you are righteous, what do you give
Him?
Or what does He receive from your
hand?
8 Your wickedness affects a man such
as you,
And your righteousness a son of man.

9 "Because of the multitude of
oppressions they cry out;
They cry out for help because of the
arm of the mighty.
10 But no one says, 'Where *is* God my
Maker,
Who gives songs in the night,
11 Who teaches us more than the beasts
of the earth,
And makes us wiser than the birds of
heaven?'
12 There they cry out, but He does not
answer,
Because of the pride of evil men.
13 Surely God will not listen to empty
talk,
Nor will the Almighty regard it.
14 Although you say you do not see Him,
Yet justice *is* before Him, and you must
wait for Him.
15 And now, because He has not
punished in His anger,
Nor taken much notice of folly,
16 Therefore Job opens his mouth in vain;
He multiplies words without
knowledge."

ELIHU PROCLAIMS GOD'S GOODNESS

36 Elihu also proceeded and said:

2 "Bear with me a little, and I will show
you
That *there are* yet words to speak on
God's behalf.
3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar;
I will ascribe righteousness to my
Maker.
4 For truly my words *are* not false;
One who is perfect in knowledge *is*
with you.

5 "Behold, God *is* mighty, but despises
no one;
He is mighty in strength of
understanding.
6 He does not preserve the life of the
wicked,
But gives justice to the oppressed.
7 He does not withdraw His eyes from
the righteous;
But *they are* on the throne with kings,
For He has seated them forever,
And they are exalted.
8 And if *they are* bound in fetters,
Held in the cords of affliction,
9 Then He tells them their work and
their transgressions—
That they have acted defiantly.
10 He also opens their ear to instruction,
And commands that they turn from
iniquity.
11 If they obey and serve *Him,*
They shall spend their days in
prosperity,
And their years in pleasures.
12 But if they do not obey,
They shall perish by the sword,
And they shall die without knowledge.[a]

13 "But the hypocrites in heart store up
wrath;
They do not cry for help when He
binds them.
14 They die in youth,
And their life *ends* among the
perverted persons.[a]
15 He delivers the poor in their affliction,
And opens their ears in oppression.

16 "Indeed He would have brought you
out of dire distress,
Into a broad place where *there is* no
restraint;
And what is set on your table *would be*
full of richness.
17 But you are filled with the judgment
due the wicked;
Judgment and justice take hold *of you.*
18 Because *there is* wrath, *beware* lest He
take you away with *one* blow;
For a large ransom would not help you
avoid *it.*
19 Will your riches,
Or all the mighty forces,

36:12 [a]Masoretic Text reads *as one without knowledge.* **36:14** [a]Hebrew *qedeshim,* that is, those practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals

Keep you from distress?
20 Do not desire the night,
When people are cut off in their place.
21 Take heed, do not turn to iniquity,
For you have chosen this rather than affliction.

22 "Behold, God is exalted by His power;
Who teaches like Him?
23 Who has assigned Him His way,
Or who has said, 'You have done wrong'?

ELIHU PROCLAIMS GOD'S MAJESTY

24 "Remember to magnify His work,
Of which men have sung.
25 Everyone has seen it;
Man looks on *it* from afar.

26 "Behold, God *is* great, and we do not know *Him;*
Nor can the number of His years *be* discovered.
27 For He draws up drops of water,
Which distill as rain from the mist,
28 Which the clouds drop down
And pour abundantly on man.
29 Indeed, can *anyone* understand the spreading of clouds,
The thunder from His canopy?
30 Look, He scatters His light upon it,
And covers the depths of the sea.
31 For by these He judges the peoples;
He gives food in abundance.
32 He covers *His* hands with lightning,
And commands it to strike.
33 His thunder declares it,
The cattle also, concerning the rising *storm.*

37 "At this also my heart trembles,
And leaps from its place.
2 Hear attentively the thunder of His voice,
And the rumbling *that* comes from His mouth.
3 He sends it forth under the whole heaven,
His lightning to the ends of the earth.
4 After it a voice roars;
He thunders with His majestic voice,
And He does not restrain them when His voice is heard.
5 God thunders marvelously with His voice;
He does great things which we cannot comprehend.
6 For He says to the snow, 'Fall *on* the earth';
Likewise to the gentle rain and the heavy rain of His strength.
7 He seals the hand of every man,
That all men may know His work.
8 The beasts go into dens,
And remain in their lairs.
9 From the chamber *of the south* comes the whirlwind,
And cold from the scattering winds *of the north.*
10 By the breath of God ice is given,
And the broad waters are frozen.
11 Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds;
He scatters His bright clouds.
12 And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance,
That they may do whatever He commands them
On the face of the whole earth.[a]
13 He causes it to come,
Whether for correction,
Or for His land,
Or for mercy.

14 "Listen to this, O Job;
Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.
15 Do you know when God dispatches them,
And causes the light of His cloud to shine?
16 Do you know how the clouds are balanced,
Those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge?
17 Why *are* your garments hot,
When He quiets the earth by the south *wind?*
18 With Him, have you spread out the skies,
Strong as a cast metal mirror?

19 "Teach us what we should say to Him,
For we can prepare nothing because of the darkness.
20 Should He be told that I *wish to* speak?

37:12 [a] Literally *the world of the earth*

MAKING IT REAL // JOB 37:21, 22

Majestic God Ever tried to look at the midday sun? You can't—and you're not even supposed to try. It will damage your eyes. The sun is thousands of miles away from the earth, and yet you can't look at its brightness. If we were to travel to the sun, we would burn up long before we got there because of the intensity of the heat. There is nothing on this earth to compare with the power of the sun. Job says that the power of God is even brighter than the sun. Imagine that. To God the sun is probably like a nice campfire. It's a fire that God built Himself and hung in the heavens. We sometimes forget how awesome God is. The next time you watch a sunset, think about God and remember that His power puts that shining, fiery ball in space to shame. (See also: Deut. 10:17; 1 Chr. 29:11, 12; Ps. 47:2.)

Words to Live By

Majesty: The word translated as "majesty" in Job 37:22 is the Hebrew word *howd* (hode). This word means "an imposing, grand form and appearance." It means "splendor and glory," and is used only to describe things that are superior in power or position. Something that is *howd* carries a sense of amazement and deep satisfaction to the one who sees such beauty.

If a man were to speak, surely he would be swallowed up.
21 Even now *men* cannot look at the light *when it is* bright in the skies,
When the wind has passed and cleared them.
22 He comes from the north *as* golden *splendor;*
With God *is* awesome majesty.
23 *As for* the Almighty, we cannot find Him;
He is excellent in power,
In judgment and abundant justice;
He does not oppress.
24 Therefore men fear Him;
He shows no partiality to any *who are* wise of heart."

Job 38:1

A "theophany" is a visible appearance of God. Job witnessed a theophany when the Lord came to him in the whirlwind. As was true when Moses carried on a conversation with the burning bush, Job didn't actually see God; he saw the effects of God's presence.

THE LORD REVEALS HIS OMNIPOTENCE TO JOB

38 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

2 "Who *is* this who darkens counsel
By words without knowledge?
3 Now prepare yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell *Me,* if you have understanding.
5 Who determined its measurements?
Surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?
6 To what were its foundations fastened?
Or who laid its cornerstone,
7 When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

8 "Or *who* shut in the sea with doors,
When it burst forth *and* issued from the womb;
9 When I made the clouds its garment,

And thick darkness its swaddling
band;
10When I fixed My limit for it,
And set bars and doors;
11When I said,
'This far you may come, but no farther,
And here your proud waves must stop!'

12"Have you commanded the morning
since your days *began,*
And caused the dawn to know its
place,
13That it might take hold of the ends of
the earth,
And the wicked be shaken out of it?
14It takes on form like clay *under* a seal,
And stands out like a garment.
15From the wicked their light is
withheld,
And the upraised arm is broken.

16"Have you entered the springs of the
sea?
Or have you walked in search of the
depths?
17Have the gates of death been revealed
to you?
Or have you seen the doors of the
shadow of death?
18Have you comprehended the breadth
of the earth?
Tell *Me,* if you know all this.

19"Where *is* the way *to* the dwelling of
light?
And darkness, where *is* its place,
20That you may take it to its territory,
That you may know the paths *to* its
home?
21Do you know *it,* because you were
born then,
Or *because* the number of your days
is great?

22"Have you entered the treasury of snow,
Or have you seen the treasury of hail,
23Which I have reserved for the time of
trouble,
For the day of battle and war?
24By what way is light diffused,
Or the east wind scattered over the
earth?

25"Who has divided a channel for the
overflowing *water,*
Or a path for the thunderbolt,
26To cause it to rain on a land *where
there is* no one,
A wilderness in which *there is* no man;
27To satisfy the desolate waste,
And cause to spring forth the growth
of tender grass?
28Has the rain a father?
Or who has begotten the drops of
dew?
29From whose womb comes the ice?
And the frost of heaven, who gives it
birth?
30The waters harden like stone,
And the surface of the deep is frozen.

31"Can you bind the cluster of the
Pleiades,
Or loose the belt of Orion?
32Can you bring out Mazzaroth[a] in its
season?
Or can you guide the Great Bear with
its cubs?
33Do you know the ordinances of the
heavens?
Can you set their dominion over the
earth?

34"Can you lift up your voice to the
clouds,
That an abundance of water may cover
you?
35Can you send out lightnings, that they
may go,
And say to you, 'Here we *are!*'?
36Who has put wisdom in the mind?[a]
Or who has given understanding to
the heart?
37Who can number the clouds by
wisdom?
Or who can pour out the bottles of
heaven,
38When the dust hardens in clumps,
And the clods cling together?

39"Can you hunt the prey for the lion,
Or satisfy the appetite of the young
lions,
40When they crouch in *their* dens,
Or lurk in their lairs to lie in wait?
41Who provides food for the raven,
When its young ones cry to God,
And wander about for lack of food?

38:32 [a]Literally *Constellations* **38:36** [a]Literally *inward parts*

39 "Do you know the time when
the wild mountain goats
bear young?
Or can you mark when the deer gives
birth?
2 Can you number the months *that* they
fulfill?
Or do you know the time when they
bear young?
3 They bow down,
They bring forth their young,
They deliver their offspring.[a]
4 Their young ones are healthy,
They grow strong with grain;
They depart and do not return to
them.

5 "Who set the wild donkey free?
Who loosed the bonds of the onager,
6 Whose home I have made the
wilderness,
And the barren land his dwelling?
7 He scorns the tumult of the city;
He does not heed the shouts of the
driver.
8 The range of the mountains *is* his
pasture,
And he searches after every green
thing.

9 "Will the wild ox be willing to serve
you?
Will he bed by your manger?
10 Can you bind the wild ox in the furrow
with ropes?
Or will he plow the valleys behind you?
11 Will you trust him because his
strength *is* great?
Or will you leave your labor to him?
12 Will you trust him to bring home your
grain,
And gather it to your threshing floor?

13 "The wings of the ostrich wave proudly,
But are her wings and pinions *like the*
kindly stork's?
14 For she leaves her eggs on the ground,
And warms them in the dust;
15 She forgets that a foot may crush
them,
Or that a wild beast may break them.
16 She treats her young harshly, as
though *they were* not hers;
Her labor is in vain, without concern,
17 Because God deprived her of wisdom,
And did not endow her with
understanding.
18 When she lifts herself on high,
She scorns the horse and its rider.

19 "Have you given the horse strength?
Have you clothed his neck with
thunder?[a]
20 Can you frighten him like a locust?
His majestic snorting strikes terror.
21 He paws in the valley, and rejoices in
his strength;
He gallops into the clash of arms.
22 He mocks at fear, and is not
frightened;
Nor does he turn back from the sword.
23 The quiver rattles against him,
The glittering spear and javelin.
24 He devours the distance with
fierceness and rage;
Nor does he come to a halt because
the trumpet *has* sounded.
25 At *the blast of* the trumpet he says,
'Aha!'
He smells the battle from afar,
The thunder of captains and shouting.

26 "Does the hawk fly by your wisdom,
And spread its wings toward the
south?
27 Does the eagle mount up at your
command,
And make its nest on high?
28 On the rock it dwells and resides,
On the crag of the rock and the
stronghold.
29 From there it spies out the prey;
Its eyes observe from afar.
30 Its young ones suck up blood;
And where the slain *are,* there it *is.*"

GOD
Is God ever wrong?
Job 40:2

40 Moreover the LORD answered
Job, and said:

2 "Shall the one who contends with the
Almighty correct *Him?*
He who rebukes God, let him answer it."

39:3 [a]Literally *pangs,* figurative of offspring
39:19 [a]Or *a mane*

JOB'S RESPONSE TO GOD

3 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

4 "Behold, I am vile;
What shall I answer You?
I lay my hand over my mouth.
5 Once I have spoken, but I will not answer;
Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further."

GOD'S CHALLENGE TO JOB

6 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

7 "Now prepare yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you shall answer Me:

8 "Would you indeed annul My judgment?
Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?
9 Have you an arm like God?
Or can you thunder with a voice like His?
10 Then adorn yourself *with* majesty and splendor,
And array yourself with glory and beauty.
11 Disperse the rage of your wrath;
Look on everyone *who is* proud, and humble him.
12 Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low;
Tread down the wicked in their place.
13 Hide them in the dust together,
Bind their faces in hidden *darkness.*
14 Then I will also confess to you
That your own right hand can save you.

15 "Look now at the behemoth,[a] which I made *along* with you;
He eats grass like an ox.
16 See now, his strength *is* in his hips,
And his power *is* in his stomach muscles.
17 He moves his tail like a cedar;
The sinews of his thighs are tightly knit.
18 His bones *are like* beams of bronze,
His ribs like bars of iron.
19 He *is* the first of the ways of God;
Only He who made him can bring near His sword.
20 Surely the mountains yield food for him,
And all the beasts of the field play there.
21 He lies under the lotus trees,
In a covert of reeds and marsh.
22 The lotus trees cover him *with* their shade;
The willows by the brook surround him.
23 Indeed the river may rage,
Yet he is not disturbed;
He is confident, though the Jordan gushes into his mouth,
24 *Though* he takes it in his eyes,
Or one pierces *his* nose with a snare.

41 "Can you draw out Leviathan[a] with a hook,
Or *snare* his tongue with a line *which* you lower?
2 Can you put a reed through his nose,
Or pierce his jaw with a hook?
3 Will he make many supplications to you?
Will he speak softly to you?
4 Will he make a covenant with you?
Will you take him as a servant forever?
5 Will you play with him as *with* a bird,
Or will you leash him for your maidens?
6 Will *your* companions make a banquet[a] of him?
Will they apportion him among the merchants?
7 Can you fill his skin with harpoons,
Or his head with fishing spears?
8 Lay your hand on him;
Remember the battle—
Never do it again!
9 Indeed, *any* hope of *overcoming* him is false;
Shall *one not* be overwhelmed at the sight of him?
10 No one *is so* fierce that he would dare stir him up.
Who then is able to stand against Me?
11 Who has preceded Me, that I should pay *him?*
Everything under heaven is Mine.

40:15 [a]A large animal, exact identity unknown
41:1 [a]A large sea creature, exact identity unknown **41:6** [a]Or *bargain over him*

12"I will not conceal[a] his limbs,
His mighty power, or his graceful proportions.
13Who can remove his outer coat?
Who can approach *him* with a double bridle?
14Who can open the doors of his face,
With his terrible teeth all around?
15*His* rows of scales are *his* pride,
Shut up tightly *as with* a seal;
16One is so near another
That no air can come between them;
17They are joined one to another,
They stick together and cannot be parted.
18His sneezings flash forth light,
And his eyes *are* like the eyelids of the morning.
19Out of his mouth go burning lights;
Sparks of fire shoot out.
20Smoke goes out of his nostrils,
As *from* a boiling pot and burning rushes.
21His breath kindles coals,
And a flame goes out of his mouth.
22Strength dwells in his neck,
And sorrow dances before him.
23The folds of his flesh are joined together;
They are firm on him and cannot be moved.
24His heart is as hard as stone,
Even as hard as the lower *millstone.*
25When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid;
Because of his crashings they are beside[a] themselves.
26*Though* the sword reaches him, it cannot avail;
Nor does spear, dart, or javelin.
27He regards iron as straw,
And bronze as rotten wood.
28The arrow cannot make him flee;
Slingstones become like stubble to him.
29Darts are regarded as straw;
He laughs at the threat of javelins.
30His undersides *are* like sharp potsherds;
He spreads pointed *marks* in the mire.
31He makes the deep boil like a pot;
He makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
32He leaves a shining wake behind him;
One would think the deep had white hair.
33On earth there is nothing like him,
Which is made without fear.
34He beholds every high *thing;*
He *is* king over all the children of pride."

JOB'S REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION

42 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

2"I know that You can do everything,
And that no purpose *of Yours* can be withheld from You.
3*You asked,* 'Who *is* this who hides counsel without knowledge?'
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
4Listen, please, and let me speak;
You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'

5"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But now my eye sees You.
6Therefore I abhor *myself,*
And repent in dust and ashes."

7And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me *what is* right, as My servant Job *has.* 8Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you *according to your* folly; because you have not spoken of Me *what is* right, as My servant Job *has.*"

9So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD commanded them; for the LORD had accepted Job. 10And the LORD restored Job's losses[a] when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job

41:12 [a]Literally *keep silent about* **41:25** [a]Or *purify themselves* **42:10** [a]Literally *Job's captivity,* that is, what was captured from Job

twice as much as he had before. [11]Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold.

[12]Now the LORD blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. [13]He also had seven sons and three daughters. [14]And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. [15]In all the land were found no women *so* beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

[16]After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren *for* four generations. [17]So Job died, old and full of days.

Psalms

DATE OF WRITING: 1410–C. 430 B.C.
AUTHOR: DAVID WROTE THE MAJORITY; OTHER AUTHORS INCLUDE ETHAN, HEMAN, ASAPH, THE SONS OF KORAH, SOLOMON, MOSES, AND OTHER ANONYMOUS AUTHORS
THEME: COMMUNION WITH GOD IN PRAYER AND PRAISE
PURPOSE: WE CAN COME TO GOD FREELY, WHETHER OUR HEARTS ARE BROKEN OR FILLED WITH PRAISE.

OUTLINE

1—41.....Book I
42—72.....Book II
73—89.....Book III
90—106.....Book IV
107—150.....Book V

KEY VERSE:

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer (Psalm 19:14).

THEN /// Music is a gift, but it is also a tool and a talent. Our society uses music to do everything from selling to inspiring to dancing to teaching. God uses music, too. The roles in the early Jews' worship included official musicians and song leaders. While their music was different from the music you hear today, it was just as important in worship.

Psalms is basically a book of emotions and deep reflections set to music. The topics of the psalms were like an eclectic play list. Worship was a hot topic, but it wasn't the only one. Some psalms were about regret, some were about joy, some were about anger. Music did the same thing for those ancient songwriters that it does for songwriters today: it helped them process life. Some of the psalms are honest to the point of being raw, but all of them are about real people and real life.

NOW /// Living a life of faith in a world that is sometimes faithless is a reality we can absolutely relate to. One thing we learn from the Psalms is that God is not afraid of the honest expression of the emotions we experience as we live life on this earth.

It is a fact of life that we will feel sad, angry, confused, happy, and many other emotions throughout our lives. Isn't it refreshing to know that we can go straight to God with every one of these emotions in all our situations? He knows what we're thinking and feeling anyway, and He treasures our honesty and obedience through all circumstances.

REALITY CHECK /// The Psalms are musical poetry, but they don't rhyme like most of the lyrics we learn today. Hebrew poetry was built on a concept instead of a rhyming scheme. The first line stated the concept, and the second line built on it. Hebrew poetry also used alphabetical structures. In its original language, one of the psalms (119) is written so that each line starts with a letter of the alphabet . . . *in order* no less.

So when you read a psalm, it won't be sing-songy. And if you heard a psalm sung with its original tune, it wouldn't be catchy to your ear. But the truth of the psalm would fit today as surely as when it was written.

Emotions like fear and anger and disappointment and joy are just as real for us as they were for the writers of the Psalms. The world may seem completely different, even down to the way we write poetry, but those emotions are just as real as they ever were. That is why we can read a psalm and relate to it as if it were written for our own particular situation. God, in His wisdom, has given us the perfect play list for our time here on Earth.

BOOK ONE: Psalms 1—41

PSALM 1

THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE END OF THE UNGODLY

Blessed *is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
3He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

4The ungodly *are* not so,
But *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.
5Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 1:3

Live and Grow Think about a tree growing beside a river. Would it be a dry, ugly tree with brown, cracking leaves? No, that tree would always be alive and full with lush, green leaves. Even in the middle of a drought, that tree would thrive because the river would give it all the water it needed.

Psalm 1:3 says, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." The word *he* refers to the godly man described in verses 1 and 2. This individual doesn't listen to friends or other people who tell him to go against what God wants. He doesn't make fun of God, even if it seems like everyone else does. This man is delighted when he thinks about what God says, and always chooses to do what pleases the God he loves.

If you've made up your mind to follow Jesus, ask yourself if you fit that description. *You* are like that tree growing beside a river. God's Spirit is the river that flows by you and offers you all the life and strength you need. When you get your life from His Spirit, you're always able to succeed in God's eyes, even if everything around you seems out of control. (See also: Num. 24:5–7; Ps. 52:8; Jer. 17:7, 8.)

Words to Live By

Prosper: The word translated as "prosper" in Psalm 1:3 is the Hebrew word *tsaleach* (tsaw-lay'-akh). It means "to succeed, to keep moving forward from good to good." *Tsaleach* goes beyond mere human success; it is a journey into all good things that is guided and enabled by God.

PSALM 2

THE MESSIAH'S TRIUMPH AND KINGDOM

Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?
[2]The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying,*
[3]"Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us."

[4]He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The Lord shall hold them in derision.
[5]Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
[6]"Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion."

[7]"I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
'You *are* My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
[8]Ask of Me, and I will give *You*
The nations *for* Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.
[9]You shall break[a] them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'"

[10]Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.

Psalm 2:6

When David conquered Jerusalem in around 1000 B.C., he got something extra in the process—an ancient Jebusite fortress known as Zion. Years later, when Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah, the entire area in and around Jerusalem came to be known as Zion. Eventually, Zion was used to refer to the entire nation of Israel.

2:9 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *rule* (compare Revelation 2:27).

11 Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
12 Kiss the Son,[a] lest He[b] be angry,
And you perish *in* the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

PSALM 3

THE LORD HELPS HIS TROUBLED PEOPLE

A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.

LORD, how they have increased who trouble me!
Many *are* they who rise up against me.
2 Many *are* they who say of me,
"*There is* no help for him in God." *Selah*

3 But You, O LORD, *are* a shield for me,
My glory and the One who lifts up my head.
4 I cried to the LORD with my voice,
And He heard me from His holy hill. *Selah*

5 I lay down and slept;
I awoke, for the LORD sustained me.
6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people
Who have set *themselves* against me all around.

7 Arise, O LORD;
Save me, O my God!
For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone;
You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.
8 Salvation *belongs* to the LORD.
Your blessing *is* upon Your people. *Selah*

PSALM 4

THE SAFETY OF THE FAITHFUL

To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness!
You have relieved me in *my* distress;
Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

2 How long, O you sons of men,
Will you turn my glory to shame?
How long will you love worthlessness
And seek falsehood? *Selah*
3 But know that the LORD has set apart[a] for Himself him who is godly;
The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

4 Be angry, and do not sin.
Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. *Selah*

Psalm 4:4

Bible writers believed the heart to be the center of a person's character. They believed it was the source of emotions, thoughts, and decision making. It was their belief that both good and evil actions originate in the heart.

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
And put your trust in the LORD.

6 *There are* many who say,
"Who will show us *any* good?"
LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.
7 You have put gladness in my heart,
More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.
8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep;
For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

PSALM 5

A PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE

To the Chief Musician. With flutes.[a] A Psalm of David.

Give ear to my words, O LORD,
Consider my meditation.
2 Give heed to the voice of my cry,
My King and my God,
For to You I will pray.

2:12 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Embrace discipline;* Targum reads *Receive instruction.* [b]Septuagint reads *the LORD.* **4:3** [a]Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *made wonderful.* **5:title** [a]Hebrew *nehiloth*

3My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD;
In the morning I will direct *it* to You,
And I will look up.

4For You *are* not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness,
Nor shall evil dwell with You.
5The boastful shall not stand in Your sight;
You hate all workers of iniquity.
6You shall destroy those who speak falsehood;
The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

7But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy;
In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple.
8Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies;
Make Your way straight before my face.

9For *there is* no faithfulness in their mouth;
Their inward part *is* destruction;
Their throat *is* an open tomb;
They flatter with their tongue.
10Pronounce them guilty, O God!
Let them fall by their own counsels;
Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions,
For they have rebelled against You.

11But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You;
Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them;
Let those also who love Your name
Be joyful in You.

BLESSING
What is the reward of righteousness?
Psalm 5:12

12For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous;
With favor You will surround him as *with* a shield.

PSALM 6

A PRAYER OF FAITH IN TIME OF DISTRESS

To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. On an eight-stringed harp.[a] A Psalm of David.

LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger,
Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure.
2Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I *am* weak;
O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled.
3My soul also is greatly troubled;
But You, O LORD—how long?

4Return, O LORD, deliver me!
Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake!
5For in death *there is* no remembrance of You;
In the grave who will give You thanks?

6I am weary with my groaning;
All night I make my bed swim;
I drench my couch with my tears.
7My eye wastes away because of grief;
It grows old because of all my enemies.

8Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity;
For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping.
9The LORD has heard my supplication;
The LORD will receive my prayer.
10Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled;
Let them turn back *and* be ashamed suddenly.

PSALM 7

PRAYER AND PRAISE FOR DELIVERANCE FROM ENEMIES

A Meditation[a] of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning the words of Cush, a Benjamite.

LORD my God, in You I put my trust;
Save me from all those who persecute me;
And deliver me,

6:title [a]Hebrew *sheminith* **7:title** [a]Hebrew *Shiggaion*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 7:10

Heart Matters God protects the person whose heart is right toward Him. Having your heart right toward God doesn't have anything to do with being perfect or knocking yourself out trying to do the right thing all the time. A person with an upright heart knows the only real hope of right standing with God comes from the fact that Jesus died to make things right—only through Him can we find acceptance and salvation.

Admitting we are incapable on our own of anything good takes humility. That's a word that most people don't talk about very often, maybe because their picture of humility is a weak, super-shy person who looks at the floor all the time. But for a real picture of humility, look at Jesus. Humility is one of the most outstanding parts of His personality.

A heart that's humble is the kind of heart God is looking for. That's the kind of person He can use to get the job done. He protects that person in a special way because He knows that person is ready to do what He wants. (See also: Ps. 121:7, 8; 2 Thess. 3:3.)

Words to Live By

Upright in heart: The word translated as "upright" in Psalm 7:10 is the Hebrew word *yashar* (yaw-shawr'). It means "straight, righteous, or just." The phrase "upright in heart" can refer to those who recognize their need of God and have accepted His salvation through Jesus Christ. Only by receiving the forgiveness Christ brings can we stand before God as righteous. When we accept Christ's forgiveness, we are justified in the eyes of God. Think of it this way: when you have God's forgiveness you can say, "It *is just as if I'd* never sinned."

[2]Lest they tear me like a lion,
Rending *me* in pieces, while *there is* none to deliver.

[3]O LORD my God, if I have done this:
If there is iniquity in my hands,
[4]If I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me,
Or have plundered my enemy without cause,
[5]Let the enemy pursue me and overtake *me;*
Yes, let him trample my life to the earth,
And lay my honor in the dust. *Selah*

[6]Arise, O LORD, in Your anger;
Lift Yourself up because of the rage of my enemies;
Rise up for me[a] *to* the judgment You have commanded!
[7]So the congregation of the peoples shall surround You;
For their sakes, therefore, return on high.
[8]The LORD shall judge the peoples;
Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness,
And according to my integrity within me.

[9]Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end,
But establish the just;
For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds.
[10]My defense *is* of God,
Who saves the upright in heart.

[11]God *is* a just judge,
And God is angry *with the wicked* every day.
[12]If he does not turn back,
He will sharpen His sword;
He bends His bow and makes it ready.
[13]He also prepares for Himself instruments of death;
He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.

7:6 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *O LORD my God.*

14 Behold, *the wicked* brings forth iniquity;
Yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood.
15 He made a pit and dug it out,
And has fallen into the ditch *which* he made.
16 His trouble shall return upon his own head,
And his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown.

17 I will praise the LORD according to His righteousness,
And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

PSALM 8

THE GLORY OF THE LORD IN CREATION

To the Chief Musician. On the instrument of Gath.[a] A Psalm of David.

O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent *is* Your name in all the earth,
Who have set Your glory above the heavens!

2 Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants
You have ordained strength,
Because of Your enemies,
That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
4 What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?
5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels,[a]
And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
You have put all *things* under his feet,
7 All sheep and oxen—
Even the beasts of the field,
8 The birds of the air,
And the fish of the sea
That pass through the paths of the seas.

9 O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent *is* Your name in all the earth!

PSALM 9

PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING FOR THE LORD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS

To the Chief Musician. To *the tune of* "Death of the Son."[a] A Psalm of David.

I will praise *You,* O LORD, with my whole heart;
I will tell of all Your marvelous works.
2 I will be glad and rejoice in You;
I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

3 When my enemies turn back,
They shall fall and perish at Your presence.
4 For You have maintained my right and my cause;
You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.
5 You have rebuked the nations,
You have destroyed the wicked;
You have blotted out their name forever and ever.

6 O enemy, destructions are finished forever!
And you have destroyed cities;
Even their memory has perished.

JUDGMENT
Who is the ultimate authority?
Psalm 9:7, 8

7 But the LORD shall endure forever;
He has prepared His throne for judgment.
8 He shall judge the world in righteousness,

8:title [a]Hebrew *Al Gittith* **8:5** [a]Hebrew *Elohim, God;* Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Jewish tradition translate as *angels.* **9:title** [a]Hebrew *Muth Labben*

And He shall administer judgment for
the peoples in uprightness.

9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the
oppressed,
A refuge in times of trouble.
10 And those who know Your name will
put their trust in You;
For You, LORD, have not forsaken
those who seek You.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells
in Zion!
Declare His deeds among the people.

Psalm 9:11

For the most part, the people who lived in the nations surrounding Israel were sinful and corrupt—enemies of God. The miracles God performed for the Israelites often caught the attention of these other nations. Those who recognized the power of Israel's God were given an opportunity to serve Him.

12 When He avenges blood, He
remembers them;
He does not forget the cry of the
humble.

13 Have mercy on me, O LORD!
Consider my trouble from those who
hate me,
You who lift me up from the gates of
death,
14 That I may tell of all Your praise
In the gates of the daughter of Zion.
I will rejoice in Your salvation.

15 The nations have sunk down in the pit
which they made;
In the net which they hid, their own
foot is caught.
16 The LORD is known *by* the judgment
He executes;
The wicked is snared in the work of his
own hands.
Meditation.[a] *Selah*

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell,
And all the nations that forget God.

18 For the needy shall not always be
forgotten;
The expectation of the poor shall *not*
perish forever.

HOPE
Should those in poverty have hope?
Psalm 9:18

19 Arise, O LORD,
Do not let man prevail;
Let the nations be judged in Your
sight.
20 Put them in fear, O LORD,
That the nations may know
themselves *to be but* men. *Selah*

PSALM 10

A SONG OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S TRIUMPH OVER EVIL

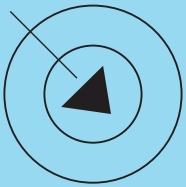
Why do You stand afar off, O LORD?
Why do You hide in times of
trouble?
2 The wicked in *his* pride persecutes the
poor;
Let them be caught in the plots which
they have devised.

3 For the wicked boasts of his heart's
desire;
He blesses the greedy *and* renounces
the LORD.
4 The wicked in his proud countenance
does not seek *God;*
God *is* in none of his thoughts.

5 His ways are always prospering;
Your judgments *are* far above, out of
his sight;
As for all his enemies, he sneers at them.
6 He has said in his heart, "I shall not be
moved;
I shall never be in adversity."
7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit
and oppression;
Under his tongue *is* trouble and
iniquity.

8 He sits in the lurking places of the
villages;

9:16 [a]Hebrew *Higgaion*



PROMISE

God promises He will be God forever.

The LORD *is King forever and ever* (Ps. 10:16a).

Think about it. Some people worship their money; some people worship their cars; some people worship their careers. Maybe you don't see them bow down to these things, and maybe they don't call them "god"; but they think about them constantly, and all their effort and energy go into making them bigger or better or both. Those people consider temporary, changeable things to be the most important things in life. But cars eventually end up in the junkyard, money gets spent, and careers always come to an end.

Other people worship things that they think are God. They honor the forces of nature or the stars. Or they pray to a statue or a city. These are nothing but empty rituals that may make some people feel better, but the things they worship will one day come to an end. Everything about this earth will one day simply cease to exist.

God is totally different. He is Eternal—He will live forever. He always has existed and always will. When everything on earth has decayed or burned up or blown away, He will still be running the show. He will be the eternal King to all the people who choose to worship Him (instead of poor substitutes that will one day be destroyed); and God's people will live with Him in His kingdom forever.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 90:2; 102:25–28; Matthew 6:19; 1 John 2:15–17



In the secret places he murders the
innocent;
His eyes are secretly fixed on the
helpless.
9He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his
den;
He lies in wait to catch the poor;
He catches the poor when he draws
him into his net.

Psalm 10:9

People in ancient Palestine continually faced the danger of lion attacks. The animals were known to spring from their hiding places among the thickets near the Jordan River to pounce on people passing by.

10So he crouches, he lies low,
That the helpless may fall by his
strength.
11He has said in his heart,
"God has forgotten;
He hides His face;
He will never see."

12Arise, O LORD!
O God, lift up Your hand!
Do not forget the humble.
13Why do the wicked renounce God?
He has said in his heart,
"You will not require *an account.*"

14But You have seen, for You observe
trouble and grief,
To repay *it* by Your hand.
The helpless commits himself to
You;
You are the helper of the fatherless.
15Break the arm of the wicked and the
evil *man;*
Seek out his wickedness *until* You find
none.

16The LORD *is* King forever and ever;
The nations have perished out of His
land.
17LORD, You have heard the desire of the
humble;
You will prepare their heart;
You will cause Your ear to hear,
18To do justice to the fatherless and the
oppressed,

That the man of the earth may oppress
no more.

PSALM 11

FAITH IN THE LORD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David.

In the LORD I put my trust;
How can you say to my soul,
"Flee *as* a bird to your mountain"?
2For look! The wicked bend *their* bow,
They make ready their arrow on the
string,
That they may shoot secretly at the
upright in heart.
3If the foundations are destroyed,
What can the righteous do?

4The LORD *is* in His holy temple,
The LORD's throne *is* in heaven;
His eyes behold,
His eyelids test the sons of men.
5The LORD tests the righteous,
But the wicked and the one who loves
violence His soul hates.
6Upon the wicked He will rain coals;
Fire and brimstone and a burning
wind
Shall be the portion of their cup.

7For the LORD *is* righteous,
He loves righteousness;
His countenance beholds the upright.[a]

PSALM 12

MAN'S TREACHERY AND GOD'S CONSTANCY

To the Chief Musician. On an eight-stringed harp.[a]
A Psalm of David.

Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases!
For the faithful disappear from
among the sons of men.
2They speak idly everyone with his
neighbor;
With flattering lips *and* a double heart
they speak.

3May the LORD cut off all flattering
lips,
And the tongue that speaks proud
things,
4Who have said,
"With our tongue we will prevail;
Our lips *are* our own;
Who *is* lord over us?"

5"For the oppression of the poor, for the
sighing of the needy,
Now I will arise," says the LORD;
"I will set *him* in the safety for which he
yearns."

PAIN
Who does God watch over?
Psalm 12:5

6The words of the LORD *are* pure words,
Like silver tried in a furnace of earth,
Purified seven times.

Psalm 12:6

If you want to find silver, you've got to look in rocks made of lead ore. If you want to get silver from the rock, you've got to heat the rock to extreme temperatures. If you want to purify the silver and make it more valuable, you've got to repeat the heating process over and over again.

7You shall keep them, O LORD,
You shall preserve them from this
generation forever.

8The wicked prowl on every side,
When vileness is exalted among the
sons of men.

PSALM 13

TRUST IN THE SALVATION OF THE LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

How long, O LORD? Will You forget me
forever?
How long will You hide Your face
from me?
2How long shall I take counsel in my
soul,
Having sorrow in my heart daily?
How long will my enemy be exalted
over me?

11:7 [a]Or *The upright beholds His countenance*
12:title [a]Hebrew *sheminith*

3Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God;
Enlighten my eyes,
Lest I sleep the *sleep of* death;

PRAYER
Can we pray for understanding?
Psalm 13:3

4Lest my enemy say,
"I have prevailed against him";
Lest those who trouble me rejoice
when I am moved.

5But I have trusted in Your mercy;
My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.
6I will sing to the LORD,
Because He has dealt bountifully
with me.

PSALM 14

FOLLY OF THE GODLESS, AND GOD'S FINAL TRIUMPH

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David.

The fool has said in his heart,
"*There is* no God."
They are corrupt,
They have done abominable works,
There is none who does good.

2The LORD looks down from heaven
upon the children of men,
To see if there are any who
understand, who seek God.
3They have all turned aside,
They have together become corrupt;
There is none who does good,
No, not one.

4Have all the workers of iniquity no
knowledge,
Who eat up my people *as* they eat
bread,
And do not call on the LORD?
5There they are in great fear,
For God *is* with the generation of the
righteous.
6You shame the counsel of the poor,
But the LORD *is* his refuge.

7Oh, that the salvation of Israel *would*
come out of Zion!
When the LORD brings back the
captivity of His people,
Let Jacob rejoice *and* Israel be glad.

Psalm 14:7

Israel was the name Jacob was given following his wrestling match with an angel of the Lord—an angel who may have been God Himself. Jacob's descendants came to be known as Israelites and the land they settled was called Israel.

PSALM 15

THE CHARACTER OF THOSE WHO MAY DWELL WITH THE LORD

A Psalm of David.

LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

2He who walks uprightly,
And works righteousness,
And speaks the truth in his heart;
3He *who* does not backbite with his
tongue,
Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor does he take up a reproach
against his friend;
4In whose eyes a vile person is
despised,
But he honors those who fear the
LORD;
He *who* swears to his own hurt and
does not change;
5He *who* does not put out his money at
usury,
Nor does he take a bribe against the
innocent.

He who does these *things* shall never
be moved.

PSALM 16

THE HOPE OF THE FAITHFUL, AND THE MESSIAH'S VICTORY

A Michtam of David.

Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my
trust.

2*O my soul,* you have said to the LORD,
"You *are* my Lord,

My goodness is nothing apart from
You."
3As for the saints who *are* on the earth,
"They are the excellent ones, in whom
is all my delight."

4Their sorrows shall be multiplied who
hasten *after* another *god;*
Their drink offerings of blood I will
not offer,
Nor take up their names on my lips.

5O LORD, *You are* the portion of my
inheritance and my cup;
You maintain my lot.
6The lines have fallen to me in pleasant
places;
Yes, I have a good inheritance.

7I will bless the LORD who has given me
counsel;
My heart also instructs me in the night
seasons.

GOD
Can we trust God to help us make decisions?
Psalm 16:7

8I have set the LORD always before me;
Because *He is* at my right hand I shall
not be moved.

9Therefore my heart is glad, and my
glory rejoices;
My flesh also will rest in hope.
10For You will not leave my soul in
Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to
see corruption.

Psalm 16:10, 11
Look carefully and you might spot Jesus in these verses. Who else do you know of who came back to life, rose out of the grave, and sits on God's right side?

11You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;
At Your right hand *are* pleasures
forevermore.

PSALM 17

PRAYER WITH CONFIDENCE IN FINAL SALVATION

A Prayer of David.

Hear a just cause, O LORD,
Attend to my cry;
Give ear to my prayer *which is* not
from deceitful lips.
2Let my vindication come from Your
presence;
Let Your eyes look on the things that
are upright.

3You have tested my heart;
You have visited *me* in the night;
You have tried me and have found
nothing;
I have purposed that my mouth shall
not transgress.
4Concerning the works of men,
By the word of Your lips,
I have kept away from the paths of the
destroyer.
5Uphold my steps in Your paths,
That my footsteps may not slip.

6I have called upon You, for You will
hear me, O God;
Incline Your ear to me, *and* hear my
speech.

PRAYER
Does God hear our prayers?
Psalm 17:6

7Show Your marvelous lovingkindness
by Your right hand,
O You who save those who trust *in You*
From those who rise up *against them.*
8Keep me as the apple of Your eye;
Hide me under the shadow of Your
wings,
9From the wicked who oppress me,
From my deadly enemies who
surround me.

10They have closed up their fat *hearts;*
With their mouths they speak proudly.
11They have now surrounded us in our
steps;
They have set their eyes, crouching
down to the earth,

Psalm 17:8

The eye, one of the most sensitive and precious parts of the human body, comes equipped with its own protector, the eyelid. The eyelid instinctively closes anytime it senses danger to the eye. It "shelters" this vital organ just as a mother hen shelters her chicks beneath her wings.

12 As a lion is eager to tear his prey,
And like a young lion lurking in secret places.

13 Arise, O LORD,
Confront him, cast him down;
Deliver my life from the wicked with Your sword,
14 With Your hand from men, O LORD,
From men of the world *who have* their portion in *this* life,
And whose belly You fill with Your hidden treasure.
They are satisfied with children,
And leave the rest of their *possession* for their babes.

15 As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness;
I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

PSALM 18

GOD THE SOVEREIGN SAVIOR

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David the servant of the LORD, who spoke to the LORD the words of this song on the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said:

I will love You, O LORD, my strength.
2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
3 I will call upon the LORD, *who is worthy* to be praised;
So shall I be saved from my enemies.

4 The pangs of death surrounded me,
And the floods of ungodliness made me afraid.
5 The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me;
The snares of death confronted me.
6 In my distress I called upon the LORD,
And cried out to my God;
He heard my voice from His temple,
And my cry came before Him, *even* to His ears.

7 Then the earth shook and trembled;
The foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken,
Because He was angry.
8 Smoke went up from His nostrils,
And devouring fire from His mouth;
Coals were kindled by it.
9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down
With darkness under His feet.
10 And He rode upon a cherub, and flew;
He flew upon the wings of the wind.
11 He made darkness His secret place;
His canopy around Him *was* dark waters
And thick clouds of the skies.
12 From the brightness before Him,
His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire.

13 The LORD thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered His voice,
Hailstones and coals of fire.[a]
14 He sent out His arrows and scattered the foe,
Lightnings in abundance, and He vanquished them.
15 Then the channels of the sea were seen,
The foundations of the world were uncovered
At Your rebuke, O LORD,
At the blast of the breath of Your nostrils.

16 He sent from above, He took me;
He drew me out of many waters.
17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From those who hated me,
For they were too strong for me.
18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity,

18:13 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; a few Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint omit *Hailstones and coals of fire.*

But the LORD was my support.
19 He also brought me out into a broad place;
He delivered me because He delighted in me.

20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness;
According to the cleanness of my hands
He has recompensed me.
21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
22 For all His judgments *were* before me,
And I did not put away His statutes from me.
23 I was also blameless before Him,
And I kept myself from my iniquity.
24 Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness,
According to the cleanness of my hands in His sight.

25 With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful;
With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless;
26 With the pure You will show Yourself pure;
And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.
27 For You will save the humble people,
But will bring down haughty looks.

28 For You will light my lamp;
The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.
29 For by You I can run against a troop,
By my God I can leap over a wall.
30 *As for* God, His way *is* perfect;
The word of the LORD is proven;
He *is* a shield to all who trust in Him.

31 For who *is* God, except the LORD?
And who *is* a rock, except our God?
32 *It is* God who arms me with strength,
And makes my way perfect.
33 He makes my feet like the *feet of* deer,
And sets me on my high places.
34 He teaches my hands to make war,
So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

35 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation;
Your right hand has held me up,
Your gentleness has made me great.
36 You enlarged my path under me,
So my feet did not slip.

37 I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them;
Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed.
38 I have wounded them,
So that they could not rise;
They have fallen under my feet.
39 For You have armed me with strength for the battle;
You have subdued under me those who rose up against me.
40 You have also given me the necks of my enemies,
So that I destroyed those who hated me.
41 They cried out, but *there was* none to save;
Even to the LORD, but He did not answer them.
42 Then I beat them as fine as the dust before the wind;
I cast them out like dirt in the streets.

43 You have delivered me from the strivings of the people;
You have made me the head of the nations;
A people I have not known shall serve me.
44 As soon as they hear of me they obey me;
The foreigners submit to me.
45 The foreigners fade away,
And come frightened from their hideouts.

46 The LORD lives!
Blessed *be* my Rock!
Let the God of my salvation be exalted.
47 *It is* God who avenges me,
And subdues the peoples under me;
48 He delivers me from my enemies.
You also lift me up above those who rise against me;
You have delivered me from the violent man.

49 Therefore I will give thanks to You,
O LORD, among the Gentiles,
And sing praises to Your name.

50 Great deliverance He gives to His king,
And shows mercy to His anointed,
To David and his descendants
forevermore.

PSALM 19

THE PERFECT REVELATION OF THE LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His
handiwork.
2 Day unto day utters speech,
And night unto night reveals
knowledge.
3 *There is* no speech nor language
Where their voice is not heard.
4 Their line[a] has gone out through all
the earth,
And their words to the end of the
world.

In them He has set a tabernacle for
the sun,
5 Which *is* like a bridegroom coming
out of his chamber,
And rejoices like a strong man to run
its race.
6 Its rising *is* from one end of heaven,
And its circuit to the other end;
And there is nothing hidden from its
heat.

7 The law of the LORD *is* perfect,
converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD *is* sure,
making wise the simple;
8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right,
rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD *is*
pure, enlightening the eyes;
9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean,
enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD *are* true
and righteous altogether.
10 More to be desired *are they* than
gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the
honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them Your servant is
warned,
And in keeping them *there is* great
reward.

12 Who can understand *his* errors?
Cleanse me from secret *faults.*

GUILT
Can we keep our sins secret from God?
Psalm 19:12, 13

13 Keep back Your servant also from
presumptuous *sins;*
Let them not have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
And I shall be innocent of great
transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the
meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight,
O LORD, my strength and my
Redeemer.

PSALM 20

THE ASSURANCE OF GOD'S SAVING WORK

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

May the LORD answer you in the day
of trouble;
May the name of the God of Jacob
defend you;
2 May He send you help from the
sanctuary,
And strengthen you out of Zion;
3 May He remember all your offerings,
And accept your burnt sacrifice. *Selah*

4 May He grant you according to your
heart's *desire,*
And fulfill all your purpose.
5 We will rejoice in your salvation,
And in the name of our God we will
set up *our* banners!
May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.

6 Now I know that the LORD saves His
anointed;

19:4 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *sound;* Targum reads *business.*

Psalm 20:5

Banners were large flags that were used as "scoreboards" during battles. You could always tell which side was winning a skirmish by the banner that was raised. You can probably imagine how much those banners meant to the soldiers. Seeing their banner raised must have been a tremendous encouragement. Seeing an opponent's banner raised, on the other hand, may have been an incentive to fight harder.

He will answer him from His holy heaven
With the saving strength of His right hand.

7 Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses;
But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.
8 They have bowed down and fallen;
But we have risen and stand upright.

9 Save, LORD!
May the King answer us when we call.

PSALM 21

JOY IN THE SALVATION OF THE LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

The king shall have joy in Your strength, O LORD;
And in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!
2 You have given him his heart's desire,
And have not withheld the request of his lips. *Selah*

3 For You meet him with the blessings of goodness;
You set a crown of pure gold upon his head.
4 He asked life from You, *and* You gave *it* to him—
Length of days forever and ever.
5 His glory *is* great in Your salvation;
Honor and majesty You have placed upon him.
6 For You have made him most blessed forever;
You have made him exceedingly glad with Your presence.
7 For the king trusts in the LORD,
And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.

8 Your hand will find all Your enemies;
Your right hand will find those who hate You.
9 You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger;
The LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath,
And the fire shall devour them.
10 Their offspring You shall destroy from the earth,
And their descendants from among the sons of men.
11 For they intended evil against You;
They devised a plot *which* they are not able *to perform.*
12 Therefore You will make them turn their back;
You will make ready *Your arrows* on Your string toward their faces.

13 Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength!
We will sing and praise Your power.

Psalm 22:1

"Eli, eli, lamah azabtani?" is the Hebrew translation of David's first question in this psalm: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?" Those foreign words may seem familiar to you even if you've never studied Hebrew. Jesus quoted them from the Cross as He suffered the penalty of sin for the entire world.

PSALM 22

THE SUFFERING, PRAISE, AND POSTERITY OF THE MESSIAH

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Deer of the Dawn."[a] A Psalm of David.

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?
Why are You so far from helping Me,

22:title [a]Hebrew *Aijeleth Hashahar*

LIFE APP

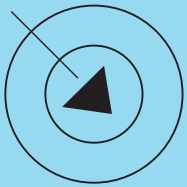
Praise / Psalm 22:3

Do you ever wonder what God's doing when we praise Him? Is He distant from our praise, just hearing it as an afterthought while He's really more concerned with something else? Not according to Psalm 22:3: "But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel." God is there, in the praises of His people—there He takes His rightful place, the throne. The Master of the universe chooses to be present in our praise!

Almighty God is more than worthy of all the praise we give Him. As His children, when we realize His power and holiness and justice and love, our only choice is to praise Him! Once, when the Pharisees wanted Him to stop His disciples from praising Him, Jesus said: "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:40). All creation recognizes the Creator. Psalm 148 is all about God's creation praising Him, from sea creatures to mountains to trees to cattle—all God's creation is told to praise the Lord.

Jesus didn't stop His disciples from praising, because praise from His people delights the Lord. It's within the praise of His people that He is enthroned. And when His people consider who He is and what He has done for us, we'll want to continually praise Him! David knew this thankful praise very well, "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him" (Ps. 28:7).

Have you felt that kind of thankfulness that led to praise? Have you praised God lately? Is praising God part of your life every day? Try making a list of all of God's attributes, all the ways He's blessed you, and every act of His deliverance you've witnessed. Then simply spend some time praising God for who He is. He will be there with you, alive and enthroned in your praise.



PROMISE

God promises to fill you with His praises.

My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him (Ps. 22:25).

When God's people come together, they usually sing or play music, or do other things to express praise to God. That is as it should be.

But what is praise? Do we need just the right music, the perfect words, or special physical movements to truly praise God? Some of us may try to work up just the right frame of mind in our attempt to please God and make ourselves feel like "praisers." Churches have people who make it their business to plan songs and prayers and other activities that will help us enter into true praise of God. There's certainly nothing wrong with that; praising God is the right thing to do.

David had a different idea about how he was going to praise God. He set his will in motion and made the decision to praise no matter what his feelings told him—he simply praised God for being God. He knew that when he did his part by choosing to praise God, his heart would be filled with the God-given ability to praise as he should. The happiness David had in God's presence came straight from God.

So when you get together with other people who love God, make up your mind that you're going to praise God. Think about His goodness, His power, His awesome love. Ask Him to fill your heart with praise as He did for David. And He will.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 4:7; Isaiah 61:11; Romans 15:13; Hebrews 13:15

And from the words of My groaning?
2 O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear;
And in the night season, and am not silent.

3 But You *are* holy,
Enthroned in the praises of Israel.
4 Our fathers trusted in You;
They trusted, and You delivered them.
5 They cried to You, and were delivered;
They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.

6 But I *am* a worm, and no man;
A reproach of men, and despised by the people.
7 All those who see Me ridicule Me;
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying,*
8 "He trusted[a] in the LORD, let Him rescue Him;
Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"

9 But You *are* He who took Me out of the womb;
You made Me trust *while* on My mother's breasts.
10 I was cast upon You from birth.
From My mother's womb
You *have been* My God.
11 Be not far from Me,
For trouble *is* near;
For *there is* none to help.

12 Many bulls have surrounded Me;
Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled Me.
13 They gape at Me *with* their mouths,
Like a raging and roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water,
And all My bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It has melted within Me.
15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And My tongue clings to My jaws;
You have brought Me to the dust of death.

22:8 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *hoped;* Targum reads *praised.*

16 For dogs have surrounded Me;
The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.
They pierced[a] My hands and My feet;

Psalm 22:16

The dogs of ancient Israel were more like scavengers than house pets. Traveling in packs, these wild creatures were known for attacking and killing the weak and the helpless. They ate discarded food and anything else they could find to stay alive.

17 I can count all My bones.
They look *and* stare at Me.
18 They divide My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.

19 But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me;
O My Strength, hasten to help Me!
20 Deliver Me from the sword,
My precious *life* from the power of the dog.
21 Save Me from the lion's mouth
And from the horns of the wild oxen!

You have answered Me.

22 I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.
23 You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But when He cried to Him, He heard.

25 My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;
I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.
26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.
Let your heart live forever!

27 All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the nations
Shall worship before You.[a]
28 For the kingdom *is* the LORD's,
And He rules over the nations.

29 All the prosperous of the earth
Shall eat and worship;
All those who go down to the dust
Shall bow before Him,
Even he who cannot keep himself alive.

30 A posterity shall serve Him.
It will be recounted of the Lord to the *next* generation,
31 They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,
That He has done *this.*

PSALM 23

THE LORD THE SHEPHERD OF HIS PEOPLE

A Psalm of David.

The LORD *is* my shepherd;
I shall not want.
2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
3 He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

Psalm 23:4

A shepherd's rod was a stick with a hook at the end of it. With it, a shepherd could gently nudge a stray sheep back into line or, using the hook, pull a sheep from a dangerous spot. The rod was also used as a weapon to defend the flock against wolves and other predators.

22:16 [a]Following some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *Like a lion.* **22:27** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Targum; Arabic, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Him.*



PROFILE
DAVID

Like little brothers often do, David got the jobs no one else wanted. His big brothers got to play soldier while David played shepherd with real sheep. But he turned what others didn't want into an adventure. He did so well tending his father's flock that his heavenly Father entrusted him with a kingdom. What David learned from the sheep made a difference in many people's lives.

The youthful David made good use of his time. He developed his abilities to sing and sling. He sang and played the harp for the sheep he tended and, later in his life, his music was a powerful comfort to a troubled king. David became a marksman with his sling as he protected the flock. Later, he made quite an impression on an angry giant with that same sling. Unfortunately for him, the giant didn't see the truth of what God can do with a committed young person until it hit him right between the eyes.

We don't know when David actually wrote Psalm 23, the Shepherd's Psalm. But David learned all the truth of that psalm when he was young. Those early experiences made him a wise and powerful king. You see, growing up is not just the passing of a certain number of years; it is the construction of a character. People and places had a big part in creating David's character. But the Lord's work in David's life had the greatest impact in making David the kind of person he was. As long as David lived the truth of his words, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want," he made the right kind of difference with his life (Ps. 23:1).

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

The difference you can make may not be apparent right now, but you can be sure it is being constructed. Your days at home and school may seem as boring and uneventful as watching a bunch of sheep. You can imagine defeating a giant enemy, but the only enemy facing you right now is tomorrow's geometry quiz. You want to sing for the multitudes, but you're struggling with piano lessons. When days seem boring and uneventful, it's hard to feel you're on your way to greatness.

Here's the point: until you can discover God's part in the little, boring things in your life, you will not understand God's part in the big things of life. The more you allow God to make a difference in your life each day, the more your life will make a difference in other's lives.

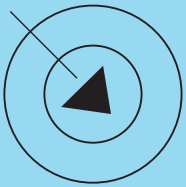
WANT TO KNOW MORE?

David's life is recounted in 1 Samuel 16—1 Kings 2. Read Psalm 23 and identify "places" in your life right now that are like the "places" in that psalm (that is, green pastures, calm water, dark valleys, and so on).

David was a real man with real difficulties. His life made a difference. Yours can, too!

[4]Yea, though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You *are* with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they
comfort me.

[5]You prepare a table before me in the
presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
[6]Surely goodness and mercy shall
follow me



PROMISE

God promises all to provide all your needs.

The LORD *is my shepherd; I shall not want* (Ps. 23:1).

David had a rock-solid confidence in God. He didn't wonder whether God was going to give him food to eat, clothes to wear, or a place to live. Part of that confidence came out of David's experiences. In spite of all the scrapes and tight places he found himself in, God never failed to provide for him. David also spent time with God, so he knew God very well. He knew Him like a best friend. He knew God is kind, loving, compassionate, and powerful.

There was another reason that David could say, "I shall not want." All of David's hopes and dreams were caught up in the Lord. Even if he had been forced to go without some of the things people consider necessities, he wouldn't have missed them much. David's relationship with God meant everything to him. As long as he knew God was leading him and that their friendship was where it was supposed to be, David had the thing he wanted most. All the rest was extra.

As you grow toward having the same attitude that David did, you'll see—like David did—that God never lets you go without the things you really need. And you'll also come to understand that God is the one thing you need most.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Isaiah 49:10; Luke 12:29–31; John 6:35

All the days of my life;
And I will dwell[a] in the house of the LORD
Forever.

PSALM 24

THE KING OF GLORY AND HIS KINGDOM

A Psalm of David.

The earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.
[2]For He has founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the waters.

BLESSING

What attitude toward God will lead to blessing?

Psalm 24:3–6

[3]Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who may stand in His holy place?
[4]He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,
Nor sworn deceitfully.
[5]He shall receive blessing from the LORD,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
[6]This *is* Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,
Who seek Your face. *Selah*

[7]Lift up your heads, O you gates!
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
[8]Who *is* this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
The LORD mighty in battle.
[9]Lift up your heads, O you gates!
Lift up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
[10]Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts,
He *is* the King of glory. *Selah*

23:6 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *return*.

PSALM 25

A PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE AND FORGIVENESS

A Psalm of David.

To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
[2]O my God, I trust in You;
Let me not be ashamed;
Let not my enemies triumph over me.
[3]Indeed, let no one who waits on You
be ashamed;
Let those be ashamed who deal
treacherously without cause.

[4]Show me Your ways, O LORD;
Teach me Your paths.
[5]Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
For You *are* the God of my salvation;
On You I wait all the day.

[6]Remember, O LORD, Your
tender mercies and Your
lovingkindnesses,
For they *are* from of old.
[7]Do not remember the sins of my
youth, nor my transgressions;
According to Your mercy
remember me,
For Your goodness' sake, O LORD.

[8]Good and upright *is* the LORD;
Therefore He teaches sinners in the
way.
[9]The humble He guides in justice,
And the humble He teaches His way.

Psalm 25:10

The covenant (or agreement) between God and the Israelites was first made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. After God led the Israelites out of Egypt, He confirmed the covenant with Moses and the people. The deal went like this: God would make Israel into a great nation and bless its people. In return, the Israelites would serve God faithfully, obeying and worshiping Him as the only true God.

[10]All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy
and truth,
To such as keep His covenant and His
testimonies.

[11]For Your name's sake, O LORD,
Pardon my iniquity, for it *is* great.

[12]Who *is* the man that fears the LORD?
Him shall He[a] teach in the way He[b]
chooses.

FEAR
What is a healthy fear?
Psalm 25:12–15

[13]He himself shall dwell in prosperity,
And his descendants shall inherit the
earth.
[14]The secret of the LORD *is* with those
who fear Him,
And He will show them His covenant.
[15]My eyes *are* ever toward the LORD,
For He shall pluck my feet out of the
net.

[16]Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy
on me,
For I *am* desolate and afflicted.
[17]The troubles of my heart have
enlarged;
Bring me out of my distresses!
[18]Look on my affliction and my pain,
And forgive all my sins.
[19]Consider my enemies, for they are
many;
And they hate me with cruel hatred.
[20]Keep my soul, and deliver me;
Let me not be ashamed, for I put my
trust in You.
[21]Let integrity and uprightness
preserve me,
For I wait for You.

[22]Redeem Israel, O God,
Out of all their troubles!

PSALM 26

A PRAYER FOR DIVINE SCRUTINY AND REDEMPTION

A Psalm of David.

Vindicate me, O LORD,
For I have walked in my integrity.
I have also trusted in the LORD;
I shall not slip.

25:12 [a]Or *he* [b]Or *he*

2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me;
Try my mind and my heart.
3 For Your lovingkindness *is* before my eyes,
And I have walked in Your truth.
4 I have not sat with idolatrous mortals,
Nor will I go in with hypocrites.
5 I have hated the assembly of evildoers,
And will not sit with the wicked.

6 I will wash my hands in innocence;
So I will go about Your altar, O LORD,
7 That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving,
And tell of all Your wondrous works.
8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house,
And the place where Your glory dwells.

9 Do not gather my soul with sinners,
Nor my life with bloodthirsty men,
10 In whose hands *is* a sinister scheme,
And whose right hand is full of bribes.

11 But as for me, I will walk in my integrity;
Redeem me and be merciful to me.
12 My foot stands in an even place;
In the congregations I will bless the LORD.

PSALM 27

AN EXUBERANT DECLARATION OF FAITH

A Psalm of David.

The LORD *is* my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The LORD *is* the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?

FEAR
Why should we never be afraid?
Psalm 27:1

2 When the wicked came against me
To eat up my flesh,
My enemies and foes,
They stumbled and fell.
3 Though an army may encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear;
Though war may rise against me,
In this I *will be* confident.

4 One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.

Psalm 27:4

Before Solomon built the temple, the tabernacle was the place the Israelites went to worship God. The tabernacle was considered the house of God because His "glory," a symbol of His presence, appeared over the ark of the Testimony, which was kept in the tabernacle.

5 For in the time of trouble
He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle
He shall hide me;
He shall set me high upon a rock.

6 And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me;
Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle;
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice!
Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.
8 *When You said,* "Seek My face,"
My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek."
9 Do not hide Your face from me;
Do not turn Your servant away in anger;
You have been my help;
Do not leave me nor forsake me,
O God of my salvation.
10 When my father and my mother forsake me,
Then the LORD will take care of me.

11 Teach me Your way, O LORD,
And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.

12 Do not deliver me to the will of my
adversaries;
For false witnesses have risen
against me,
And such as breathe out violence.
13 *I would have lost heart,* unless I had
believed
That I would see the goodness of the
LORD
In the land of the living.

14 Wait on the LORD;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the LORD!

PSALM 28

REJOICING IN ANSWERED PRAYER

A Psalm of David.

To You I will cry, O LORD my Rock:
Do not be silent to me,
Lest, if You *are* silent to me,
I become like those who go down to
the pit.
2 Hear the voice of my supplications
When I cry to You,
When I lift up my hands toward Your
holy sanctuary.

3 Do not take me away with the wicked
And with the workers of iniquity,
Who speak peace to their neighbors,
But evil *is* in their hearts.
4 Give them according to their deeds,
And according to the wickedness of
their endeavors;
Give them according to the work of
their hands;
Render to them what they deserve.
5 Because they do not regard the works
of the LORD,
Nor the operation of His hands,
He shall destroy them
And not build them up.

6 Blessed *be* the LORD,
Because He has heard the voice of my
supplications!
7 The LORD *is* my strength and my
shield;
My heart trusted in Him, and I am
helped;
Therefore my heart greatly rejoices,
And with my song I will praise Him.

Psalm 28:7

Shields were just as important to ancient soldiers as swords and spears. Since few ancient armies wore body armor, shields were the only defense soldiers had against enemy arrows and swords. These shields came in all shapes and sizes, and could be made of leather, wood, or metal.

8 The LORD *is* their strength,[a]
And He *is* the saving refuge of His
anointed.
9 Save Your people,
And bless Your inheritance;
Shepherd them also,
And bear them up forever.

PSALM 29

PRAISE TO GOD IN HIS HOLINESS AND MAJESTY

A Psalm of David.

Give unto the LORD, O you mighty
ones,
Give unto the LORD glory and
strength.
2 Give unto the LORD the glory due to
His name;
Worship the LORD in the beauty of
holiness.

WORSHIP
Is worship of God optional?
Psalm 29:1, 2

3 The voice of the LORD *is* over the
waters;
The God of glory thunders;
The LORD *is* over many waters.
4 The voice of the LORD *is* powerful;
The voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.

5 The voice of the LORD breaks the
cedars,
Yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of
Lebanon.

28:8 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *the strength of His people.*

6He makes them also skip like a calf,
Lebanon and Sirion like a young
wild ox.
7The voice of the LORD divides the
flames of fire.

8The voice of the LORD shakes the
wilderness;
The LORD shakes the Wilderness of
Kadesh.
9The voice of the LORD makes the deer
give birth,
And strips the forests bare;
And in His temple everyone says,
"Glory!"

10The LORD sat *enthroned* at the Flood,
And the LORD sits as King forever.
11The LORD will give strength to His
people;
The LORD will bless His people with
peace.

PEACE
Are God's people promised peace?
Psalm 29:11

PSALM 30

THE BLESSEDNESS OF ANSWERED PRAYER

A Psalm. A Song at the dedication of the house of David.

I will extol You, O LORD, for You have
lifted me up,
And have not let my foes rejoice
over me.
2O LORD my God, I cried out to You,
And You healed me.
3O LORD, You brought my soul up from
the grave;
You have kept me alive, that I should
not go down to the pit.[a]

4Sing praise to the LORD, you saints
of His,
And give thanks at the remembrance
of His holy name.[a]
5For His anger *is but for* a moment,
His favor *is for* life;
Weeping may endure for a night,
But joy *comes* in the morning.
6Now in my prosperity I said,
"I shall never be moved."
7LORD, by Your favor You have made
my mountain stand strong;
You hid Your face, *and* I was
troubled.

8I cried out to You, O LORD;
And to the LORD I made supplication:
9"What profit *is there* in my blood,
When I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise You?
Will it declare Your truth?
10Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me;
LORD, be my helper!"

11You have turned for me my mourning
into dancing;
You have put off my sackcloth and
clothed me with gladness,
12To the end that *my* glory may sing
praise to You and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to
You forever.

PSALM 31

THE LORD A FORTRESS IN ADVERSITY

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

In You, O LORD, I put my trust;
Let me never be ashamed;
Deliver me in Your righteousness.
2Bow down Your ear to me,
Deliver me speedily;
Be my rock of refuge,
A fortress of defense to save me.

3For You *are* my rock and my fortress;
Therefore, for Your name's sake,
Lead me and guide me.
4Pull me out of the net which they have
secretly laid for me,
For You *are* my strength.
5Into Your hand I commit my spirit;
You have redeemed me, O LORD God
of truth.

6I have hated those who regard useless
idols;
But I trust in the LORD.

30:3 [a]Following Qere and Targum; Kethib, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *from those who descend to the pit.* **30:4** [a]Or *His holiness*

7 I will be glad and rejoice in Your
mercy,
For You have considered my trouble;
You have known my soul in
adversities,
8 And have not shut me up into the
hand of the enemy;
You have set my feet in a wide place.

9 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am
in trouble;
My eye wastes away with grief,
Yes, my soul and my body!
10 For my life is spent with grief,
And my years with sighing;
My strength fails because of my
iniquity,
And my bones waste away.
11 I am a reproach among all my
enemies,
But especially among my neighbors,
And *am* repulsive to my
acquaintances;
Those who see me outside flee
from me.
12 I am forgotten like a dead man, out of
mind;
I am like a broken vessel.
13 For I hear the slander of many;
Fear *is* on every side;
While they take counsel together
against me,
They scheme to take away my life.

14 But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD;
I say, "You *are* my God."
15 My times *are* in Your hand;
Deliver me from the hand of my
enemies,
And from those who persecute me.
16 Make Your face shine upon Your
servant;
Save me for Your mercies' sake.
17 Do not let me be ashamed, O LORD, for
I have called upon You;
Let the wicked be ashamed;
Let them be silent in the grave.
18 Let the lying lips be put to silence,
Which speak insolent things proudly
and contemptuously against the
righteous.

19 Oh, how great *is* Your goodness,
Which You have laid up for those who
fear You,
Which You have prepared for those
who trust in You
In the presence of the sons of men!
20 You shall hide them in the secret place
of Your presence
From the plots of man;
You shall keep them secretly in a
pavilion
From the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed *be* the LORD,
For He has shown me His marvelous
kindness in a strong city!
22 For I said in my haste,
"I am cut off from before Your eyes";
Nevertheless You heard the voice of
my supplications
When I cried out to You.

23 Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints!
For the LORD preserves the faithful,
And fully repays the proud person.
24 Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart,
All you who hope in the LORD.

PSALM 32

THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS

A Psalm of David. A Contemplation.[a]

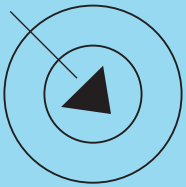
Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is*
forgiven,
Whose sin *is* covered.
2 Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD
does not impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit *there is* no deceit.

3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old
Through my groaning all the day long.
4 For day and night Your hand was
heavy upon me;
My vitality was turned into the
drought of summer. *Selah*

FORGIVENESS
What must happen before we can receive forgiveness from God?
Psalm 32:5

5 I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.

32:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil*



PROMISE

God promises to teach you.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye (Ps. 32:8).

Who was your favorite teacher? Do you remember that person well? You probably do. Maybe he or she took a special interest in you; didn't let you get away with anything; believed in you more than you believed in yourself; made you want to learn; had high expectations of what you could do; actually made school fun. Whatever the reason, that teacher had a big impact on your life and helped you learn things to bring you success in your earthly life. And you'll most likely always be grateful.

Well, God promises He will be your Teacher. He says He will point out the road you should follow and always watch over you. He will teach you all you need to know to live a successful life in His eternal kingdom. God will give you the answers to all of your questions. He will guide you by His Holy Spirit to realize what is true (John 16:13). So if you were thinking about skipping God's class, don't. Listen to Him and His wise instruction and find out just how wonderful life can be.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Proverbs 2:6; Isaiah 2:3; John 14:26; 16:13

I said, "I will confess my transgressions
to the LORD,"
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.
Selah

6For this cause everyone who is godly
shall pray to You
In a time when You may be found;
Surely in a flood of great waters
They shall not come near him.
7You *are* my hiding place;
You shall preserve me from trouble;
You shall surround me with songs of
deliverance. *Selah*

8I will instruct you and teach you in the
way you should go;
I will guide you with My eye.
9Do not be like the horse *or* like the mule,
Which have no understanding,
Which must be harnessed with bit and
bridle,
Else they will not come near you.

10Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked;
But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy
shall surround him.
11Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you
righteous;
And shout for joy, all *you* upright in
heart!

PSALM 33

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE LORD IN CREATION AND HISTORY

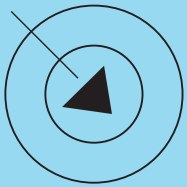
Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous!
For praise from the upright is
beautiful.
2Praise the LORD with the harp;
Make melody to Him with an
instrument of ten strings.

Psalm 33:2

The Israelites loved their music, especially when it came time to worship the Lord. Specific groups of Levites were assigned to sing in the choir or play in the orchestra that performed in or near the tabernacle. The orchestra was made up of stringed instruments, such as guitars and harps, as well as percussion instruments, such as tambourines and cymbals.

3Sing to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a shout of joy.

4For the word of the LORD *is* right,
And all His work *is done* in truth.
5He loves righteousness and justice;



PROMISE

God promises that His advice and plans will never change.

The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations (Ps. 33:11).

Do you know what God thinks of you? He thinks you're the best! You belong to Him and are His beloved child. He created you out of pure love. He *wanted* you to be alive. He has made plans for all of eternity—plans that will never change, because He is unchangeable—He never changes and neither do His thoughts. Everything God made, He made with a specific purpose and He's got a perfect plan for you. He has compassion toward you because He knows your weak places. But in spite of all those weaknesses, God designed your heart, your mind, and your body with His plan in mind. He will strengthen your weaknesses and teach you all you need to know to carry out His perfect plan for your life. You can run from God's plan for the rest of your life, but you will never change His mind or mess with His plan. He knows what you would be great at because He made you and created the abilities you possess. Ask Him to show you His plan for your life. Then go for it!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 139:13–17; Jeremiah 29:11; Malachi 3:6

The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.
7 He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap;[a]
He lays up the deep in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
9 For He spoke, and it was *done;*
He commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.
11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
The plans of His heart to all generations.
12 Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD,
The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

13 The LORD looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men.
14 From the place of His dwelling He looks
On all the inhabitants of the earth;
15 He fashions their hearts individually;
He considers all their works.

16 No king *is* saved by the multitude of an army;
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.
17 A horse *is* a vain hope for safety;
Neither shall it deliver *any* by its great strength.

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* on those who fear Him,
On those who hope in His mercy,
19 To deliver their soul from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waits for the LORD;
He *is* our help and our shield.
21 For our heart shall rejoice in Him,
Because we have trusted in His holy name.

33:7 [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *in a vessel.*

22 Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us,
Just as we hope in You.

PSALM 34

THE HAPPINESS OF THOSE WHO TRUST IN GOD

A Psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.

I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.
2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.
3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.

4 I sought the LORD, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.
5 They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces were not ashamed.
6 This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard *him,*
And saved him out of all his troubles.
7 The angel[a] of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him,
And delivers them.

8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good;
Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!
9 Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints!
There is no want to those who fear Him.
10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger;
But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good *thing.*

11 Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
12 Who *is* the man *who* desires life,
And loves *many* days, that he may see good?
13 Keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking deceit.
14 Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the LORD *are* on the righteous,
And His ears *are open* to their cry.
16 The face of the LORD *is* against those who do evil,
To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 *The righteous* cry out, and the LORD hears,
And delivers them out of all their troubles.

TRIALS
How does the Lord respond to those who suffer?
Psalm 34:17–19

18 The LORD *is* near to those who have a broken heart,
And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

19 Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous,
But the LORD delivers him out of them all.
20 He guards all his bones;
Not one of them is broken.
21 Evil shall slay the wicked,
And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.
22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants,
And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

PSALM 35

THE LORD THE AVENGER OF HIS PEOPLE

A Psalm of David.

Plead *my cause,* O LORD, with those who strive with me;
Fight against those who fight against me.
2 Take hold of shield and buckler,
And stand up for my help.
3 Also draw out the spear,
And stop those who pursue me.
Say to my soul,
"I *am* your salvation."

4 Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor

34:7 [a]Or *Angel*

Who seek after my life;
Let those be turned back and brought
to confusion
Who plot my hurt.
5Let them be like chaff before the wind,
And let the angel[a] of the LORD chase
them.
6Let their way be dark and slippery,
And let the angel of the LORD pursue
them.
7For without cause they have hidden
their net for me *in* a pit,
Which they have dug without cause
for my life.
8Let destruction come upon him
unexpectedly,
And let his net that he has hidden
catch himself;
Into that very destruction let him fall.

9And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD;
It shall rejoice in His salvation.
10All my bones shall say,
"LORD, who *is* like You,
Delivering the poor from him who is
too strong for him,
Yes, the poor and the needy from him
who plunders him?"

11Fierce witnesses rise up;
They ask me *things* that I do not know.
12They reward me evil for good,
To the sorrow of my soul.
13But as for me, when they were sick,
My clothing *was* sackcloth;
I humbled myself with fasting;
And my prayer would return to my
own heart.
14I paced about as though *he were* my
friend *or* brother;
I bowed down heavily, as one who
mourns *for his* mother.

15But in my adversity they rejoiced
And gathered together;
Attackers gathered against me,
And I did not know *it;*
They tore *at me* and did not cease;
16With ungodly mockers at feasts
They gnashed at me with their teeth.

17Lord, how long will You look on?
Rescue me from their destructions,
My precious *life* from the lions.
18I will give You thanks in the great
assembly;
I will praise You among many people.
19Let them not rejoice over me who are
wrongfully my enemies;
Nor let them wink with the eye who
hate me without a cause.
20For they do not speak peace,
But they devise deceitful matters
Against *the* quiet ones in the land.
21They also opened their mouth wide
against me,
And said, "Aha, aha!
Our eyes have seen *it.*"

22*This* You have seen, O LORD;
Do not keep silence.
O Lord, do not be far from me.
23Stir up Yourself, and awake to my
vindication,
To my cause, my God and my Lord.
24Vindicate me, O LORD my God,
according to Your
righteousness;
And let them not rejoice over me.
25Let them not say in their hearts, "Ah,
so we would have it!"
Let them not say, "We have swallowed
him up."

26Let them be ashamed and brought to
mutual confusion
Who rejoice at my hurt;
Let them be clothed with shame and
dishonor
Who exalt themselves against me.

27Let them shout for joy and be glad,
Who favor my righteous cause;
And let them say continually,
"Let the LORD be magnified,
Who has pleasure in the prosperity of
His servant."
28And my tongue shall speak of Your
righteousness
And of Your praise all the day long.

PSALM 36

MAN'S WICKEDNESS AND GOD'S PERFECTIONS

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David the servant of the LORD.

An oracle within my heart concerning
the transgression of the
wicked:

35:5 [a]Or *Angel*

There is no fear of God before his eyes.
2For he flatters himself in his own eyes,
When he finds out his iniquity *and* when he hates.
3The words of his mouth *are* wickedness and deceit;
He has ceased to be wise *and* to do good.
4He devises wickedness on his bed;
He sets himself in a way *that is* not good;
He does not abhor evil.

5Your mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens;
Your faithfulness *reaches* to the clouds.
6Your righteousness *is* like the great mountains;
Your judgments *are* a great deep;
O LORD, You preserve man and beast.

7How precious *is* Your lovingkindness, O God!
Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.
8They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house,
And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures.
9For with You *is* the fountain of life;
In Your light we see light.

Psalm 36:9

Not much rain falls in Israel between May and September, which makes water precious. Old Testament writers often used rain (here called "the fountain of life") as a symbol of God's blessing and drought as a symbol of God's punishment.

10Oh, continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You,
And Your righteousness to the upright in heart.
11Let not the foot of pride come against me,
And let not the hand of the wicked drive me away.
12There the workers of iniquity have fallen;
They have been cast down and are not able to rise.

PSALM 37

THE HERITAGE OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE CALAMITY OF THE WICKED

A Psalm of David.

Do not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.
2For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.

3Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
4Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

ENVY

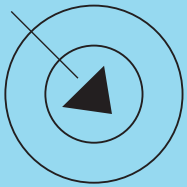
Rather than envy others, what should we do in order to receive good things?

Psalm 37:1–4

5Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring *it* to pass.
6He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.

7Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.
8Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Do not fret—*it* only *causes* harm.

9For evildoers shall be cut off;
But those who wait on the LORD,
They shall inherit the earth.
10For yet a little while and the wicked *shall be* no *more;*
Indeed, you will look carefully for his place,
But it *shall be* no *more.*
11But the meek shall inherit the earth,
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.



PROMISE

God promises to never forsake you.

For the LORD *loves justice, and does not forsake His saints; they are preserved forever, but the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off* (Ps. 37:28).

Do you ever wonder if people who don't care at all about God have good lives? You probably know some people who don't give God a second thought, but have nice clothes, good grades, and lots of friends. There are definitely a lot of famous musicians, actors, athletes, and politicians who don't care about God, but they're living the "good life" all the same. Sometimes when you compare your life to theirs, it's easy to wonder why God let them have things He doesn't give to you.

Psalm 37 reminds you that the situation isn't always what it looks like. The people who don't care about God have what Jesus called a "house on the sand" (Matt. 7:26). It may be a really nice house, but it can't stand up for long because it's built on things that shift around and are eventually washed away, just like sand. The people who don't build their lives on God (Who can never be changed and will never end) will end up with nothing but a destroyed house—broken plans and dreams.

When it looks as if God is blessing those who don't serve Him and leaving you to fend for yourself, you need to know that He is still on your side. He will *never* forsake you. He won't collapse when a storm of trouble hits your life or run away when things are rough. You can always depend on Him.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Deuteronomy 31:6; Matthew 7:24–27; 18:12–14; 28:18–20



12 The wicked plots against the just,
And gnashes at him with his teeth.
13 The Lord laughs at him,
For He sees that his day is coming.
14 The wicked have drawn the sword
And have bent their bow,
To cast down the poor and needy,
To slay those who are of upright conduct.
15 Their sword shall enter their own heart,
And their bows shall be broken.

16 A little that a righteous man has
Is better than the riches of many wicked.
17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
But the LORD upholds the righteous.

18 The LORD knows the days of the upright,
And their inheritance shall be forever.
19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time,
And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
20 But the wicked shall perish;
And the enemies of the LORD,
Like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish.
Into smoke they shall vanish away.

21 The wicked borrows and does not repay,
But the righteous shows mercy and gives.
22 For *those* blessed by Him shall inherit the earth,
But *those* cursed by Him shall be cut off.

23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD,
And He delights in his way.
24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down;

For the LORD upholds *him with* His hand.

ASSURANCE
Does God always care for his children?
Psalm 37:23, 24

25 I have been young, and *now* am old;
Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,
Nor his descendants begging bread.
26 *He is* ever merciful, and lends;
And his descendants *are* blessed.

27 Depart from evil, and do good;
And dwell forevermore.
28 For the LORD loves justice,
And does not forsake His saints;
They are preserved forever,
But the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off.
29 The righteous shall inherit the land,
And dwell in it forever.

30 The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom,
And his tongue talks of justice.
31 The law of his God *is* in his heart;
None of his steps shall slide.

32 The wicked watches the righteous,
And seeks to slay him.
33 The LORD will not leave him in his hand,
Nor condemn him when he is judged.

34 Wait on the LORD,
And keep His way,
And He shall exalt you to inherit the land;
When the wicked are cut off, you shall see *it.*
35 I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a native green tree.
36 Yet he passed away,[a] and behold, he *was* no *more;*
Indeed I sought him, but he could not be found.

37 Mark the blameless *man,* and observe the upright;
For the future of *that* man *is* peace.
38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together;
The future of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous *is* from the LORD;
He is their strength in the time of trouble.
40 And the LORD shall help them and deliver them;
He shall deliver them from the wicked,
And save them,
Because they trust in Him.

PSALM 38

PRAYER IN TIME OF CHASTENING

A Psalm of David. To bring to remembrance.

O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your wrath,
Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure!
2 For Your arrows pierce me deeply,
And Your hand presses me down.

3 *There is* no soundness in my flesh
Because of Your anger,
Nor *any* health in my bones
Because of my sin.
4 For my iniquities have gone over my head;
Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.
5 My wounds are foul *and* festering
Because of my foolishness.

6 I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly;
I go mourning all the day long.
7 For my loins are full of inflammation,
And *there is* no soundness in my flesh.
8 I am feeble and severely broken;
I groan because of the turmoil of my heart.

9 Lord, all my desire *is* before You;
And my sighing is not hidden from You.
10 My heart pants, my strength fails me;
As for the light of my eyes, it also has gone from me.

37:36 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Targum; Syriac and Vulgate read *I passed by.*

11 My loved ones and my friends stand
aloof from my plague,
And my relatives stand afar off.
12 Those also who seek my life lay snares
for me;
Those who seek my hurt speak of
destruction,
And plan deception all the day long.

13 But I, like a deaf *man,* do not hear;
And *I am* like a mute *who* does not
open his mouth.
14 Thus I am like a man who does not
hear,
And in whose mouth *is* no response.

15 For in You, O LORD, I hope;
You will hear, O Lord my God.
16 For I said, *"Hear me,* lest they rejoice
over me,
Lest, when my foot slips, they exalt
themselves against me."

17 For I *am* ready to fall,
And my sorrow *is* continually
before me.
18 For I will declare my iniquity;
I will be in anguish over my sin.
19 But my enemies *are* vigorous, *and* they
are strong;
And those who hate me wrongfully
have multiplied.
20 Those also who render evil for good,
They are my adversaries, because I
follow *what is* good.

21 Do not forsake me, O LORD;
O my God, be not far from me!
22 Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation!

PSALM 39

PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND FORGIVENESS

To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

said, "I will guard my ways,
Lest I sin with my tongue;
I will restrain my mouth with a
muzzle,
While the wicked are before me."
2 I was mute with silence,
I held my peace *even* from good;
And my sorrow was stirred up.
3 My heart was hot within me;
While I was musing, the fire burned.
Then I spoke with my tongue:

4 "LORD, make me to know my end,
And what *is* the measure of my days,
That I may know how frail I *am.*
5 Indeed, You have made my days *as*
handbreadths,
And my age *is* as nothing before You;
Certainly every man at his best state *is*
but vapor. *Selah*
6 Surely every man walks about like a
shadow;
Surely they busy themselves in vain;
He heaps up *riches,*
And does not know who will gather
them.

7 "And now, Lord, what do I wait for?
My hope *is* in You.
8 Deliver me from all my
transgressions;
Do not make me the reproach of the
foolish.
9 I was mute, I did not open my mouth,
Because it was You who did *it.*
10 Remove Your plague from me;
I am consumed by the blow of Your
hand.
11 When with rebukes You correct man
for iniquity,
You make his beauty melt away like a
moth;
Surely every man *is* vapor. *Selah*

Psalm 39:11

Moths are mentioned several times in the Bible as symbols of destruction. Here's how the little critters are able to do so much damage. Female moths often lay their eggs in clothing. When the eggs hatch, the newborn larvae eat the fibers of the clothing. Because the larvae chew quietly, the owner of the clothing may not know that damage is being done until it's too late.

12 "Hear my prayer, O LORD,
And give ear to my cry;
Do not be silent at my tears;
For I *am* a stranger with You,
A sojourner, as all my fathers *were.*

13 Remove Your gaze from me, that I may
regain strength,
Before I go away and am no more."

PSALM 40

FAITH PERSEVERING IN TRIAL

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

I waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me,
And heard my cry.
2 He also brought me up out of a
horrible pit,
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.
3 He has put a new song in my mouth—
Praise to our God;
Many will see *it* and fear,
And will trust in the LORD.

4 Blessed *is* that man who makes the
LORD his trust,
And does not respect the proud, nor
such as turn aside to lies.
5 Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your
wonderful works
Which You have done;
And Your thoughts toward us
Cannot be recounted to You in order;
If I would declare and speak *of them,*
They are more than can be numbered.

6 Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;
My ears You have opened.
Burnt offering and sin offering You did
not require.
7 Then I said, "Behold, I come;
In the scroll of the book *it is* written
of me.
8 I delight to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law *is* within my heart."

9 I have proclaimed the good news of
righteousness
In the great assembly;
Indeed, I do not restrain my lips,
O LORD, You Yourself know.
10 I have not hidden Your righteousness
within my heart;
I have declared Your faithfulness and
Your salvation;
I have not concealed Your
lovingkindness and Your truth
From the great assembly.

11 Do not withhold Your tender mercies
from me, O LORD;
Let Your lovingkindness and Your
truth continually preserve me.
12 For innumerable evils have
surrounded me;
My iniquities have overtaken me, so
that I am not able to look up;
They are more than the hairs of my
head;
Therefore my heart fails me.

13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me;
O LORD, make haste to help me!

PRAYER
Is it right to ask the Lord for help?
Psalm 40:13

14 Let them be ashamed and brought to
mutual confusion
Who seek to destroy my life;
Let them be driven backward and
brought to dishonor
Who wish me evil.
15 Let them be confounded because of
their shame,
Who say to me, "Aha, aha!"

16 Let all those who seek You rejoice and
be glad in You;
Let such as love Your salvation say
continually,
"The LORD be magnified!"
17 But I *am* poor and needy;
Yet the LORD thinks upon me.
You *are* my help and my deliverer;
Do not delay, O my God.

PSALM 41

THE BLESSING AND SUFFERING OF THE GODLY

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Blessed *is* he who considers the poor;
The LORD will deliver him in time of
trouble.
2 The LORD will preserve him and keep
him alive,
And he will be blessed on the earth;
You will not deliver him to the will of
his enemies.

3 The LORD will strengthen him on his
bed of illness;
You will sustain him on his sickbed.

SICKNESS
Does God care for the sick?
Psalm 41:1–3

4 I said, "LORD, be merciful to me;
Heal my soul, for I have sinned against
You."
5 My enemies speak evil of me:
"When will he die, and his name
perish?"
6 And if he comes to see *me,* he speaks
lies;
His heart gathers iniquity to itself;
When he goes out, he tells *it.*

7 All who hate me whisper together
against me;
Against me they devise my hurt.
8 "An evil disease," *they say,* "clings to
him.
And *now* that he lies down, he will rise
up no more."
9 Even my own familiar friend in whom
I trusted,
Who ate my bread,
Has lifted up *his* heel against me.

Psalm 41:9
Ahithophel, who had been one of David's most trusted advisors, betrayed the king by helping Absalom, David's son, in his attempt to take over the throne. Centuries later, Jesus quoted this verse just before Judas' betrayal after eating the Passover meal with Him.

10 But You, O LORD, be merciful to me,
and raise me up,
That I may repay them.
11 By this I know that You are well
pleased with me,
Because my enemy does not triumph
over me.
12 As for me, You uphold me in my
integrity,
And set me before Your face forever.

13 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!
Amen and Amen.

BOOK TWO: Psalms 42—72

PSALM 42

YEARNING FOR GOD IN THE MIDST OF DISTRESSES

To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation[a] of the sons of Korah.

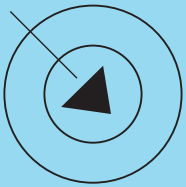
As the deer pants for the water
brooks,
So pants my soul for You, O God.
2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living
God.
When shall I come and appear before
God?[a]
3 My tears have been my food day and
night,
While they continually say to me,
"Where *is* your God?"

4 When I remember these *things,*
I pour out my soul within me.
For I used to go with the multitude;
I went with them to the house of
God,
With the voice of joy and praise,
With a multitude that kept a pilgrim
feast.

DEPRESSION
How can we overcome depression?
Psalm 42:5–11

5 Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And *why* are you disquieted
within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise
Him
For the help of His countenance.[a]

42:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil* **42:2** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *I see the face of God.* **42:5** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; a few Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *The help of my countenance, my God.*



PROMISE

God promises to be your God.

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God (Ps. 43:5).

Have you ever thought, *There are billions of people in the world. How can God keep up with all of us? How can He pay any attention to me? How can He hear my prayers when everybody else is talking to Him, too?* Thoughts like that will blow your mind, but God is so much bigger than your mind. Psalm 43:5 has two words that will help put your mind at ease: "my God." In order to have a close and growing relationship with God, you have to make Him personal. You have to know that He is *your* God. Here's a suggestion: When you pray, just say to the Lord, "You are *my* God." Put the emphasis on the word *my.* Even though there are lots of Christians in the world, your relationship with God is not like anybody else's. He made you to stand out from everybody else. Those things that set you apart from other people are the things that give you a unique place with Him. When you feel like just another person in the middle of a swarm of Christians who need God's love and attention, just remember that God is *your* God.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 63:1; 118:28; Isaiah 25:1

[6]O my God,[a] my soul is cast down
within me;
Therefore I will remember You from
the land of the Jordan,
And from the heights of Hermon,
From the Hill Mizar.
[7]Deep calls unto deep at the noise of
Your waterfalls;
All Your waves and billows have gone
over me.
[8]The LORD will command His
lovingkindness in the daytime,
And in the night His song *shall be*
with me—
A prayer to the God of my life.

[9]I will say to God my Rock,
"Why have You forgotten me?
Why do I go mourning because of the
oppression of the enemy?"
[10]*As* with a breaking of my bones,
My enemies reproach me,
While they say to me all day long,
"Where *is* your God?"

[11]Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my
God.

PSALM 43

PRAYER TO GOD IN TIME OF TROUBLE

Vindicate me, O God,
And plead my cause against an
ungodly nation;
Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and
unjust man!
[2]For You *are* the God of my strength;
Why do You cast me off?
Why do I go mourning because of the
oppression of the enemy?

[3]Oh, send out Your light and Your truth!
Let them lead me;
Let them bring me to Your holy hill
And to Your tabernacle.
[4]Then I will go to the altar of God,
To God my exceeding joy;
And on the harp I will praise You,
O God, my God.

[5]Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted
within me?
Hope in God;

42:6 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; a few Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate put *my God* at the end of verse 5.

For I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my God.

PSALM 44

REDEMPTION REMEMBERED IN PRESENT DISHONOR

To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation[a] of the sons of Korah.

We have heard with our ears,
O God,
Our fathers have told us,
The deeds You did in their days,
In days of old:

Psalm 44:1

God wanted every generation of Israelites to know all He had done for their ancestors. Though written records of past events were kept, few people had access to them. That's why it was important for the Israelites to tell their children and grandchildren about their history.

2 You drove out the nations with Your hand,
But them You planted;
You afflicted the peoples, and cast them out.
3 For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword,
Nor did their own arm save them;
But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance,
Because You favored them.

4 You are my King, O God;[a]
Command[b] victories for Jacob.
5 Through You we will push down our enemies;
Through Your name we will trample those who rise up against us.
6 For I will not trust in my bow,
Nor shall my sword save me.
7 But You have saved us from our enemies,
And have put to shame those who hated us.
8 In God we boast all day long,
And praise Your name forever. *Selah*

9 But You have cast *us* off and put us to shame,
And You do not go out with our armies.
10 You make us turn back from the enemy,
And those who hate us have taken spoil for themselves.
11 You have given us up like sheep *intended* for food,
And have scattered us among the nations.
12 You sell Your people for *next to* nothing,
And are not enriched by selling them.

13 You make us a reproach to our neighbors,
A scorn and a derision to those all around us.
14 You make us a byword among the nations,
A shaking of the head among the peoples.
15 My dishonor *is* continually before me,
And the shame of my face has covered me,
16 Because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles,
Because of the enemy and the avenger.

17 All this has come upon us;
But we have not forgotten You,
Nor have we dealt falsely with Your covenant.
18 Our heart has not turned back,
Nor have our steps departed from Your way;
19 But You have severely broken us in the place of jackals,
And covered us with the shadow of death.

20 If we had forgotten the name of our God,
Or stretched out our hands to a foreign god,
21 Would not God search this out?
For He knows the secrets of the heart.

44:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil* **44:4** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *and my God.* [b]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *Who commands.*

22 Yet for Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

23 Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord?
Arise! Do not cast *us* off forever.
24 Why do You hide Your face,
And forget our affliction and our oppression?
25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust;
Our body clings to the ground.
26 Arise for our help,
And redeem us for Your mercies' sake.

PSALM 45

THE GLORIES OF THE MESSIAH AND HIS BRIDE

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies."[a] A Contemplation[b] of the sons of Korah. A Song of Love.

My heart is overflowing with a good theme;
I recite my composition concerning the King;
My tongue *is* the pen of a ready writer.

2 You are fairer than the sons of men;
Grace is poured upon Your lips;
Therefore God has blessed You forever.
3 Gird Your sword upon *Your* thigh, O Mighty One,
With Your glory and Your majesty.
4 And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, *and* righteousness;
And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things.
5 Your arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the King's enemies;
The peoples fall under You.

6 Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever;
A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom.
7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.
8 All Your garments *are scented* with myrrh and aloes *and* cassia,
Out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad.

Psalm 45:8

The spices mentioned here were rare and expensive. Myrrh was a plant used to make perfumes, among other things. It was also one of the presents the wise men brought to the baby Jesus. The aloes were not the plants we know today, but were actually trees whose fragrant wood was used for perfume and incense. Cassia plants smelled a lot like cinnamon. All three spices were associated with the oil used to anoint kings.

9 Kings' daughters *are* among Your honorable women;
At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.

10 Listen, O daughter,
Consider and incline your ear;
Forget your own people also, and your father's house;
11 So the King will greatly desire your beauty;
Because He *is* your Lord, worship Him.
12 And the daughter of Tyre *will come* with a gift;
The rich among the people will seek your favor.

13 The royal daughter *is* all glorious within *the palace;*
Her clothing *is* woven with gold.
14 She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors;
The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You.
15 With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought;
They shall enter the King's palace.

16 Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons,
Whom You shall make princes in all the earth.

45:title [a]Hebrew *Shoshannim* [b]Hebrew *Maschil*

17 I will make Your name to be
remembered in all generations;
Therefore the people shall praise You
forever and ever.

PSALM 46

GOD THE REFUGE OF HIS PEOPLE AND CONQUEROR OF THE NATIONS

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of the sons of Korah. A Song for Alamoth.

God *is* our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
2 Therefore we will not fear,
Even though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried
into the midst of the sea;
3 *Though* its waters roar *and* be
troubled,
Though the mountains shake with its
swelling. *Selah*

4 *There is* a river whose streams shall
make glad the city of God,
The holy *place* of the tabernacle of the
Most High.

Psalm 46:2–4

In ancient times, oceans and seas were thought of as things to be feared. Bible writers occasionally used the sea as a symbol of trouble. Rivers, on the other hand, were considered good and helpful. In this passage, the sea represents destruction and the river represents the blessings of God.

5 God *is* in the midst of her, she shall not
be moved;
God shall help her, just at the break of
dawn.
6 The nations raged, the kingdoms were
moved;
He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

7 The LORD of hosts *is* with us;
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. *Selah*

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD,
Who has made desolations in the
earth.
9 He makes wars cease to the end of the
earth;
He breaks the bow and cuts the spear
in two;
He burns the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I *am* God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!

11 The LORD of hosts *is* with us;
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. *Selah*

PSALM 47

PRAISE TO GOD, THE RULER OF THE EARTH

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples!
Shout to God with the voice of
triumph!
2 For the LORD Most High *is* awesome;
He is a great King over all the earth.
3 He will subdue the peoples under us,
And the nations under our feet.
4 He will choose our inheritance for us,
The excellence of Jacob whom He
loves. *Selah*

5 God has gone up with a shout,
The LORD with the sound of a
trumpet.
6 Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
7 For God *is* the King of all the earth;
Sing praises with understanding.

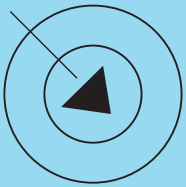
8 God reigns over the nations;
God sits on His holy throne.
9 The princes of the people have
gathered together,
The people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth *belong* to
God;
He is greatly exalted.

PSALM 48

THE GLORY OF GOD IN ZION

A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be
praised
In the city of our God,
In His holy mountain.
2 Beautiful in elevation,
The joy of the whole earth,



PROMISE

God promises to be ready to help.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Ps. 46:1).

God is always ready to aid His children. Throughout the Old Testament, we read about times when the nation of Israel found itself face-to-face with an enemy. But God was there for them. He didn't have to recruit an army and buy some weapons. He already had an army of angels—and enough power in His little finger to wipe out any enemy. Sometimes God used the men of Israel's army; sometimes He used a bunch of trumpets; but whatever way God led the Israelites to fight, they always came out on top—as long as they obeyed God.

Well, that same "refuge and strength"—that same power—is also yours whenever you ask. God is always ready to help those who serve Him and obey. When you ask for God's help with a tough decision, He doesn't have to go research the problem; He's got more knowledge than the most cutting-edge computer. If money is what you need, He doesn't have to go to the ATM, or get a loan. He created everything and can do with it as He pleases. Everything you need is wrapped up in God. He doesn't have to get it together before He can help. Just ask and you will receive whatever you need from God.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Joshua 1:9; Proverbs 2:7, 8; Isaiah 35:3, 4

Is Mount Zion *on* the sides of the north,
The city of the great King.
3 God *is* in her palaces;
He is known as her refuge.

4 For behold, the kings assembled,
They passed by together.
5 They saw *it, and* so they marveled;
They were troubled, they hastened away.
6 Fear took hold of them there,
And pain, as of a woman in birth pangs,
7 *As when* You break the ships of
Tarshish
With an east wind.

8 As we have heard,
So we have seen
In the city of the LORD of hosts,
In the city of our God:
God will establish it forever. *Selah*

9 We have thought, O God, on Your
lovingkindness,
In the midst of Your temple.
10 According to Your name, O God,
So *is* Your praise to the ends of the
earth;
Your right hand is full of
righteousness.

11 Let Mount Zion rejoice,
Let the daughters of Judah be glad,
Because of Your judgments.

12 Walk about Zion,
And go all around her.
Count her towers;

Psalm 48:12

The city of Jerusalem, located on top of Mount Zion, was surrounded by a wall to protect its citizens from their enemies. Towers were built at various points on the wall so lookouts could spot coming attacks.

13 Mark well her bulwarks;
Consider her palaces;
That you may tell *it* to the generation
following.
14 For this *is* God,
Our God forever and ever;
He will be our guide
Even to death.[a]

48:14 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Syriac; Septuagint and Vulgate read *Forever*.

GUIDANCE
Can we trust the Lord to guide our way?
Psalm 48:14

PSALM 49

THE CONFIDENCE OF THE FOOLISH

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

Hear this, all peoples;
Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,
2 Both low and high,
Rich and poor together.
3 My mouth shall speak wisdom,
And the meditation of my heart *shall give* understanding.
4 I will incline my ear to a proverb;
I will disclose my dark saying on the harp.

5 Why should I fear in the days of evil,
When the iniquity at my heels surrounds me?
6 Those who trust in their wealth
And boast in the multitude of their riches,
7 None *of them* can by any means redeem *his* brother,
Nor give to God a ransom for him—
8 For the redemption of their souls *is* costly,
And it shall cease forever—
9 That he should continue to live eternally,
And not see the Pit.

10 For he sees wise men die;
Likewise the fool and the senseless person perish,
And leave their wealth to others.
11 Their inner thought *is that* their houses *will last* forever,[a]
Their dwelling places to all generations;
They call *their* lands after their own names.
12 Nevertheless man, *though* in honor, does not remain;[a]
He is like the beasts *that* perish.
13 This is the way of those who *are* foolish,
And of their posterity who approve their sayings. *Selah*
14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave;
Death shall feed on them;
The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;
And their beauty shall be consumed in the grave, far from their dwelling.
15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave,
For He shall receive me. *Selah*

16 Do not be afraid when one becomes rich,
When the glory of his house is increased;
17 For when he dies he shall carry nothing away;
His glory shall not descend after him.
18 Though while he lives he blesses himself
(For *men* will praise you when you do well for yourself),
19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers;
They shall never see light.
20 A man *who is* in honor, yet does not understand,
Is like the beasts *that* perish.

PSALM 50

GOD THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

A Psalm of Asaph.

The Mighty One, God the LORD,
Has spoken and called the earth
From the rising of the sun to its going down.
2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God will shine forth.
3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent;
A fire shall devour before Him,
And it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.

4 He shall call to the heavens from above,

49:11 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *Their graves shall be their houses forever*.
49:12 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *understand* (compare verse 20).

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 49:12

Death Justin was sixteen years old and a really awesome kid—the kind of guy everyone wanted to be around. He had such a great attitude—he even made work fun. One Tuesday night after supper, he hopped in his car to go to a Bible study. His mom kissed him and reminded him to buckle up and drive safely. Two miles from his house, Justin crossed the yellow line and hit another car. Justin died and so did the lady in the other car. No one could believe that Justin was gone. He had so much life ahead of him—he was really going to make a difference.

It is a fact of life that we will all die one day. But sometimes it seems God's timing is off; why does He allow some people to die so young? Even when we don't understand, we can hold to the truth that God's timing is perfect.

The coolest thing about Justin was that he really loved God and lived a life that proved it. When Justin left this earth and entered the presence of his Lord, the angels sang and the Savior surely said, "Well done, My son. I am so pleased with you." (See also: Ps. 116:15; Eccl. 3:19, 20; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22; Heb. 9:27.)

Words to Live By

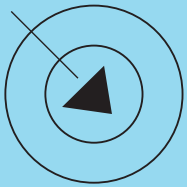
Honor: The word translated as "honor" in Psalm 49:12 is the Hebrew word *yeqar* (yek-awr'). When a person has *yeqar*, they are precious, greatly valued—they are special. God has a plan in mind for each of us. He knows everything about us—how we will live, what we will do, and when we will die. Death can be a frightening thing. But when you know how special and valued you are in God's sight, you know He will always take care of you—in this life and in the one to come.

And to the earth, that He may judge
His people:
5 "Gather My saints together to Me,
Those who have made a covenant with
Me by sacrifice."
6 Let the heavens declare His
righteousness,
For God Himself *is* Judge. *Selah*

7 "Hear, O My people, and I will speak,
O Israel, and I will testify against you;
I *am* God, your God!
8 I will not rebuke you for your
sacrifices
Or your burnt offerings,
Which are continually before Me.
9 I will not take a bull from your
house,
Nor goats out of your folds.
10 For every beast of the forest *is* Mine,
And the cattle on a thousand hills.
11 I know all the birds of the
mountains,
And the wild beasts of the field *are*
Mine.
12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you;
For the world *is* Mine, and all its
fullness.
13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls,
Or drink the blood of goats?
14 Offer to God thanksgiving,
And pay your vows to the Most High.
15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify
Me."

16 But to the wicked God says:
"What *right* have you to declare My
statutes,
Or take My covenant in your mouth,
17 Seeing you hate instruction
And cast My words behind you?
18 When you saw a thief, you consented[a]
with him,
And have been a partaker with
adulterers.
19 You give your mouth to evil,
And your tongue frames deceit.

50:18 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *ran*.



PROMISE

God promises to redeem you from the power of death.

But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me (Ps. 49:15).

Jesus promises to rescue those who believe in Him "from the power of the grave." He is the One who totally defeated death when He died on the cross and then rose from death. Jesus is more powerful than death! If you accept Him as your Savior, His victory over death is also your victory. He suffered your penalty for sin by dying for you. All He asks is that you believe He died just for you and that you turn from sin and follow Him.

For the person who doesn't believe in Jesus, death has a lot of power. Death for them is the end of life on earth and the beginning of an unknown, frightening journey. And those who don't know Jesus have a perfect right to fear; what awaits them is to be outside of God's presence forever—an eternity in hell. Those who do not accept Jesus' death on their behalf hold on to their sin and must pay the penalty. How sad that those people only had to accept Jesus in order to be saved.

But even those of us who have accepted Jesus sometimes find ourselves trying to be good enough or to accomplish enough great things to attempt to earn our place in God's kingdom.

Right now, right where you are, tell Jesus that you can't do it yourself.

If you don't know Jesus, tell Him you are drowning in your own sin and ask Him to reach in and rescue you. Hold on tightly as He pulls you to shore and breathes new life into you. Then stand up and follow the One who has rescued you for eternity.

If you do know the Lord, admit to Him that you realize you can never be good enough to earn anything from God. Thank Him for paying the price for you and ask Him to change you from the inside out. Then keep on walking out your faith and watch as God proves again and again that you belong to Him.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Isaiah 25:8, 9; 1 Corinthians 15:55–57; Revelation 21:3–7



20 You sit *and* speak against your
brother;
You slander your own mother's son.
21 These *things* you have done, and I kept
silent;
You thought that I was altogether like
you;
But I will rebuke you,
And set *them* in order before your eyes.

22 "Now consider this, you who forget
God,
Lest I tear *you* in pieces,
And *there be* none to deliver:
23 Whoever offers praise glorifies Me;
And to him who orders *his* conduct
aright
I will show the salvation of God."

PSALM 51

A PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your
tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.
2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin *is* always before me.
4 Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done *this* evil in Your sight—

That You may be found just when You speak,[a]
And blameless when You judge.

5Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.
6Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,
And in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom.

7Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

REPENTANCE
How can we be cleansed from sin?
Psalm 51:1–7

8Make me hear joy and gladness,
That the bones You have broken may rejoice.
9Hide Your face from my sins,
And blot out all my iniquities.

10Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
11Do not cast me away from Your presence,
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

12Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me *by Your* generous Spirit.
13*Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways,
And sinners shall be converted to You.

14Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
The God of my salvation,
And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.
15O Lord, open my lips,
And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.
16For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it;*
You do not delight in burnt offering.
17The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart—
These, O God, You will not despise.

18Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion;
Build the walls of Jerusalem.
19Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness,
With burnt offering and whole burnt offering;
Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

PSALM 52

THE END OF THE WICKED AND THE PEACE OF THE GODLY

To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation[a] of David when Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul, and said to him, "David has gone to the house of Ahimelech."

Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?
The goodness of God *endures* continually.
2Your tongue devises destruction,
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
3You love evil more than good,
Lying rather than speaking righteousness. *Selah*
4You love all devouring words,
You deceitful tongue.

5God shall likewise destroy you forever;
He shall take you away, and pluck you out of *your* dwelling place,
And uproot you from the land of the living. *Selah*
6The righteous also shall see and fear,
And shall laugh at him, *saying,*
7"Here is the man *who* did not make God his strength,
But trusted in the abundance of his riches,
And strengthened himself in his wickedness."

8But I *am* like a green olive tree in the house of God;
I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.
9I will praise You forever,

51:4 [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *in Your words.* **52:title** [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

Because You have done *it;*
And in the presence of Your saints
I will wait on Your name, for *it is* good.

PSALM 53

FOLLY OF THE GODLESS, AND THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Mahalath."
A Contemplation[a] of David.

The fool has said in his heart,
"*There is* no God."
They are corrupt, and have done
abominable iniquity;
There is none who does good.

2God looks down from heaven upon the
children of men,
To see if there are *any* who
understand, who seek God.
3Every one of them has turned aside;
They have together become corrupt;
There is none who does good,
No, not one.

4Have the workers of iniquity no
knowledge,
Who eat up my people *as* they eat
bread,
And do not call upon God?
5There they are in great fear
Where no fear was,
For God has scattered the bones of
him who encamps against you;
You have put *them* to shame,
Because God has despised them.

6Oh, that the salvation of Israel would
come out of Zion!
When God brings back the captivity of
His people,
Let Jacob rejoice *and* Israel be glad.

PSALM 54

ANSWERED PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE FROM ADVERSARIES

To the Chief Musician. With stringed
instruments.[a] A Contemplation[b] of David when
the Ziphites went and said to Saul, "Is David not
hiding with us?"

Save me, O God, by Your name,
And vindicate me by Your strength.
2Hear my prayer, O God;
Give ear to the words of my mouth.
3For strangers have risen up against me,
And oppressors have sought after my
life;
They have not set God before them.
Selah

4Behold, God *is* my helper;
The Lord *is* with those who uphold
my life.
5He will repay my enemies for their evil.
Cut them off in Your truth.

6I will freely sacrifice to You;
I will praise Your name, O LORD, for *it*
is good.
7For He has delivered me out of all
trouble;
And my eye has seen *its desire* upon
my enemies.

PSALM 55

TRUST IN GOD CONCERNING THE TREACHERY OF FRIENDS

To the Chief Musician. With stringed
instruments.[a] A Contemplation[b] of David.

Give ear to my prayer, O God,
And do not hide Yourself from my
supplication.
2Attend to me, and hear me;
I am restless in my complaint, and
moan noisily,
3Because of the voice of the enemy,
Because of the oppression of the
wicked;
For they bring down trouble upon me,
And in wrath they hate me.

4My heart is severely pained within me,
And the terrors of death have fallen
upon me.
5Fearfulness and trembling have come
upon me,
And horror has overwhelmed me.
6So I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a
dove!
I would fly away and be at rest.
7Indeed, I would wander far off,
And remain in the wilderness. *Selah*
8I would hasten my escape
From the windy storm *and* tempest."

53:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil* **54:title** [a]Hebrew *neginoth* [b]Hebrew *Maschil* **55:title** [a]Hebrew *neginoth* [b]Hebrew *Maschil*

9 Destroy, O Lord, *and* divide their
tongues,
For I have seen violence and strife in
the city.
10 Day and night they go around it on its
walls;
Iniquity and trouble *are* also in the
midst of it.
11 Destruction *is* in its midst;
Oppression and deceit do not depart
from its streets.

12 For *it is* not an enemy *who*
reproaches me;
Then I could bear *it.*
Nor *is it* one *who* hates me who has
exalted *himself* against me;
Then I could hide from him.
13 But *it was* you, a man my equal,
My companion and my acquaintance.
14 We took sweet counsel together,
And walked to the house of God in the
throng.

15 Let death seize them;
Let them go down alive into hell,
For wickedness *is* in their dwellings
and among them.

16 As for me, I will call upon God,
And the LORD shall save me.
17 Evening and morning and at noon
I will pray, and cry aloud,
And He shall hear my voice.
18 He has redeemed my soul in peace
from the battle *that was*
against me,
For there were many against me.
19 God will hear, and afflict them,
Even He who abides from of old. *Selah*
Because they do not change,
Therefore they do not fear God.

20 He has put forth his hands against
those who were at peace with
him;
He has broken his covenant.
21 *The words* of his mouth were smoother
than butter,
But war *was* in his heart;
His words were softer than oil,
Yet they *were* drawn swords.

22 Cast your burden on the LORD,
And He shall sustain you;
He shall never permit the righteous to
be moved.

BURDENS
How can we stand strong when we are burdened?
Psalm 55:22

23 But You, O God, shall bring them
down to the pit of destruction;
Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall
not live out half their days;
But I will trust in You.

PSALM 56

PRAYER FOR RELIEF FROM TORMENTORS

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Silent Dove in Distant Lands."[a] A Michtam of David when the Philistines captured him in Gath.

Be merciful to me, O God, for man
would swallow me up;
Fighting all day he oppresses me.
2 My enemies would hound *me* all day,
For *there are* many who fight against
me, O Most High.

3 Whenever I am afraid,
I will trust in You.
4 In God (I will praise His word),
In God I have put my trust;
I will not fear.
What can flesh do to me?

5 All day they twist my words;
All their thoughts *are* against me for
evil.
6 They gather together,
They hide, they mark my steps,
When they lie in wait for my life.
7 Shall they escape by iniquity?
In anger cast down the peoples,
O God!

8 You number my wanderings;
Put my tears into Your bottle;
Are they not in Your book?
9 When I cry out *to You,*
Then my enemies will turn back;
This I know, because God *is* for me.

56:title [a]Hebrew *Jonath Elem Rechokim*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 56:8

Tears Have you ever been through a time when it seemed like your heartache would never end? Have you ever been so hurt that it seemed the tears would never stop and the suffering would go on forever? When you're hurting badly, it can seem you may never be happy again. You may wonder if God even notices your broken heart. Surely if He knew how bad you felt during those times, He would do something to help, right?

Psalm 56:8 tells you just how much God cares about your heartaches. He cares so much that He has stored each tear you've ever cried in a bottle. That means your tears are precious to Him; He feels your pain as much as you do. God knows you intimately, and He will never turn His back on your suffering. Even when you feel completely alone, God has not abandoned you. He sees your tear-stained pillow. He hears you cry yourself to sleep. It breaks His heart to see you hurt. Don't ever think you are hurting all alone. God is there with you—close enough to catch each one of your tears. (See also: Ps. 34:18; Is. 38:5.)

Words to Live By

Wanderings: The word translated as "wanderings" in Psalm 56:8 is the Hebrew word *nod* (node). It carries the idea of lacking destination or purpose. Even when we try to wander away from the Lord, He remains close, waiting for us to turn back to Him.

10 In God (I will praise *His* word),
In the LORD (I will praise *His* word),
11 In God I have put my trust;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?

12 Vows *made* to You *are binding* upon me, O God;
I will render praises to You,
13 For You have delivered my soul from death.
Have You not *kept* my feet from falling,
That I may walk before God
In the light of the living?

PSALM 57

PRAYER FOR SAFETY FROM ENEMIES

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy."[a] A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul into the cave.

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me!
For my soul trusts in You;
And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge,
Until *these* calamities have passed by.

Psalm 57:1

Throughout the Bible, wings are used as symbols of protection and safety. If that seems odd to you, consider the way a mother hen covers her babies with her wings. In the same way, God shelters His children from danger.

2 I will cry out to God Most High,
To God who performs *all things* for me.
3 He shall send from heaven and save me;
He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. *Selah*
God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.

4 My soul *is* among lions;
I lie *among* the sons of men
Who are set on fire,
Whose teeth *are* spears and arrows,
And their tongue a sharp sword.
5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let Your glory *be* above all the earth.

57:title [a] Hebrew *Al Tashcheth*

6 They have prepared a net for my steps;
My soul is bowed down;
They have dug a pit before me;
Into the midst of it they *themselves*
have fallen. *Selah*

7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart
is steadfast;
I will sing and give praise.
8 Awake, my glory!
Awake, lute and harp!
I will awaken the dawn.

9 I will praise You, O Lord, among the
peoples;
I will sing to You among the nations.
10 For Your mercy reaches unto the
heavens,
And Your truth unto the clouds.

11 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let Your glory *be* above all the earth.

PSALM 58

THE JUST JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy."[a] A Michtam of David.

Do you indeed speak righteousness,
you silent ones?
Do you judge uprightly, you sons of
men?
2 No, in heart you work wickedness;
You weigh out the violence of your
hands in the earth.

3 The wicked are estranged from the
womb;
They go astray as soon as they are
born, speaking lies.
4 Their poison *is* like the poison of a
serpent;
They are like the deaf cobra *that* stops
its ear,
5 Which will not heed the voice of
charmers,
Charming ever so skillfully.

6 Break their teeth in their mouth,
O God!
Break out the fangs of the young lions,
O LORD!
7 Let them flow away as waters *which*
run continually;
When he bends *his bow,*
Let his arrows be as if cut in pieces.
8 *Let them be* like a snail which melts
away as it goes,
Like a stillborn child of a woman, that
they may not see the sun.

Psalm 58:8

In ancient times, people believed that the slime left behind by a snail was actually part of the snail itself. They believed that as the snail traveled, it left behind more and more of itself, growing smaller and smaller, until it disappeared completely.

9 Before your pots can feel *the burning*
thorns,
He shall take them away as with a
whirlwind,
As in His living and burning wrath.
10 The righteous shall rejoice when he
sees the vengeance;
He shall wash his feet in the blood of
the wicked,
11 So that men will say,
"Surely *there is* a reward for the righteous;
Surely He is God who judges in the
earth."

PSALM 59

THE ASSURED JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy."[a] A Michtam of David when Saul sent men, and they watched the house in order to kill him.

Deliver me from my enemies, O my
God;
Defend me from those who rise up
against me.
2 Deliver me from the workers of
iniquity,
And save me from bloodthirsty men.

3 For look, they lie in wait for my life;
The mighty gather against me,
Not *for* my transgression nor *for* my
sin, O LORD.
4 They run and prepare themselves
through no fault *of mine.*

58:title [a]Hebrew *Al Tashcheth* **59:title** [a]Hebrew *Al Tashcheth*

Awake to help me, and behold!
5You therefore, O LORD God of hosts,
the God of Israel,
Awake to punish all the nations;
Do not be merciful to any wicked
transgressors. *Selah*

6At evening they return,
They growl like a dog,
And go all around the city.
7Indeed, they belch with their mouth;
Swords *are* in their lips;
For *they say,* "Who hears?"

8But You, O LORD, shall laugh at them;
You shall have all the nations in
derision.
9I will wait for You, O You his Strength;[a]
For God *is* my defense.
10My God of mercy[a] shall come to
meet me;
God shall let me see *my desire* on my
enemies.

11Do not slay them, lest my people
forget;
Scatter them by Your power,
And bring them down,
O Lord our shield.
12*For* the sin of their mouth *and* the
words of their lips,
Let them even be taken in their
pride,
And for the cursing and lying *which*
they speak.
13Consume *them* in wrath, consume
them,
That they *may* not *be;*
And let them know that God rules in
Jacob
To the ends of the earth. *Selah*

14And at evening they return,
They growl like a dog,
And go all around the city.
15They wander up and down for food,
And howl[a] if they are not satisfied.

16But I will sing of Your power;
Yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in
the morning;
For You have been my defense
And refuge in the day of my trouble.
17To You, O my Strength, I will sing
praises;
For God *is* my defense,
My God of mercy.

PSALM 60

URGENT PRAYER FOR THE RESTORED FAVOR OF GOD

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Lily of the Testimony."[a] A Michtam of David. For teaching. When he fought against Mesopotamia and Syria of Zobah, and Joab returned and killed twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

O God, You have cast us off;
You have broken us down;
You have been displeased;
Oh, restore us again!
2You have made the earth tremble;
You have broken it;
Heal its breaches, for it is shaking.
3You have shown Your people hard
things;
You have made us drink the wine of
confusion.

4You have given a banner to those who
fear You,
That it may be displayed because of
the truth. *Selah*
5That Your beloved may be delivered,
Save *with* Your right hand, and
hear me.

6God has spoken in His holiness:
"I will rejoice;
I will divide Shechem
And measure out the Valley of
Succoth.
7Gilead *is* Mine, and Manasseh *is* Mine;
Ephraim also *is* the helmet for My head;
Judah *is* My lawgiver.
8Moab *is* My washpot;
Over Edom I will cast My shoe;
Philistia, shout in triumph because
of Me."

59:9 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Syriac; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *my Strength.* **59:10** [a]Following Qere; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *My God, His mercy;* Kethib, some Hebrew manuscripts and Targum read *O God, my mercy;* Syriac reads *O God, Your mercy.* **59:15** [a]Following Septuagint and Vulgate; Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Targum read *spend the night.* **60:title** [a]Hebrew *Shushan Eduth*

Psalm 60:6–8

When David first became leader of Israel, he had to deal not only with the nation's enemies, but also with people in his own country who refused to accept him as king. Eventually, the territories mentioned in this passage recognized that God had chosen David as leader of Israel and submitted to his rule.

9 Who will bring me *to* the strong city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
10 *Is it* not You, O God, *who* cast us off?
And You, O God, *who* did not go out with our armies?
11 Give us help from trouble,
For the help of man *is* useless.
12 Through God we will do valiantly,
For *it is* He *who* shall tread down our enemies.[a]

PSALM 61

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S ETERNAL PROTECTION

To the Chief Musician. On a stringed instrument.[a] *A Psalm* of David.

Hear my cry, O God;
Attend to my prayer.
2 From the end of the earth I will cry to You,
When my heart is overwhelmed;
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

3 For You have been a shelter for me,
A strong tower from the enemy.
4 I will abide in Your tabernacle forever;
I will trust in the shelter of Your wings.
Selah

5 For You, O God, have heard my vows;
You have given *me* the heritage of those who fear Your name.
6 You will prolong the king's life,
His years as many generations.
7 He shall abide before God forever.
Oh, prepare mercy and truth, *which* may preserve him!

8 So I will sing praise to Your name forever,
That I may daily perform my vows.

PSALM 62

A CALM RESOLVE TO WAIT FOR THE SALVATION OF GOD

To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

Truly my soul silently *waits* for God;
From Him *comes* my salvation.
2 He only *is* my rock and my salvation;
He is my defense;
I shall not be greatly moved.

3 How long will you attack a man?
You shall be slain, all of you,
Like a leaning wall and a tottering fence.
4 They only consult to cast *him* down from his high position;
They delight in lies;
They bless with their mouth,
But they curse inwardly. *Selah*

5 My soul, wait silently for God alone,
For my expectation *is* from Him.
6 He only *is* my rock and my salvation;
He is my defense;
I shall not be moved.
7 In God *is* my salvation and my glory;
The rock of my strength,
And my refuge, *is* in God.

8 Trust in Him at all times, you people;
Pour out your heart before Him;
God *is* a refuge for us. *Selah*

TRUST
Where should we place our trust?
Psalm 62:7, 8

9 Surely men of low degree *are* a vapor,
Men of high degree *are* a lie;
If they are weighed on the scales,
They *are* altogether *lighter* than vapor.
10 Do not trust in oppression,
Nor vainly hope in robbery;
If riches increase,
Do not set *your* heart *on them.*

60:12 [a]Compare verses 5–12 with 108:6–13
61:title [a]Hebrew *neginah*

11 God has spoken once,
Twice I have heard this:
That power *belongs* to God.
12 Also to You, O Lord, *belongs* mercy;
For You render to each one
according to his work.

PSALM 63

JOY IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD

A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

O God, You *are* my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
2 So I have looked for You in the
sanctuary,
To see Your power and Your glory.

3 Because Your lovingkindness *is*
better than life,
My lips shall praise You.
4 Thus I will bless You while I live;
I will lift up my hands in Your
name.
5 My soul shall be satisfied as with
marrow and fatness,
And my mouth shall praise *You* with
joyful lips.

6 When I remember You on my bed,
I meditate on You in the *night*
watches.
7 Because You have been my help,
Therefore in the shadow of Your
wings I will rejoice.
8 My soul follows close behind You;
Your right hand upholds me.

9 But those *who* seek my life, to
destroy *it,*
Shall go into the lower parts of the
earth.
10 They shall fall by the sword;
They shall be a portion for jackals.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God;
Everyone who swears by Him shall
glory;
But the mouth of those who speak
lies shall be stopped.

PSALM 64

OPPRESSED BY THE WICKED BUT REJOICING IN THE LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Hear my voice, O God, in my
meditation;
Preserve my life from fear of the
enemy.
2 Hide me from the secret plots of the
wicked,
From the rebellion of the workers of
iniquity,
3 Who sharpen their tongue like a
sword,
And bend *their bows to shoot* their
arrows—bitter words,
4 That they may shoot in secret at the
blameless;
Suddenly they shoot at him and do
not fear.

5 They encourage themselves *in* an evil
matter;
They talk of laying snares secretly;
They say, "Who will see them?"
6 They devise iniquities:
"We have perfected a shrewd scheme."
Both the inward thought and the heart
of man are deep.

7 But God shall shoot at them *with* an
arrow;
Suddenly they shall be wounded.
8 So He will make them stumble over
their own tongue;
All who see them shall flee away.
9 All men shall fear,
And shall declare the work of God;
For they shall wisely consider His
doing.

10 The righteous shall be glad in the
LORD, and trust in Him.
And all the upright in heart shall
glory.

PSALM 65

PRAISE TO GOD FOR HIS SALVATION AND PROVIDENCE

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. A Song.

Praise is awaiting You, O God, in Zion;
And to You the vow shall be
performed.

[2]O You who hear prayer,
To You all flesh will come.
[3]Iniquities prevail against me;
As for our transgressions,
You will provide atonement for them.

[4]Blessed *is the man* You choose,
And cause to approach *You,*
That he may dwell in Your courts.
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house,
Of Your holy temple.

[5]*By* awesome deeds in righteousness You will answer us,
O God of our salvation,
You who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth,
And of the far-off seas;
[6]Who established the mountains by His strength,
Being clothed with power;
[7]You who still the noise of the seas,
The noise of their waves,
And the tumult of the peoples.
[8]They also who dwell in the farthest parts are afraid of Your signs;
You make the outgoings of the morning and evening rejoice.

[9]You visit the earth and water it,
You greatly enrich it;
The river of God is full of water;
You provide their grain,
For so You have prepared it.
[10]You water its ridges abundantly,
You settle its furrows;
You make it soft with showers,
You bless its growth.

[11]You crown the year with Your goodness,
And Your paths drip *with* abundance.
[12]They drop *on* the pastures of the wilderness,
And the little hills rejoice on every side.
[13]The pastures are clothed with flocks;
The valleys also are covered with grain;
They shout for joy, they also sing.

PSALM 66

PRAISE TO GOD FOR HIS AWESOME WORKS

To the Chief Musician. A Song. A Psalm.

Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!
[2]Sing out the honor of His name;
Make His praise glorious.
[3]Say to God,
"How awesome are Your works!
Through the greatness of Your power
Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.
[4]All the earth shall worship You
And sing praises to You;
They shall sing praises *to* Your name."
Selah

[5]Come and see the works of God;
He is awesome *in His* doing toward the sons of men.
[6]He turned the sea into dry *land;*
They went through the river on foot.
There we will rejoice in Him.

Psalm 66:6

The pharaoh of Egypt, after letting the Israelites leave his country, changed his mind and sent his army to bring them back. His plan was to trap the Israelites at the Red Sea. Just when things looked hopeless for the Israelites, God parted the waters and created a path of dry land through the middle of the sea. The Israelites were able to walk across to the other side. When the Egyptians tried to follow, the water collapsed on top of them, and they drowned.

[7]He rules by His power forever;
His eyes observe the nations;
Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves. *Selah*

[8]Oh, bless our God, you peoples!
And make the voice of His praise to be heard,
[9]Who keeps our soul among the living,
And does not allow our feet to be moved.
[10]For You, O God, have tested us;



LIFE APP

Rebellion / Psalm 66:7

The word "rebellion" can bring out different emotions from different people at different times. We may think of rebellions such as the Boston Tea Party or other events in the American Revolutionary War. Or maybe we think of the rebellions that happened within the French Revolution. When we think of those rebellions, it may bring to mind images of honest people revolting against an unjust and oppressive authority.

But that's just one side of rebellion. There is another, less inspiring (and frankly, evil) side of rebellion. This kind of rebellion goes all the way back to when Satan's pride caused him to rebel against God. Since the creation of mankind, the devil has been inspiring a sense of evil rebellion in the human race. In the Garden of Eden, he tempted Eve to rebel against God by doing the one and only thing God had forbidden (Gen. 3). Both Adam and Eve chose to rebel against their loving, holy, and powerful God. Their rebellion had disastrous consequences for them and every generation to come after them. Our imperfect world and our own desires to rebel against authority are constant reminders of that foolish and deadly rebellion.

Jesus sacrificed Himself to save us from the eternal consequences of Adam and Eve's rebellion. The Creator and Sustainer of the world loves us! Why would we rebel against Him? He is the most powerful being that has ever been or will ever be. Psalm 66:7 says "He rules by His power forever; His eyes observe the nations; do not let the rebellious exalt themselves." Any rebellion against Him will fail, and is pointless. Rather than giving in to a spirit of pride and rebellion, we can always keep a spirit of remembrance of and thankfulness for what God has done for us.

Every time you're tempted to rebel against your parents or teachers or any other authority, remind yourself that rebellion is a temptation to sin that comes from your enemy, who only wishes you harm, and not your God, who only wants what's good for you.

You have refined us as silver is refined.
11 You brought us into the net;
You laid affliction on our backs.
12 You have caused men to ride over our heads;
We went through fire and through water;
But You brought us out to rich *fulfillment.*

13 I will go into Your house with burnt offerings;
I will pay You my vows,
14 Which my lips have uttered
And my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble.
15 I will offer You burnt sacrifices of fat animals,
With the sweet aroma of rams;
I will offer bulls with goats. *Selah*

16 Come *and* hear, all you who fear God,
And I will declare what He has done for my soul.
17 I cried to Him with my mouth,
And He was extolled with my tongue.
18 If I regard iniquity in my heart,
The Lord will not hear.
19 *But* certainly God has heard *me;*
He has attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed *be* God,
Who has not turned away my prayer,
Nor His mercy from me!

PSALM 67

AN INVOCATION AND A DOXOLOGY

To the Chief Musician. On stringed instruments.[a] A Psalm. A Song.

God be merciful to us and bless us,
And cause His face to shine upon us, *Selah*
2 That Your way may be known on earth,
Your salvation among all nations.

3 Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.
4 Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy!
For You shall judge the people righteously,
And govern the nations on earth. *Selah*
5 Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.
6 *Then* the earth shall yield her increase;
God, our own God, shall bless us.
7 God shall bless us,
And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

PSALM 68

THE GLORY OF GOD IN HIS GOODNESS TO ISRAEL

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. A Song.

Let God arise,
Let His enemies be scattered;
Let those also who hate Him flee before Him.
2 As smoke is driven away,
So drive *them* away;
As wax melts before the fire,
So let the wicked perish at the presence of God.
3 But let the righteous be glad;
Let them rejoice before God;
Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly.

4 Sing to God, sing praises to His name;
Extol Him who rides on the clouds,[a]
By His name YAH,
And rejoice before Him.

5 A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows,
Is God in His holy habitation.

CARING
Does God care for needy people?
Psalm 68:5

6 God sets the solitary in families;
He brings out those who are bound into prosperity;
But the rebellious dwell in a dry *land.*

7 O God, when You went out before Your people,
When You marched through the wilderness, *Selah*

67:title [a]Hebrew *neginoth* **68:4** [a]Masoretic Text reads *deserts;* Targum reads *heavens* (compare verse 34 and Isaiah 19:1).

8 The earth shook;
The heavens also dropped *rain* at the presence of God;
Sinai itself *was moved* at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
9 You, O God, sent a plentiful rain,
Whereby You confirmed Your inheritance,
When it was weary.
10 Your congregation dwelt in it;
You, O God, provided from Your goodness for the poor.

11 The Lord gave the word;
Great *was* the company of those who proclaimed *it:*
12 "Kings of armies flee, they flee,
And she who remains at home divides the spoil.
13 Though you lie down among the sheepfolds,
You will be like the wings of a dove covered with silver,
And her feathers with yellow gold."
14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it,
It was *white* as snow in Zalmon.

15 A mountain of God *is* the mountain of Bashan;
A mountain *of many* peaks *is* the mountain of Bashan.
16 Why do you fume with envy, you mountains of *many* peaks?
This is the mountain *which* God desires to dwell in;
Yes, the LORD will dwell *in it* forever.

17 The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand,
Even thousands of thousands;
The Lord is among them *as in* Sinai, in the Holy *Place.*
18 You have ascended on high,
You have led captivity captive;
You have received gifts among men,
Even *from* the rebellious,
That the LORD God might dwell *there.*

19 Blessed *be* the Lord,
Who daily loads us *with benefits,*
The God of our salvation! *Selah*
20 Our God *is* the God of salvation;
And to GOD the Lord *belong* escapes from death.

21 But God will wound the head of His enemies,
The hairy scalp of the one who still goes on in his trespasses.
22 The Lord said, "I will bring back from Bashan,
I will bring *them* back from the depths of the sea,

Psalm 68:22

Bashan, which was located east of the Jordan River, was a fertile area of land that belonged to the tribe of Manasseh. Later in Israel's history, the area became known as much for its selfish and arrogant inhabitants as for its plentiful harvests and choice livestock.

23 That your foot may crush *them*[a] in blood,
And the tongues of your dogs *may have* their portion from *your* enemies."

24 They have seen Your procession, O God,
The procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary.
25 The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after;
Among *them were* the maidens playing timbrels.
26 Bless God in the congregations,
The Lord, from the fountain of Israel.
27 There *is* little Benjamin, their leader,
The princes of Judah *and* their company,
The princes of Zebulun *and* the princes of Naphtali.

28 Your God has commanded[a] your strength;
Strengthen, O God, what You have done for us.
29 Because of Your temple at Jerusalem,
Kings will bring presents to You.
30 Rebuke the beasts of the reeds,
The herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples,

68:23 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *you may dip your foot.* **68:28** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *Command, O God.*

Till everyone submits himself with
pieces of silver.
Scatter the peoples *who* delight in war.
31 Envoys will come out of Egypt;
Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her
hands to God.

32 Sing to God, you kingdoms of the
earth;
Oh, sing praises to the Lord, *Selah*
33 To Him who rides on the heaven of
heavens, *which were* of old!
Indeed, He sends out His voice, a
mighty voice.
34 Ascribe strength to God;
His excellence *is* over Israel,
And His strength *is* in the clouds.
35 O God, *You are* more awesome than
Your holy places.
The God of Israel *is* He who gives
strength and power to *His* people.

Blessed *be* God!

WORRY
What should our response be in times of stress?
Psalm 69

PSALM 69

AN URGENT PLEA FOR HELP IN TROUBLE

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies."[a] A Psalm of David.

Save me, O God!
For the waters have come up to *my*
neck.
2 I sink in deep mire,
Where *there is* no standing;
I have come into deep waters,
Where the floods overflow me.
3 I am weary with my crying;
My throat is dry;
My eyes fail while I wait for my God.

4 Those who hate me without a cause
Are more than the hairs of my head;
They are mighty who would
destroy me,
Being my enemies wrongfully;
Though I have stolen nothing,
I *still* must restore *it.*
5 O God, You know my foolishness;
And my sins are not hidden from You.
6 Let not those who wait for You, O Lord
GOD of hosts, be ashamed
because of me;
Let not those who seek You be
confounded because of me,
O God of Israel.
7 Because for Your sake I have borne
reproach;
Shame has covered my face.
8 I have become a stranger to my
brothers,
And an alien to my mother's children;
9 Because zeal for Your house has eaten
me up,
And the reproaches of those who
reproach You have fallen on me.
10 When I wept *and chastened* my soul
with fasting,
That became my reproach.
11 I also made sackcloth my garment;
I became a byword to them.
12 Those who sit in the gate speak
against me,
And I *am* the song of the drunkards.

13 But as for me, my prayer *is* to You,
O LORD, *in* the acceptable time;
O God, in the multitude of Your
mercy,
Hear me in the truth of Your
salvation.
14 Deliver me out of the mire,
And let me not sink;
Let me be delivered from those who
hate me,
And out of the deep waters.
15 Let not the floodwater overflow me,
Nor let the deep swallow me up;
And let not the pit shut its mouth
on me.

16 Hear me, O LORD, for Your
lovingkindness *is* good;
Turn to me according to the multitude
of Your tender mercies.
17 And do not hide Your face from Your
servant,
For I am in trouble;
Hear me speedily.
18 Draw near to my soul, *and* redeem it;
Deliver me because of my enemies.

69:title [a]Hebrew *Shoshannim*

19 You know my reproach, my shame,
and my dishonor;
My adversaries *are* all before You.
20 Reproach has broken my heart,
And I am full of heaviness;
I looked *for someone* to take pity, but
there was none;
And for comforters, but I found none.
21 They also gave me gall for my food,
And for my thirst they gave me vinegar
to drink.

22 Let their table become a snare before
them,
And their well-being a trap.
23 Let their eyes be darkened, so that
they do not see;
And make their loins shake
continually.
24 Pour out Your indignation upon them,
And let Your wrathful anger take hold
of them.
25 Let their dwelling place be desolate;
Let no one live in their tents.
26 For they persecute the *ones* You have
struck,
And talk of the grief of those You have
wounded.
27 Add iniquity to their iniquity,
And let them not come into Your
righteousness.
28 Let them be blotted out of the book of
the living,
And not be written with the righteous.

29 But I *am* poor and sorrowful;
Let Your salvation, O God, set me up
on high.
30 I will praise the name of God with a
song,
And will magnify Him with
thanksgiving.
31 *This* also shall please the LORD better
than an ox *or* bull,
Which has horns and hooves.
32 The humble shall see *this and* be glad;
And you who seek God, your hearts
shall live.
33 For the LORD hears the poor,
And does not despise His prisoners.

34 Let heaven and earth praise Him,
The seas and everything that moves
in them.
35 For God will save Zion
And build the cities of Judah,
That they may dwell there and
possess it.
36 Also, the descendants of His servants
shall inherit it,
And those who love His name shall
dwell in it.

PSALM 70

PRAYER FOR RELIEF FROM ADVERSARIES

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David. To bring to remembrance.

Make haste, O God, to deliver me!
Make haste to help me, O LORD!
2 Let them be ashamed and confounded
Who seek my life;
Let them be turned back[a] and
confused
Who desire my hurt.
3 Let them be turned back because of
their shame,
Who say, "Aha, aha!"

4 Let all those who seek You rejoice and
be glad in You;
And let those who love Your salvation
say continually,
"Let God be magnified!"

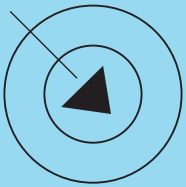
5 But I *am* poor and needy;
Make haste to me, O God!
You *are* my help and my deliverer;
O LORD, do not delay.

PSALM 71

GOD THE ROCK OF SALVATION

In You, O LORD, I put my trust;
Let me never be put to shame.
2 Deliver me in Your righteousness, and
cause me to escape;
Incline Your ear to me, and save me.
3 Be my strong refuge,
To which I may resort continually;
You have given the commandment to
save me,
For You *are* my rock and my fortress.

70:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *be appalled* (compare 40:15).



PROMISE

God promises to be faithful.

Also with the lute I will praise You—and Your faithfulness, O my God! (Ps. 71:22a).

Imagine this: A mom and dad lost their only daughter two days before her fifteenth birthday. She was riding in a car that was hit by a drunk driver. Devastated, they started the long process of grieving for their child who died far too young. Several months later, they came to your school and told you how incredibly painful and difficult losing their daughter had been. But something they said really grabbed you: "But we have God. We couldn't have made it without Him. He has been so faithful."

That's God's faithfulness in action: He is always there to help and comfort those who are in pain and bring hope of a better tomorrow. God will never fail to hold us when we are hurting. Even on days when, like the parents in our story above, we hurt so much we can hardly breathe, He stays right beside us. He carries us when we don't have enough strength or courage to face life. He touches our hearts and heals the pain. And He teaches us to smile again when it seems our smiles are gone forever.

Don't wait for a catastrophe to learn of God's faithfulness. He's faithful in your good times, too. Be on the lookout for your faithful Father.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 36:5; 119:90; 1 Corinthians 1:9

[4]Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand
of the wicked,
Out of the hand of the unrighteous
and cruel man.
[5]For You are my hope, O Lord GOD;
You are my trust from my youth.
[6]By You I have been upheld from
birth;
You are He who took me out of my
mother's womb.
My praise *shall be* continually of You.

[7]I have become as a wonder to many,
But You *are* my strong refuge.
[8]Let my mouth be filled *with* Your
praise
And with Your glory all the day.

[9]Do not cast me off in the time of old
age;
Do not forsake me when my strength
fails.
[10]For my enemies speak against me;
And those who lie in wait for my life
take counsel together,
[11]Saying, "God has forsaken him;
Pursue and take him, for *there is* none
to deliver *him*."

[12]O God, do not be far from me;
O my God, make haste to help me!
[13]Let them be confounded *and*
consumed
Who are adversaries of my life;
Let them be covered *with* reproach
and dishonor
Who seek my hurt.

[14]But I will hope continually,
And will praise You yet more and
more.
[15]My mouth shall tell of Your
righteousness
And Your salvation all the day,
For I do not know *their* limits.
[16]I will go in the strength of the Lord
GOD;
I will make mention of Your
righteousness, of Yours only.

[17]O God, You have taught me from my
youth;
And to this *day* I declare Your
wondrous works.
[18]Now also when *I am* old and
grayheaded,
O God, do not forsake me,

Until I declare Your strength to *this* generation,
Your power to everyone *who* is to come.

19 Also Your righteousness, O God, *is* very high,
You who have done great things;
O God, who *is* like You?
20 *You,* who have shown me great and severe troubles,
Shall revive me again,
And bring me up again from the depths of the earth.
21 You shall increase my greatness,
And comfort me on every side.

22 Also with the lute I will praise You—
And Your faithfulness, O my God!
To You I will sing with the harp,
O Holy One of Israel.
23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You,
And my soul, which You have redeemed.
24 My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long;
For they are confounded,
For they are brought to shame
Who seek my hurt.

PSALM 72

GLORY AND UNIVERSALITY OF THE MESSIAH'S REIGN

A Psalm of Solomon.

Give the king Your judgments, O God,
And Your righteousness to the king's Son.
2 He will judge Your people with righteousness,
And Your poor with justice.
3 The mountains will bring peace to the people,
And the little hills, by righteousness.
4 He will bring justice to the poor of the people;
He will save the children of the needy,
And will break in pieces the oppressor.

5 They shall fear You[a]
As long as the sun and moon endure,
Throughout all generations.
6 He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing,
Like showers *that* water the earth.
7 In His days the righteous shall flourish,
And abundance of peace,
Until the moon is no more.

8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.
9 Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him,
And His enemies will lick the dust.
10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles
Will bring presents;
The kings of Sheba and Seba
Will offer gifts.
11 Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him;
All nations shall serve Him.

12 For He will deliver the needy when he cries,
The poor also, and *him* who has no helper.
13 He will spare the poor and needy,
And will save the souls of the needy.
14 He will redeem their life from oppression and violence;
And precious shall be their blood in His sight.

15 And He shall live;
And the gold of Sheba will be given to Him;
Prayer also will be made for Him continually,
And daily He shall be praised.

16 There will be an abundance of grain in the earth,
On the top of the mountains;
Its fruit shall wave like Lebanon;
And *those* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

17 His name shall endure forever;
His name shall continue as long as the sun.
And *men* shall be blessed in Him;
All nations shall call Him blessed.

72:5 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *They shall continue.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 72:18

Miracles A miracle is an event that happens in a way that science cannot explain. For instance, a car is crushed from every angle in an accident, but the driver comes away unharmed; or a child returns to perfect health after doctors declared that there was no hope. It's just as miraculous when the wildest troublemaker in town gets saved and starts telling everyone what God has done in his life. And there's the miracle that is the basis of our faith: A Man, dead for three days in a grave, got up and appeared to over five hundred people.

If you've ever seen a miracle, you can be sure that you witnessed the hand of God working. You experienced a supernatural event. Only God can do miracles. Sometimes He uses people in the process, but no man can work a miracle by his own power.

The purpose of a miracle is to bring glory to God and to remind us of His amazing love toward us. Miracles force us to stop looking at ourselves and our limitations. We have to look up at God and His mighty power. A miracle is meant to get our attention and cause us to be amazed by our God. (See also: Ex. 34:10; Mic. 7:15.)

Words to Live By

Wondrous: The word translated in Psalm 72:18 as "wondrous" is the Hebrew word *pala* (paw-law'). It is a word that means "great, difficult, distinguished, marvelous, and miraculous." We can always trust that God will work wondrously on our behalf. He is the God of miracles—everything about Him is *pala*!

18 Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel,
Who only does wondrous things!
19 And blessed *be* His glorious name forever!
And let the whole earth be filled *with* His glory.
Amen and Amen.

20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

BOOK THREE: Psalms 73—89

PSALM 73

THE TRAGEDY OF THE WICKED, AND THE BLESSEDNESS OF TRUST IN GOD

A Psalm of Asaph.

Truly God *is* good to Israel,
To such as are pure in heart.
2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;
My steps had nearly slipped.
3 For I *was* envious of the boastful,
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4 For *there are* no pangs in their death,
But their strength *is* firm.
5 They *are* not in trouble *as other* men,
Nor are they plagued like *other* men.
6 Therefore pride serves as their necklace;
Violence covers them *like* a garment.
7 Their eyes bulge[a] with abundance;
They have more than heart could wish.
8 They scoff and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression;
They speak loftily.
9 They set their mouth against the heavens,
And their tongue walks through the earth.

10 Therefore his people return here,
And waters of a full *cup* are drained by them.

73:7 [a]Targum reads *face bulges;* Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *iniquity bulges.*

11 And they say, "How does God know?
And is there knowledge in the Most
High?"
12 Behold, these *are* the ungodly,
Who are always at ease;
They increase *in* riches.
13 Surely I have cleansed my heart *in*
vain,
And washed my hands in innocence.
14 For all day long I have been plagued,
And chastened every morning.

15 If I had said, "I will speak thus,"
Behold, I would have been untrue to
the generation of Your children.
16 When I thought *how* to understand
this,
It *was* too painful for me—
17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God;
Then I understood their end.

18 Surely You set them in slippery
places;
You cast them down to destruction.
19 Oh, how they are *brought* to
desolation, as in a moment!
They are utterly consumed with
terrors.
20 As a dream when *one* awakes,
So, Lord, when You awake,
You shall despise their image.

21 Thus my heart was grieved,
And I was vexed in my mind.
22 I *was* so foolish and ignorant;
I was *like* a beast before You.
23 Nevertheless I *am* continually with
You;
You hold *me* by my right hand.
24 You will guide me with Your counsel,
And afterward receive me *to* glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven *but You?*
And *there is* none upon earth *that* I
desire besides You.
26 My flesh and my heart fail;
But God *is* the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.

27 For indeed, those who are far from You
shall perish;
You have destroyed all those who
desert You for harlotry.
28 But *it is* good for me to draw near to
God;
I have put my trust in the Lord GOD,
That I may declare all Your works.

PSALM 74

A PLEA FOR RELIEF FROM OPPRESSORS

A Contemplation[a] of Asaph.

O God, why have You cast *us* off
forever?
Why does Your anger smoke
against the sheep of Your
pasture?
2 Remember Your congregation, *which*
You have purchased of old,
The tribe of Your inheritance, *which*
You have redeemed—
This Mount Zion where You have dwelt.
3 Lift up Your feet to the perpetual
desolations.
The enemy has damaged everything in
the sanctuary.
4 Your enemies roar in the midst of Your
meeting place;
They set up their banners *for* signs.
5 They seem like men who lift up
Axes among the thick trees.
6 And now they break down its carved
work, all at once,
With axes and hammers.
7 They have set fire to Your sanctuary;
They have defiled the dwelling place of
Your name to the ground.
8 They said in their hearts,
"Let us destroy them altogether."
They have burned up all the meeting
places of God in the land.

9 We do not see our signs;
There is no longer any prophet;
Nor *is there* any among us who knows
how long.
10 O God, how long will the adversary
reproach?
Will the enemy blaspheme Your name
forever?
11 Why do You withdraw Your hand, even
Your right hand?
Take it out of Your bosom and destroy
them.
12 For God *is* my King from of old,
Working salvation in the midst of the
earth.

74:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

13 You divided the sea by Your strength;
You broke the heads of the sea
serpents in the waters.
14 You broke the heads of Leviathan in
pieces,
And gave him *as* food to the people
inhabiting the wilderness.
15 You broke open the fountain and the
flood;
You dried up mighty rivers.
16 The day *is* Yours, the night also *is*
Yours;
You have prepared the light and the
sun.
17 You have set all the borders of the
earth;
You have made summer and winter.

18 Remember this, *that* the enemy has
reproached, O LORD,
And *that* a foolish people has
blasphemed Your name.
19 Oh, do not deliver the life of Your
turtledove to the wild beast!
Do not forget the life of Your poor
forever.
20 Have respect to the covenant;
For the dark places of the earth are full
of the haunts of cruelty.
21 Oh, do not let the oppressed return
ashamed!
Let the poor and needy praise Your
name.

22 Arise, O God, plead Your own cause;
Remember how the foolish man
reproaches You daily.
23 Do not forget the voice of Your
enemies;
The tumult of those who rise up
against You increases continually.

PSALM 75

THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy."[a]
A Psalm of Asaph. A Song.

We give thanks to You, O God, we
give thanks!
For Your wondrous works declare
that Your name is near.

2 "When I choose the proper time,
I will judge uprightly.
3 The earth and all its inhabitants are
dissolved;
I set up its pillars firmly. *Selah*

4 "I said to the boastful, 'Do not deal
boastfully,'
And to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the
horn.
5 Do not lift up your horn on high;
Do *not* speak with a stiff neck.'"

6 For exaltation *comes* neither from the
east
Nor from the west nor from the south.
7 But God *is* the Judge:
He puts down one,
And exalts another.
8 For in the hand of the LORD *there is*
a cup,
And the wine is red;
It is fully mixed, and He pours it out;
Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of
the earth
Drain *and* drink down.

9 But I will declare forever,
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

10 "All the horns of the wicked I will also
cut off,
But the horns of the righteous shall be
exalted."

PSALM 76

THE MAJESTY OF GOD IN JUDGMENT

To the Chief Musician. On stringed instruments.[a]
A Psalm of Asaph. A Song.

In Judah God *is* known;
His name *is* great in Israel.
2 In Salem[a] also is His tabernacle,
And His dwelling place in Zion.
3 There He broke the arrows of the bow,
The shield and sword of battle. *Selah*

4 You *are* more glorious and excellent
Than the mountains of prey.
5 The stouthearted were plundered;
They have sunk into their sleep;
And none of the mighty men have
found the use of their hands.

75:title [a]Hebrew *Al Tashcheth* **76:title** [a]Hebrew *neginoth* **76:2** [a]That is, Jerusalem

6 At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob,
Both the chariot and horse were cast
into a dead sleep.

7 You, Yourself, *are* to be feared;
And who may stand in Your presence
When once You are angry?
8 You caused judgment to be heard from
heaven;
The earth feared and was still,
9 When God arose to judgment,
To deliver all the oppressed of the
earth. *Selah*

10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise
You;
With the remainder of wrath You shall
gird Yourself.

11 Make vows to the LORD your God, and
pay *them;*
Let all who are around Him bring
presents to Him who ought to be
feared.
12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes;
He is awesome to the kings of the
earth.

PSALM 77

THE CONSOLING MEMORY OF GOD'S REDEMPTIVE WORKS

To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

I cried out to God with my voice—
To God with my voice;
And He gave ear to me.
2 In the day of my trouble I sought the
Lord;
My hand was stretched out in the
night without ceasing;
My soul refused to be comforted.
3 I remembered God, and was
troubled;
I complained, and my spirit was
overwhelmed. *Selah*

4 You hold my eyelids *open;*
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
5 I have considered the days of old,
The years of ancient times.
6 I call to remembrance my song in the
night;
I meditate within my heart,
And my spirit makes diligent search.
7 Will the Lord cast off forever?
And will He be favorable no more?
8 Has His mercy ceased forever?
Has *His* promise failed forevermore?
9 Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has He in anger shut up His tender
mercies? *Selah*

10 And I said, "This *is* my anguish;
But I will remember the years of the
right hand of the Most High."

Psalm 77:10

The phrase "right hand" is a way of describing God's strength. Specifically, the phrase is used to describe God's highly visible actions, such as the miracles He performed around the time of the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt.

11 I will remember the works of the
LORD;
Surely I will remember Your wonders
of old.
12 I will also meditate on all Your work,
And talk of Your deeds.
13 Your way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary;
Who *is* so great a God as *our* God?
14 You *are* the God who does wonders;
You have declared Your strength
among the peoples.
15 You have with *Your* arm redeemed
Your people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph. *Selah*

16 The waters saw You, O God;
The waters saw You, they were
afraid;
The depths also trembled.
17 The clouds poured out water;
The skies sent out a sound;
Your arrows also flashed about.
18 The voice of Your thunder *was* in the
whirlwind;
The lightnings lit up the world;
The earth trembled and shook.
19 Your way *was* in the sea,
Your path in the great waters,
And Your footsteps were not
known.
20 You led Your people like a flock
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

PSALM 78

GOD'S KINDNESS TO REBELLIOUS ISRAEL

A Contemplation[a] of Asaph.

Give ear, O my people, *to* my law;
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
2 I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings of old,
3 Which we have heard and known,
And our fathers have told us.
4 We will not hide *them* from their children,
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.

5 For He established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which He commanded our fathers,
That they should make them known to their children;
6 That the generation to come might know *them,*
The children *who* would be born,
That they may arise and declare *them* to their children,
7 That they may set their hope in God,
And not forget the works of God,
But keep His commandments;
8 And may not be like their fathers,
A stubborn and rebellious generation,
A generation *that* did not set its heart aright,
And whose spirit was not faithful to God.

9 The children of Ephraim, *being* armed *and* carrying bows,
Turned back in the day of battle.
10 They did not keep the covenant of God;
They refused to walk in His law,
11 And forgot His works
And His wonders that He had shown them.

12 Marvelous things He did in the sight of their fathers,
In the land of Egypt, *in* the field of Zoan.
13 He divided the sea and caused them to pass through;
And He made the waters stand up like a heap.
14 In the daytime also He led them with the cloud,
And all the night with a light of fire.
15 He split the rocks in the wilderness,
And gave *them* drink in abundance like the depths.
16 He also brought streams out of the rock,
And caused waters to run down like rivers.

17 But they sinned even more against Him
By rebelling against the Most High in the wilderness.
18 And they tested God in their heart
By asking for the food of their fancy.
19 Yes, they spoke against God:
They said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?
20 Behold, He struck the rock,
So that the waters gushed out,
And the streams overflowed.
Can He give bread also?
Can He provide meat for His people?"

21 Therefore the LORD heard *this* and was furious;
So a fire was kindled against Jacob,
And anger also came up against Israel,
22 Because they did not believe in God,
And did not trust in His salvation.
23 Yet He had commanded the clouds above,
And opened the doors of heaven,
24 Had rained down manna on them to eat,
And given them of the bread of heaven.
25 Men ate angels' food;
He sent them food to the full.

26 He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens;
And by His power He brought in the south wind.
27 He also rained meat on them like the dust,
Feathered fowl like the sand of the seas;

78:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

28 And He let *them* fall in the midst of their camp,
All around their dwellings.
29 So they ate and were well filled,
For He gave them their own desire.
30 They were not deprived of their craving;
But while their food *was* still in their mouths,
31 The wrath of God came against them,
And slew the stoutest of them,
And struck down the choice *men* of Israel.

32 In spite of this they still sinned,
And did not believe in His wondrous works.
33 Therefore their days He consumed in futility,
And their years in fear.

34 When He slew them, then they sought Him;
And they returned and sought earnestly for God.
35 Then they remembered that God *was* their rock,
And the Most High God their Redeemer.
36 Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouth,
And they lied to Him with their tongue;
37 For their heart was not steadfast with Him,
Nor were they faithful in His covenant.
38 But He, *being* full of compassion,
forgave *their* iniquity,
And did not destroy *them.*
Yes, many a time He turned His anger away,
And did not stir up all His wrath;
39 For He remembered that they *were but* flesh,
A breath that passes away and does not come again.

40 How often they provoked Him in the wilderness,
And grieved Him in the desert!
41 Yes, again and again they tempted God,
And limited the Holy One of Israel.
42 They did not remember His power:
The day when He redeemed them from the enemy,
43 When He worked His signs in Egypt,
And His wonders in the field of Zoan;
44 Turned their rivers into blood,
And their streams, that they could not drink.
45 He sent swarms of flies among them, which devoured them,
And frogs, which destroyed them.
46 He also gave their crops to the caterpillar,
And their labor to the locust.
47 He destroyed their vines with hail,
And their sycamore trees with frost.
48 He also gave up their cattle to the hail,
And their flocks to fiery lightning.
49 He cast on them the fierceness of His anger,
Wrath, indignation, and trouble,
By sending angels of destruction *among them.*
50 He made a path for His anger;
He did not spare their soul from death,
But gave their life over to the plague,
51 And destroyed all the firstborn in Egypt,
The first of *their* strength in the tents of Ham.
52 But He made His own people go forth like sheep,
And guided them in the wilderness like a flock;
53 And He led them on safely, so that they did not fear;
But the sea overwhelmed their enemies.
54 And He brought them to His holy border,
This mountain *which* His right hand had acquired.
55 He also drove out the nations before them,
Allotted them an inheritance by survey,
And made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents.

56 Yet they tested and provoked the Most High God,
And did not keep His testimonies,
57 But turned back and acted unfaithfully like their fathers;
They were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

58 For they provoked Him to anger with
their high places,
And moved Him to jealousy with their
carved images.
59 When God heard *this,* He was furious,
And greatly abhorred Israel,
60 So that He forsook the tabernacle of
Shiloh,
The tent He had placed among men,

Psalm 78:60
Joshua set up the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant in Shiloh, a city in Ephraim's territory. The city served as Israel's center of worship for many years.

61 And delivered His strength into
captivity,
And His glory into the enemy's hand.
62 He also gave His people over to the
sword,
And was furious with His inheritance.
63 The fire consumed their young men,
And their maidens were not given in
marriage.
64 Their priests fell by the sword,
And their widows made no
lamentation.

65 Then the Lord awoke as *from* sleep,
Like a mighty man who shouts
because of wine.
66 And He beat back His enemies;
He put them to a perpetual reproach.

67 Moreover He rejected the tent of
Joseph,
And did not choose the tribe of
Ephraim,
68 But chose the tribe of Judah,
Mount Zion which He loved.
69 And He built His sanctuary like the
heights,
Like the earth which He has
established forever.

INTEGRITY
Is it important for leaders to have integrity?
Psalm 78:70–72

70 He also chose David His servant,
And took him from the sheepfolds;
71 From following the ewes that had
young He brought him,
To shepherd Jacob His people,
And Israel His inheritance.
72 So he shepherded them according to
the integrity of his heart,
And guided them by the skillfulness of
his hands.

Psalm 79:1
The events described in this verse took place in 597 B.C., when King Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army conquered Jerusalem. Thousands of Israelites were captured and taken to Babylon as prisoners. Others were simply killed, their bodies left to rot.

PSALM 79

A DIRGE AND A PRAYER FOR ISRAEL, DESTROYED BY ENEMIES

A Psalm of Asaph.

O God, the nations have come into
Your inheritance;
Your holy temple they have
defiled;
They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.
2 The dead bodies of Your servants
They have given *as* food for the birds of
the heavens,
The flesh of Your saints to the beasts of
the earth.
3 Their blood they have shed like water
all around Jerusalem,
And *there was* no one to bury *them.*
4 We have become a reproach to our
neighbors,
A scorn and derision to those who are
around us.

5 How long, LORD?
Will You be angry forever?
Will Your jealousy burn like fire?
6 Pour out Your wrath on the nations
that do not know You,
And on the kingdoms that do not call
on Your name.
7 For they have devoured Jacob,
And laid waste his dwelling place.

8 Oh, do not remember former iniquities
against us!
Let Your tender mercies come speedily
to meet us,
For we have been brought very low.
9 Help us, O God of our salvation,
For the glory of Your name;
And deliver us, and provide atonement
for our sins,
For Your name's sake!
10 Why should the nations say,
"Where *is* their God?"
Let there be known among the nations
in our sight
The avenging of the blood of Your
servants *which has been* shed.

11 Let the groaning of the prisoner come
before You;
According to the greatness of Your
power
Preserve those who are appointed to
die;
12 And return to our neighbors sevenfold
into their bosom
Their reproach with which they have
reproached You, O Lord.

13 So we, Your people and sheep of Your
pasture,
Will give You thanks forever;
We will show forth Your praise to all
generations.

PSALM 80

PRAYER FOR ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies."[a]
A Testimony[b] of Asaph. A Psalm.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
You who lead Joseph like a flock;
You who dwell *between* the
cherubim, shine forth!
2 Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and
Manasseh,
Stir up Your strength,
And come *and* save us!

3 Restore us, O God;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

4 O LORD God of hosts,
How long will You be angry
Against the prayer of Your people?
5 You have fed them with the bread of
tears,
And given them tears to drink in great
measure.
6 You have made us a strife to our
neighbors,
And our enemies laugh among
themselves.

7 Restore us, O God of hosts;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

8 You have brought a vine out of Egypt;
You have cast out the nations, and
planted it.
9 You prepared *room* for it,
And caused it to take deep root,
And it filled the land.
10 The hills were covered with its shadow,
And the mighty cedars with its
boughs.
11 She sent out her boughs to the Sea,[a]
And her branches to the River.[b]

12 Why have You broken down her
hedges,
So that all who pass by the way pluck
her *fruit?*
13 The boar out of the woods uproots it,
And the wild beast of the field
devours it.

14 Return, we beseech You, O God of
hosts;
Look down from heaven and see,
And visit this vine
15 And the vineyard which Your right
hand has planted,
And the branch *that* You made strong
for Yourself.
16 *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down;
They perish at the rebuke of Your
countenance.
17 Let Your hand be upon the man of
Your right hand,
Upon the son of man *whom* You made
strong for Yourself.
18 Then we will not turn back from You;
Revive us, and we will call upon Your
name.

80:title [a]Hebrew *Shoshannim* [b]Hebrew *Eduth*
80:11 [a]That is, the Mediterranean [b]That is, the Euphrates

19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

PSALM 81

AN APPEAL FOR ISRAEL'S REPENTANCE

To the Chief Musician. On an instrument of Gath.[a]
A Psalm of Asaph.

Sing aloud to God our strength;
Make a joyful shout to the God of Jacob.
2 Raise a song and strike the timbrel,
The pleasant harp with the lute.

3 Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon,
At the full moon, on our solemn feast day.
4 For this *is* a statute for Israel,
A law of the God of Jacob.
5 This He established in Joseph *as* a testimony,
When He went throughout the land of Egypt,
Where I heard a language I did not understand.

MUSIC
Are music and singing good ways to praise God?
Psalm 81:1–5

6 "I removed his shoulder from the burden;
His hands were freed from the baskets.

Psalm 81:6
The "burden" was the suffering the Israelites endured while they were slaves in Egypt. The "baskets" were the containers workers carried while making bricks for the Egyptians. Brick workers were often forced to carry wooden beams with a basket hanging from each end to hold materials or finished bricks.

7 You called in trouble, and I delivered you;
I answered you in the secret place of thunder;
I tested you at the waters of Meribah.
Selah

8 "Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you!
O Israel, if you will listen to Me!
9 There shall be no foreign god among you;
Nor shall you worship any foreign god.
10 I *am* the LORD your God,
Who brought you out of the land of Egypt;
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

11 "But My people would not heed My voice,
And Israel would *have* none of Me.
12 So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart,
To walk in their own counsels.

13 "Oh, that My people would listen to Me,
That Israel would walk in My ways!
14 I would soon subdue their enemies,
And turn My hand against their adversaries.
15 The haters of the LORD would pretend submission to Him,
But their fate would endure forever.
16 He would have fed them also with the finest of wheat;
And with honey from the rock I would have satisfied you."

PSALM 82

A PLEA FOR JUSTICE

A Psalm of Asaph.

God stands in the congregation of the mighty;
He judges among the gods.[a]
2 How long will you judge unjustly,
And show partiality to the wicked?
Selah
3 Defend the poor and fatherless;
Do justice to the afflicted and needy.
4 Deliver the poor and needy;
Free *them* from the hand of the wicked.

81:title [a]Hebrew *Al Gittith* **82:1** [a]Hebrew *elohim, mighty ones;* that is, the judges

5 They do not know, nor do they
understand;
They walk about in darkness;
All the foundations of the earth are
unstable.

6 I said, "You *are* gods,[a]
And all of you *are* children of the Most
High.
7 But you shall die like men,
And fall like one of the princes."

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth;
For You shall inherit all nations.

PSALM 83

PRAYER TO FRUSTRATE CONSPIRACY AGAINST ISRAEL

A Song. A Psalm of Asaph.

Do not keep silent, O God!
Do not hold Your peace,
And do not be still, O God!
2 For behold, Your enemies make a
tumult;
And those who hate You have lifted up
their head.

PROTECTION
Who should protect the helpless?
Psalm 82:3, 4

3 They have taken crafty counsel against
Your people,
And consulted together against Your
sheltered ones.
4 They have said, "Come, and let us cut
them off from *being* a nation,
That the name of Israel may be
remembered no more."

5 For they have consulted together with
one consent;
They form a confederacy against You:
6 The tents of Edom and the
Ishmaelites;
Moab and the Hagrites;
7 Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek;
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;
8 Assyria also has joined with them;
They have helped the children of Lot.
Selah

9 Deal with them as *with* Midian,
As *with* Sisera,
As *with* Jabin at the Brook Kishon,
10 Who perished at En Dor,
Who became *as* refuse on the earth.
11 Make their nobles like Oreb and like
Zeeb,
Yes, all their princes like Zebah and
Zalmunna,
12 Who said, "Let us take for ourselves
The pastures of God for a possession."

13 O my God, make them like the
whirling dust,
Like the chaff before the wind!
14 As the fire burns the woods,
And as the flame sets the mountains
on fire,
15 So pursue them with Your tempest,
And frighten them with Your storm.
16 Fill their faces with shame,
That they may seek Your name,
O LORD.
17 Let them be confounded and
dismayed forever;
Yes, let them be put to shame and
perish,
18 That they may know that You, whose
name alone *is* the LORD,
Are the Most High over all the earth.

PSALM 84

THE BLESSEDNESS OF DWELLING IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

To the Chief Musician. On an instrument of Gath.[a]
A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

How lovely *is* Your tabernacle,
O LORD of hosts!
2 My soul longs, yes, even faints
For the courts of the LORD;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the
living God.

3 Even the sparrow has found a home,
And the swallow a nest for herself,
Where she may lay her young—
Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts,
My King and my God.
4 Blessed *are* those who dwell in Your
house;
They will still be praising You. *Selah*

82:6 [a]Hebrew *elohim, mighty ones;* that is, the judges **84:title** [a]Hebrew *Al Gittith*

Psalm 83:9–11

These enemies had one thing in common: they had been defeated by the Israelites in an unlikely manner. The Midianites fought the Israelites with an enormous army, yet they were defeated by Gideon and his tiny band of soldiers. The army of Jabin, under the command of Sisera, lost to an Israelite army led by a woman, Deborah. Sisera escaped, but was later killed by another woman, Jael, who hammered a tent peg into his head while he slept.

5 Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in You,
Whose heart *is* set on pilgrimage.
6 *As they* pass through the Valley of Baca,
They make it a spring;
The rain also covers it with pools.
7 They go from strength to strength;
Each one appears before God in Zion.[a]

8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;
Give ear, O God of Jacob! *Selah*
9 O God, behold our shield,
And look upon the face of Your anointed.

10 For a day in Your courts *is* better than a thousand.
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11 For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield;
The LORD will give grace and glory;
No good *thing* will He withhold
From those who walk uprightly.

12 O LORD of hosts,
Blessed *is* the man who trusts in You!

PSALM 85

PRAYER THAT THE LORD WILL RESTORE FAVOR TO THE LAND

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

LORD, You have been favorable to Your land;
You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.
2 You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people;
You have covered all their sin. *Selah*
3 You have taken away all Your wrath;
You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.

4 Restore us, O God of our salvation,
And cause Your anger toward us to cease.
5 Will You be angry with us forever?
Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?
6 Will You not revive us again,
That Your people may rejoice in You?
7 Show us Your mercy, LORD,
And grant us Your salvation.

8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak,
For He will speak peace
To His people and to His saints;
But let them not turn back to folly.
9 Surely His salvation *is* near to those who fear Him,
That glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth have met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed.
11 Truth shall spring out of the earth,
And righteousness shall look down from heaven.
12 Yes, the LORD will give *what is* good;
And our land will yield its increase.
13 Righteousness will go before Him,
And shall make His footsteps *our* pathway.

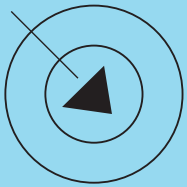
PSALM 86

PRAYER FOR MERCY, WITH MEDITATION ON THE EXCELLENCIES OF THE LORD

A Prayer of David.

Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me;
For I *am* poor and needy.
2 Preserve my life, for I *am* holy;
You are my God;
Save Your servant who trusts in You!
3 Be merciful to me, O Lord,
For I cry to You all day long.

84:7 [a] Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *The God of gods shall be seen.*



PROMISE

God promises peace to His faithful people.

I will hear what God the LORD will speak, for He will speak peace to His people and to His saints; but let them not turn back to folly (Ps. 85:8).

Faithfulness, the way God defines it, is not a stuck-like-glue observance of a bunch of rules you learn in Sunday school. What's going on inside you is more important to God than what you do. So the faithful person obeys, not because he has incredible willpower but because his heart is turned toward God all the time. When a faithful person fails, he or she is quick to admit it, talk to Jesus about it, and accept His forgiveness. The faithful person is humble and realizes real, meaningful life cannot be lived without God.

God promises to give peace to His people, but having peace doesn't mean everything that happens in your life will be wonderful and you won't ever be sad or get upset. The peace God gives is a way-down-in-your-gut confidence that everything that happens to you, good or bad, is something God will use to bring you closer to Him and make you more like Him. As your friendship with Jesus grows, this peace will take root in your heart. He promises it will!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Micah 5:4, 5; John 14:27

[4]Rejoice the soul of Your servant,
For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
[5]For You, Lord, *are* good, and ready to forgive,
And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

[6]Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;
And attend to the voice of my supplications.
[7]In the day of my trouble I will call upon You,
For You will answer me.

FORGIVENESS

Does God always forgive us when we ask for forgiveness?

Psalm 86:5–7

[8]Among the gods *there is* none like You, O Lord;
Nor *are there any works* like Your works.
[9]All nations whom You have made
Shall come and worship before You, O Lord,
And shall glorify Your name.
[10]For You *are* great, and do wondrous things;
You alone *are* God.

[11]Teach me Your way, O LORD;
I will walk in Your truth;
Unite my heart to fear Your name.
[12]I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
And I will glorify Your name forevermore.
[13]For great *is* Your mercy toward me,
And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

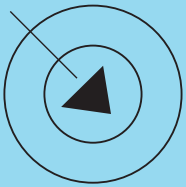
HELL

Who saves us from hell?

Psalm 86:13

[14]O God, the proud have risen against me,
And a mob of violent *men* have sought my life,
And have not set You before them.
[15]But You, O Lord, *are* a God full of compassion, and gracious,
Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

[16]Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me!
Give Your strength to Your servant,
And save the son of Your maidservant.



PROMISE

God promises to readily forgive you.

For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You (Ps. 86:5).

In Luke 15, we read the story Jesus told about a young guy who wanted to leave home in order to have the freedom to live life his own way. So he asked his dad for the money he was supposed to inherit later and ran off to do his own thing. This guy didn't live a very good life out on his own; he went wild and did all kinds of unwise things with his money. Soon he was completely broke and had to find a job. He didn't know how to do much, so he had to take the worst job he could think of—feeding pigs. It paid practically nothing and he didn't even have enough food to eat. He was so hungry he actually envied the pigs' mealtime garbage. Finally, he got tired of living that way and decided to go home. He didn't expect things to be exactly as they were before he left, but he thought his dad might give him a job as a servant. His dad surprised him. He saw his son coming and ran down the road to meet him. His father was so excited to see him that he threw a big party.

Jesus told this story to give you a picture of just how ready God is to forgive you. He's like that dad, standing on the porch, looking down the road for you—running toward you when He sees you coming. He doesn't forgive you because He has to. He forgives you because, like that dad, He loves you; and what He wants more than anything else is to have you home with Him.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 145:8; Luke 15:11–32; 1 John 1:9

17 Show me a sign for good,
That those who hate me may see *it* and be ashamed,
Because You, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

PSALM 87

THE GLORIES OF THE CITY OF GOD

A Psalm of the sons of Korah. A Song.

His foundation *is* in the holy mountains.
2 The LORD loves the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
3 Glorious things are spoken of you,
O city of God! *Selah*

4 "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me;
Behold, O Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia:
'This *one* was born there.'"

5 And of Zion it will be said,
"This *one* and that *one* were born in her;
And the Most High Himself shall establish her."
6 The LORD will record,
When He registers the peoples:
"This *one* was born there." *Selah*

7 Both the singers and the players on instruments *say,*
"All my springs *are* in you."

PSALM 88

A PRAYER FOR HELP IN DESPONDENCY

A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. To the Chief Musician. Set to "Mahalath Leannoth." A Contemplation[a] of Heman the Ezrahite.

O LORD, God of my salvation,
I have cried out day and night before You.
2 Let my prayer come before You;
Incline Your ear to my cry.

3 For my soul is full of troubles,
And my life draws near to the grave.

88:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

4 I am counted with those who go down
to the pit;
I am like a man *who has* no
strength,
5 Adrift among the dead,
Like the slain who lie in the grave,
Whom You remember no more,
And who are cut off from Your hand.

6 You have laid me in the lowest pit,
In darkness, in the depths.
7 Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
And You have afflicted *me* with all
Your waves. *Selah*
8 You have put away my acquaintances
far from me;
You have made me an abomination
to them;
I am shut up, and I cannot get out;
9 My eye wastes away because of
affliction.

LORD, I have called daily upon You;
I have stretched out my hands to
You.
10 Will You work wonders for the
dead?
Shall the dead arise *and* praise You?
Selah
11 Shall Your lovingkindness be declared
in the grave?
Or Your faithfulness in the place of
destruction?
12 Shall Your wonders be known in the
dark?
And Your righteousness in the land of
forgetfulness?

13 But to You I have cried out, O LORD,
And in the morning my prayer comes
before You.
14 LORD, why do You cast off my soul?
Why do You hide Your face from me?
15 I *have been* afflicted and ready to die
from *my* youth;
I suffer Your terrors;
I am distraught.
16 Your fierce wrath has gone over me;
Your terrors have cut me off.
17 They came around me all day long like
water;
They engulfed me altogether.
18 Loved one and friend You have put far
from me,
And my acquaintances into darkness.

PSALM 89

REMEMBERING THE COVENANT WITH DAVID, AND SORROW FOR LOST BLESSINGS

A Contemplation[a] of Ethan the Ezrahite.

I will sing of the mercies of the LORD
forever;
With my mouth will I make known
Your faithfulness to all
generations.
2 For I have said, "Mercy shall be built
up forever;
Your faithfulness You shall establish in
the very heavens."

3 "I have made a covenant with My
chosen,
I have sworn to My servant David:
4 'Your seed I will establish forever,
And build up your throne to all
generations.'" *Selah*

5 And the heavens will praise Your
wonders, O LORD;
Your faithfulness also in the assembly
of the saints.
6 For who in the heavens can be
compared to the LORD?
Who among the sons of the mighty can
be likened to the LORD?
7 God is greatly to be feared in the
assembly of the saints,
And to be held in reverence by all *those*
around Him.
8 O LORD God of hosts,
Who *is* mighty like You, O LORD?
Your faithfulness also surrounds You.
9 You rule the raging of the sea;
When its waves rise, You still them.
10 You have broken Rahab in pieces, as
one who is slain;
You have scattered Your enemies with
Your mighty arm.

11 The heavens *are* Yours, the earth also
is Yours;
The world and all its fullness, You have
founded them.
12 The north and the south, You have
created them;
Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Your
name.

89:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

13 You have a mighty arm;
Strong is Your hand, *and* high is Your right hand.
14 Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of Your throne;
Mercy and truth go before Your face.
15 Blessed *are* the people who know the joyful sound!
They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance.
16 In Your name they rejoice all day long,
And in Your righteousness they are exalted.
17 For You *are* the glory of their strength,
And in Your favor our horn is exalted.
18 For our shield *belongs* to the LORD,
And our king to the Holy One of Israel.

19 Then You spoke in a vision to Your holy one,[a]
And said: "I have given help to *one who is* mighty;
I have exalted one chosen from the people.
20 I have found My servant David;
With My holy oil I have anointed him,
21 With whom My hand shall be established;
Also My arm shall strengthen him.
22 The enemy shall not outwit him,
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
23 I will beat down his foes before his face,
And plague those who hate him.

24 "But My faithfulness and My mercy *shall be* with him,
And in My name his horn shall be exalted.
25 Also I will set his hand over the sea,
And his right hand over the rivers.
26 He shall cry to Me, 'You *are* my Father,
My God, and the rock of my salvation.'
27 Also I will make him *My* firstborn,
The highest of the kings of the earth.
28 My mercy I will keep for him forever,
And My covenant shall stand firm with him.
29 His seed also I will make *to endure* forever,
And his throne as the days of heaven.

30 "If his sons forsake My law
And do not walk in My judgments,
31 If they break My statutes
And do not keep My commandments,
32 Then I will punish their transgression with the rod,
And their iniquity with stripes.
33 Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him,
Nor allow My faithfulness to fail.
34 My covenant I will not break,
Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.
35 Once I have sworn by My holiness;
I will not lie to David:
36 His seed shall endure forever,
And his throne as the sun before Me;
37 It shall be established forever like the moon,
Even *like* the faithful witness in the sky." *Selah*

38 But You have cast off and abhorred,
You have been furious with Your anointed.
39 You have renounced the covenant of Your servant;
You have profaned his crown *by casting it* to the ground.
40 You have broken down all his hedges;
You have brought his strongholds to ruin.
41 All who pass by the way plunder him;
He is a reproach to his neighbors.
42 You have exalted the right hand of his adversaries;
You have made all his enemies rejoice.
43 You have also turned back the edge of his sword,
And have not sustained him in the battle.
44 You have made his glory cease,
And cast his throne down to the ground.
45 The days of his youth You have shortened;
You have covered him with shame. *Selah*

46 How long, LORD?
Will You hide Yourself forever?
Will Your wrath burn like fire?
47 Remember how short my time is;
For what futility have You created all the children of men?

89:19 [a] Following many Hebrew manuscripts; Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *holy ones*.

48 What man can live and not see
death?
Can he deliver his life from the power
of the grave? *Selah*

DEATH
Who will face death?
Psalm 89:46–48

49 Lord, where *are* Your former
lovingkindnesses,
Which You swore to David in Your
truth?
50 Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your
servants—
How I bear in my bosom *the reproach*
of all the many peoples,
51 With which Your enemies have
reproached, O LORD,
With which they have reproached the
footsteps of Your anointed.

52 Blessed *be* the LORD forevermore!
Amen and Amen.

Psalm 90:1

This psalm, the only one written by Moses, is probably the oldest one in the entire collection. It was written near the end of the Israelites' forty years of wandering in the wilderness and offers a prayer for the new generation of Israelites who would enter and conquer the land God had promised them.

BOOK FOUR: Psalms 90—106

PSALM 90

THE ETERNITY OF GOD, AND MAN'S FRAILTY

A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place[a]
in all generations.
2 Before the mountains were brought
forth,
Or ever You had formed the earth and
the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting,
You *are* God.
3 You turn man to destruction,
And say, "Return, O children of men."
4 For a thousand years in Your sight
Are like yesterday when it is past,
And *like* a watch in the night.
5 You carry them away *like* a flood;
They are like a sleep.
In the morning they are like grass
which grows up:
6 In the morning it flourishes and
grows up;
In the evening it is cut down and
withers.

7 For we have been consumed by Your
anger,
And by Your wrath we are terrified.
8 You have set our iniquities before You,
Our secret *sins* in the light of Your
countenance.
9 For all our days have passed away in
Your wrath;
We finish our years like a sigh.
10 The days of our lives *are* seventy years;
And if by reason of strength *they are*
eighty years,
Yet their boast *is* only labor and
sorrow;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
11 Who knows the power of Your anger?
For as the fear of You, *so is* Your wrath.
12 So teach *us* to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

13 Return, O LORD!
How long?
And have compassion on Your
servants.
14 Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy,
That we may rejoice and be glad all
our days!
15 Make us glad according to the days *in*
which You have afflicted us,
The years *in which* we have seen evil.
16 Let Your work appear to Your
servants,
And Your glory to their children.
17 And let the beauty of the LORD our
God be upon us,
And establish the work of our hands
for us;
Yes, establish the work of our hands.

90:1 [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *refuge.*



LIFE APP

Eternity / Psalm 90:2

If you want to think about something that will make your brain crash and burn, try thinking about eternity. How can something have no beginning and no end? Our limited minds just cannot conceive of anything outside our own concept of being. Everything we know started somewhere and will one day come to an end. So words like "everlasting" and "forever" are concepts we just don't get.

Although we may never understand the full meaning of eternity while we live in this world, we can find ways to try and grasp at least a little of all it means.

When God created all that is, He set certain physical laws in motion. They govern the building blocks of our world: space, time, energy, and matter. If you think about it, everything in our world is one of those four things. Because He placed us in this world, our existence is ruled by those laws. We experience time, because God set time in motion for His creation. We "see" air, because God created space. We can see and touch things, because God decided to create matter. We know the meaning of energy because we feel the heat of the sun and know the power of fire.

When we think of existence we think within the forms that we know from living in this world. But God lives outside His creation. God's "world" is so different from ours that we could never grasp anything about His existence. He lives outside space and time; He is not affected by energy or matter because He created them. No physical laws govern Him because He is the One who set the laws in motion.

The concept of eternity is one we most likely will never really get until we have left this world behind. Although we are now living in this world that is limited to space, time, matter, and energy, we will one day enter eternity. Until then, we can simply thank God that He is so different from us. Who would want to worship a God who is so small He could be completely understood?

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 90:5, 6

Wasted Time Compared to God, who was never born and will never die, your life is like a blade of grass that grows up at dawn and withers by sunset. Our time on earth is short, so the really important question is how are you going to spend your life? Are you going to waste most of it, hoping to make the last few years count, or will you max out your days to the glory of God?

Don't waste any more time. Lock on to the things that you really love to do and pursue them with all your heart. Get serious about your relationship with God. Before you know it, you'll be standing in His presence, giving an account of what you did on earth. It's time to forgive the people you need to forgive. It's time to plug in to your family. It's time to stop whining and look for the good in your life. Every day you waste is twenty-four hours you will never get back. (See also: Job 14:1, 2; Eccl. 6:12; Is. 40:6–8.)

Words to Live By

In the morning . . . in the evening: We all understand the words "morning" and "evening" but Psalm 90:6 isn't really talking about the portions of a day. It is actually speaking of our lives. If you lived your entire life in one single day—from newborn to elderly in twenty-four hours—as a teenager you would be midway through your morning. By noon half your life would be gone. That's just how fast life feels when you get older and look back over the time you've lived. Don't waste a day of the time you have. Don't look back at midnight and wish you'd have lived differently.

PSALM 91

SAFETY OF ABIDING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
2 I will say of the LORD, *"He is* my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."

FEAR
Why should we never be afraid?
Psalm 91:3–10

3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler[a]
And from the perilous pestilence.
4 He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth *shall be your* shield and buckler.

5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow *that* flies by day,
6 *Nor* of the pestilence *that* walks in darkness,
Nor of the destruction *that* lays waste at noonday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side,
And ten thousand at your right hand;
But it shall not come near you.
8 Only with your eyes shall you look,
And see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because you have made the LORD, *who is* my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place,
10 No evil shall befall you,
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;
11 For He shall give His angels charge over you,
To keep you in all your ways.

91:3 [a] That is, one who catches birds in a trap or snare

12 In *their* hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.

14 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him on high, because he has known My name.
15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I *will be* with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him.
16 With long life I will satisfy him,
And show him My salvation."

PSALM 92

PRAISE TO THE LORD FOR HIS LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS

A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath day.

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;
2 To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning,
And Your faithfulness every night,
3 On an instrument of ten strings,
On the lute,
And on the harp,
With harmonious sound.
4 For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work;
I will triumph in the works of Your hands.

5 O LORD, how great are Your works!
Your thoughts are very deep.
6 A senseless man does not know,
Nor does a fool understand this.
7 When the wicked spring up like grass,
And when all the workers of iniquity flourish,
It is that they may be destroyed forever.

8 But You, LORD, *are* on high forevermore.
9 For behold, Your enemies, O LORD,
For behold, Your enemies shall perish;
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

10 But my horn You have exalted like a wild ox;
I have been anointed with fresh oil.

Psalm 92:10

The wild ox was considered untamable. The animal, which used its horn as a weapon, was a symbol of strength to the Israelites.

11 My eye also has seen *my desire* on my enemies;
My ears hear *my desire* on the wicked
Who rise up against me.

12 The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
13 Those who are planted in the house of the LORD
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They shall still bear fruit in old age;
They shall be fresh and flourishing,
15 To declare that the LORD is upright;
He is my rock, and *there is* no unrighteousness in Him.

PSALM 93

THE ETERNAL REIGN OF THE LORD

The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty;
The LORD is clothed,
He has girded Himself with strength.
Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved.
2 Your throne *is* established from of old;
You *are* from everlasting.

3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD,
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their waves.
4 The LORD on high *is* mightier
Than the noise of many waters,
Than the mighty waves of the sea.

5 Your testimonies are very sure;
Holiness adorns Your house,
O LORD, forever.

PSALM 94

GOD THE REFUGE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongs—
O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth!
2 Rise up, O Judge of the earth;
Render punishment to the proud.
3 LORD, how long will the wicked,
How long will the wicked triumph?

4 They utter speech, *and* speak insolent things;
All the workers of iniquity boast in themselves.
5 They break in pieces Your people, O LORD,
And afflict Your heritage.
6 They slay the widow and the stranger,
And murder the fatherless.
7 Yet they say, "The LORD does not see,
Nor does the God of Jacob understand."

8 Understand, you senseless among the people;
And *you* fools, when will you be wise?
9 He who planted the ear, shall He not hear?
He who formed the eye, shall He not see?
10 He who instructs the nations, shall He not correct,
He who teaches man knowledge?
11 The LORD knows the thoughts of man,
That they *are* futile.

12 Blessed *is* the man whom You instruct, O LORD,
And teach out of Your law,
13 That You may give him rest from the days of adversity,
Until the pit is dug for the wicked.
14 For the LORD will not cast off His people,
Nor will He forsake His inheritance.
15 But judgment will return to righteousness,
And all the upright in heart will follow it.
16 Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?
Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?
17 Unless the LORD *had been* my help,
My soul would soon have settled in silence.
18 If I say, "My foot slips,"
Your mercy, O LORD, will hold me up.
19 In the multitude of my anxieties within me,
Your comforts delight my soul.

20 Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law,
Have fellowship with You?
21 They gather together against the life of the righteous,
And condemn innocent blood.
22 But the LORD has been my defense,
And my God the rock of my refuge.
23 He has brought on them their own iniquity,
And shall cut them off in their own wickedness;
The LORD our God shall cut them off.

PSALM 95

A CALL TO WORSHIP AND OBEDIENCE

O h come, let us sing to the LORD!
Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.
2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving;
Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.
3 For the LORD *is* the great God,
And the great King above all gods.
4 In His hand *are* the deep places of the earth;
The heights of the hills *are* His also.
5 The sea *is* His, for He made it;
And His hands formed the dry *land.*

6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.
7 For He *is* our God,
And we *are* the people of His pasture,
And the sheep of His hand.

Today, if you will hear His voice:
8"Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion,[a]
As *in* the day of trial[b] in the wilderness,
9When your fathers tested Me;
They tried Me, though they saw My work.
10For forty years I was grieved with *that* generation,
And said, 'It *is* a people who go astray in their hearts,
And they do not know My ways.'
11So I swore in My wrath,
'They shall not enter My rest.'"

PSALM 96

A SONG OF PRAISE TO GOD COMING IN JUDGMENT

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
2Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.
3Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.

4For the LORD *is* great and greatly to be praised;
He *is* to be feared above all gods.
5For all the gods of the peoples *are* idols,
But the LORD made the heavens.
6Honor and majesty *are* before Him;
Strength and beauty *are* in His sanctuary.

7Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
Give to the LORD glory and strength.
8Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name;
Bring an offering, and come into His courts.
9Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!
Tremble before Him, all the earth.

10Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns;
The world also is firmly established,
It shall not be moved;
He shall judge the peoples righteously."
11Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
12Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* in it.
Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the LORD.
13For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth.
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with His truth.

PSALM 97

A SONG OF PRAISE TO THE SOVEREIGN LORD

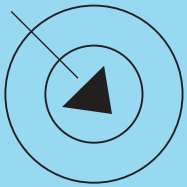
The LORD reigns;
Let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad!

2Clouds and darkness surround Him;
Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of His throne.
3A fire goes before Him,
And burns up His enemies round about.
4His lightnings light the world;
The earth sees and trembles.
5The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
6The heavens declare His righteousness,
And all the peoples see His glory.

7Let all be put to shame who serve carved images,
Who boast of idols.
Worship Him, all *you* gods.
8Zion hears and is glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoice
Because of Your judgments, O LORD.
9For You, LORD, *are* most high above all the earth;
You are exalted far above all gods.

10You who love the LORD, hate evil!
He preserves the souls of His saints;
He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.
11Light is sown for the righteous,
And gladness for the upright in heart.

95:8 [a]Or *Meribah* [b]Or *Massah*



PROMISE

God promises to be a fair and equal judge.

For He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity (Ps. 98:9).

How many times have you complained to someone, "Hey, that's not fair!" You might make that claim when someone who didn't study for a test gets a better grade than you after you studied for hours; or when your friend's curfew is later than yours; or any time you have to suffer consequences for someone else's poor choices.

Life can seem totally unfair, especially when you look at the world around you—murderers who don't go to jail because of legal technicalities, innocent little kids who are hurt by people they trust, people killed by drunk drivers. Some of the horrible things that can happen in life can make you question whether God cares about justice.

There is no doubt that God cares about justice, but we have to realize that God is the only one who can really decide what justice looks like. He's the only one who is good enough and wise enough to make that call. And God isn't limited to seeing only today, as we are. He sees from the beginning of time to the end of time in one glance. He knows what's in store for people who choose to hurt others and for the innocent people who suffer because of them. God never plays favorites. He loves everyone equally and gives everyone the right to make their own choices. When those choices cause sinful behaviors, God will hold the people who chose sin accountable. The only thing that will prevent those people from getting exactly what they deserve will be the mercy and forgiveness that Jesus gives. That mercy will only be available to those who have trusted in Him.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 7:9; 119:137; Isaiah 30:18; Zephaniah 3:5; 1 John 1:9

12 Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous,
And give thanks at the remembrance
of His holy name.[a]

PSALM 98

A SONG OF PRAISE TO THE LORD FOR HIS SALVATION AND JUDGMENT

A Psalm.

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
For He has done marvelous
things;
His right hand and His holy arm
have gained Him the victory.
2 The LORD has made known His
salvation;
His righteousness He has revealed in
the sight of the nations.
3 He has remembered His mercy and
His faithfulness to the house of
Israel;
All the ends of the earth have seen the
salvation of our God.

4 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the
earth;
Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing
praises.
5 Sing to the LORD with the harp,
With the harp and the sound of a
psalm,
6 With trumpets and the sound of a
horn;
Shout joyfully before the LORD, the
King.
7 Let the sea roar, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell in it;
8 Let the rivers clap *their* hands;
Let the hills be joyful together before
the LORD,
9 For He is coming to judge the earth.

97:12 [a] Or *His holiness*

Psalm 98:6

The horns used by musicians in ancient Israel were made of animal horns. After removing the horn from an animal such as a wild ox or ram, the musician would cut off the end of it, and blow through it. These horns, which were also known as shofars, were used by priests and Levites for religious events. They were also sounded to announce an attack during wartime.

With righteousness He shall judge the world,
And the peoples with equity.

PSALM 99

PRAISE TO THE LORD FOR HIS HOLINESS

The LORD reigns;
Let the peoples tremble!
He dwells *between* the cherubim;
Let the earth be moved!
2 The LORD *is* great in Zion,
And He *is* high above all the peoples.
3 Let them praise Your great and awesome name—
He *is* holy.

4 The King's strength also loves justice;
You have established equity;
You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.
5 Exalt the LORD our God,
And worship at His footstool—
He *is* holy.

6 Moses and Aaron were among His priests,
And Samuel was among those who called upon His name;
They called upon the LORD, and He answered them.
7 He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar;
They kept His testimonies and the ordinance He gave them.

8 You answered them, O LORD our God;
You were to them God-Who-Forgives,
Though You took vengeance on their deeds.

9 Exalt the LORD our God,
And worship at His holy hill;
For the LORD our God *is* holy.

PSALM 100

A SONG OF PRAISE FOR THE LORD'S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PEOPLE

A Psalm of Thanksgiving.

Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands!
2 Serve the LORD with gladness;
Come before His presence with singing.
3 Know that the LORD, He *is* God;
It is He *who* has made us, and not we ourselves;[a]
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
And into His courts with praise.
Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name.
5 For the LORD *is* good;
His mercy *is* everlasting,
And His truth *endures* to all generations.

PSALM 101

PROMISED FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD

A Psalm of David.

I will sing of mercy and justice;
To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.

2 I will behave wisely in a perfect way.
Oh, when will You come to me?
I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes;
I hate the work of those who fall away;
It shall not cling to me.
4 A perverse heart shall depart from me;
I will not know wickedness.

100:3 [a] Following Kethib, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Qere, many Hebrew manuscripts, and Targum read *we are His.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 100:5

Goodness Goodness is not something God does; it is something God is. Goodness is a part of God's very nature and He will never change. Think about it this way. If you were born Hispanic, that's what you are. No matter what you do, you will always be Hispanic. In much the same way, God will always be good. Because He is eternally good, everything that comes from Him is also good. His will is goodness. He shows us goodness, and He expects it from us.

When Jesus came to earth He said He wanted to show the world what God is like. Because Jesus is God, when we look at Him and read about Him in the Bible, we are learning about the nature of God.

As we walk with God, we should begin to act more and more like Jesus. Do your actions show people about God's goodness? There's nothing geeky about being good. In fact, it takes a really strong and disciplined person to be good. Do you give goodness freely? If you do, keep it up. If you don't, it's never too late to start. What's the worst that could happen? No matter how others react, at least the world could be better for a moment because you made the choice to show goodness. Give it a shot. What have you got to lose? (See also: Ezra 3:11; Ps. 34:8; 145:9; Jer. 33:11.)

Words to Live By

Everlasting: The word translated in Psalm 100:5 as "everlasting" is the Hebrew word *olam* (o-lawm'). It means "eternal," but it also implies something that is unchanging—forever the same. We live in a world where the only thing we can ever really be sure of is change. How wonderful to know that God never changes.

PURITY
How can we live pure lives?
Psalm 101:2–4

5 Whoever secretly slanders his
neighbor,
Him I will destroy;
The one who has a haughty look and a
proud heart,
Him I will not endure.

6 My eyes *shall be* on the faithful of the
land,
That they may dwell with me;
He who walks in a perfect way,
He shall serve me.
7 He who works deceit shall not dwell
within my house;
He who tells lies shall not continue in
my presence.
8 Early I will destroy all the wicked of
the land,
That I may cut off all the evildoers
from the city of the LORD.

PSALM 102

THE LORD'S ETERNAL LOVE

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the LORD.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
And let my cry come to You.
2 Do not hide Your face from me in
the day of my trouble;
Incline Your ear to me;
In the day that I call, answer me
speedily.

3 For my days are consumed like smoke,
And my bones are burned like a
hearth.
4 My heart is stricken and withered like
grass,
So that I forget to eat my bread.
5 Because of the sound of my groaning
My bones cling to my skin.

6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness;
I am like an owl of the desert.
7 I lie awake,
And am like a sparrow alone on the housetop.

8 My enemies reproach me all day long;
Those who deride me swear an oath against me.
9 For I have eaten ashes like bread,
And mingled my drink with weeping,
10 Because of Your indignation and Your wrath;
For You have lifted me up and cast me away.
11 My days *are* like a shadow that lengthens,
And I wither away like grass.

12 But You, O LORD, shall endure forever,
And the remembrance of Your name to all generations.

Psalm 102:13, 14

The Babylonians weren't content with attacking Jerusalem once. In 586 B.C., they returned to finish the job. Led by Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian forces looted and destroyed Solomon's temple. For fifty years the temple lay in ruins, until a group of Jews returned home from captivity to rebuild the structure. The job was finished around 515 B.C. Like the temple, the walls of Jerusalem lay in shambles until Nehemiah led a reconstruction project in 445 B.C.

13 You will arise *and* have mercy on Zion;
For the time to favor her,
Yes, the set time, has come.
14 For Your servants take pleasure in her stones,
And show favor to her dust.
15 So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD,
And all the kings of the earth Your glory.
16 For the LORD shall build up Zion;
He shall appear in His glory.
17 He shall regard the prayer of the destitute,
And shall not despise their prayer.
18 This will be written for the generation to come,
That a people yet to be created may praise the LORD.
19 For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary;
From heaven the LORD viewed the earth,
20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner,
To release those appointed to death,
21 To declare the name of the LORD in Zion,
And His praise in Jerusalem,
22 When the peoples are gathered together,
And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

23 He weakened my strength in the way;
He shortened my days.
24 I said, "O my God,
Do not take me away in the midst of my days;
Your years *are* throughout all generations.
25 Of old You laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens *are* the work of Your hands.
26 They will perish, but You will endure;
Yes, they will all grow old like a garment;
Like a cloak You will change them,
And they will be changed.
27 But You *are* the same,
And Your years will have no end.
28 The children of Your servants will continue,
And their descendants will be established before You."

PSALM 103

PRAISE FOR THE LORD'S MERCIES

A Psalm of David.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!
2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:
3 Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases,
4 Who redeems your life from destruction,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

5 Who satisfies your mouth with good
things,
So that your youth is renewed like the
eagle's.

6 The LORD executes righteousness
And justice for all who are oppressed.
7 He made known His ways to Moses,
His acts to the children of Israel.
8 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abounding in
mercy.
9 He will not always strive *with us,*
Nor will He keep *His anger* forever.
10 He has not dealt with us according to
our sins,
Nor punished us according to our
iniquities.

11 For as the heavens are high above the
earth,
So great is His mercy toward those
who fear Him;
12 As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our
transgressions from us.
13 As a father pities *his* children,
So the LORD pities those who fear Him.
14 For He knows our frame;
He remembers that we *are* dust.

15 *As for* man, his days *are* like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he
flourishes.
16 For the wind passes over it, and it is
gone,
And its place remembers it no more.[a]
17 But the mercy of the LORD *is* from
everlasting to everlasting
On those who fear Him,
And His righteousness to children's
children,
18 To such as keep His covenant,
And to those who remember His
commandments to do them.

19 The LORD has established His throne
in heaven,
And His kingdom rules over all.

20 Bless the LORD, you His angels,
Who excel in strength, who do His
word,
Heeding the voice of His word.
21 Bless the LORD, all *you* His hosts,
You ministers of His, who do His
pleasure.
22 Bless the LORD, all His works,
In all places of His dominion.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

PSALM 104

PRAISE TO THE SOVEREIGN LORD FOR HIS CREATION AND PROVIDENCE

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

O LORD my God, You are very great:
You are clothed with honor and
majesty,
2 Who cover *Yourself* with light as *with* a
garment,
Who stretch out the heavens like a
curtain.

3 He lays the beams of His upper
chambers in the waters,
Who makes the clouds His chariot,
Who walks on the wings of the wind,
4 Who makes His angels spirits,
His ministers a flame of fire.

5 *You who* laid the foundations of the
earth,
So *that* it should not be moved forever,
6 You covered it with the deep as *with* a
garment;
The waters stood above the
mountains.
7 At Your rebuke they fled;
At the voice of Your thunder they
hastened away.
8 They went up over the mountains;
They went down into the valleys,
To the place which You founded for
them.
9 You have set a boundary that they may
not pass over,
That they may not return to cover the
earth.

10 He sends the springs into the valleys;
They flow among the hills.
11 They give drink to every beast of the
field;
The wild donkeys quench their thirst.

103:16 [a]Compare Job 7:10

12 By them the birds of the heavens have their home;
They sing among the branches.
13 He waters the hills from His upper chambers;
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works.

14 He causes the grass to grow for the cattle,
And vegetation for the service of man,
That he may bring forth food from the earth,
15 And wine *that* makes glad the heart of man,
Oil to make *his* face shine,
And bread *which* strengthens man's heart.
16 The trees of the LORD are full *of sap,*
The cedars of Lebanon which He planted,
17 Where the birds make their nests;
The stork has her home in the fir trees.
18 The high hills *are* for the wild goats;
The cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers.[a]

19 He appointed the moon for seasons;
The sun knows its going down.
20 You make darkness, and it is night,
In which all the beasts of the forest creep about.
21 The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their food from God.
22 *When* the sun rises, they gather together
And lie down in their dens.
23 Man goes out to his work
And to his labor until the evening.

24 O LORD, how manifold are Your works!
In wisdom You have made them all.
The earth is full of Your possessions—
25 This great and wide sea,
In which *are* innumerable teeming things,
Living things both small and great.
26 There the ships sail about;
There is that Leviathan
Which You have made to play there.

27 These all wait for You,
That You may give *them* their food in due season.
28 *What* You give them they gather in;
You open Your hand, they are filled with good.
29 You hide Your face, they are troubled;
You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.
30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created;
And You renew the face of the earth.

31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
May the LORD rejoice in His works.
32 He looks on the earth, and it trembles;
He touches the hills, and they smoke.

33 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
34 May my meditation be sweet to Him;
I will be glad in the LORD.
35 May sinners be consumed from the earth,
And the wicked be no more.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!
Praise the LORD!

PSALM 105

THE ETERNAL FAITHFULNESS OF THE LORD

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
2 Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!
3 Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
4 Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
5 Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,
6 O seed of Abraham His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!

7 He *is* the LORD our God;
His judgments *are* in all the earth.
8 He remembers His covenant forever,

104:18 [a]Or *rock hyrax* (compare Leviticus 11:5)

The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,
9 *The covenant* which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
10 And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel *as* an everlasting covenant,
11 Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance,"
12 When they were few in number,
Indeed very few, and strangers in it.

13 When they went from one nation to another,
From *one* kingdom to another people,
14 He permitted no one to do them wrong;
Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes,
15 *Saying,* "Do not touch My anointed ones,
And do My prophets no harm."

16 Moreover He called for a famine in the land;
He destroyed all the provision of bread.
17 He sent a man before them—
Joseph—*who* was sold as a slave.
18 They hurt his feet with fetters,
He was laid in irons.
19 Until the time that his word came to pass,
The word of the LORD tested him.
20 The king sent and released him,
The ruler of the people let him go free.
21 He made him lord of his house,
And ruler of all his possessions,
22 To bind his princes at his pleasure,
And teach his elders wisdom.

23 Israel also came into Egypt,
And Jacob dwelt in the land of Ham.
24 He increased His people greatly,
And made them stronger than their enemies.
25 He turned their heart to hate His people,
To deal craftily with His servants.

26 He sent Moses His servant,
And Aaron whom He had chosen.
27 They performed His signs among them,
And wonders in the land of Ham.
28 He sent darkness, and made *it* dark;
And they did not rebel against His word.
29 He turned their waters into blood,
And killed their fish.
30 Their land abounded with frogs,
Even in the chambers of their kings.
31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies,
And lice in all their territory.
32 He gave them hail for rain,
And flaming fire in their land.
33 He struck their vines also, and their fig trees,
And splintered the trees of their territory.
34 He spoke, and locusts came,
Young locusts without number,
35 And ate up all the vegetation in their land,
And devoured the fruit of their ground.
36 He also destroyed all the firstborn in their land,
The first of all their strength.

37 He also brought them out with silver and gold,
And *there was* none feeble among His tribes.
38 Egypt was glad when they departed,
For the fear of them had fallen upon them.
39 He spread a cloud for a covering,
And fire to give light in the night.
40 *The people* asked, and He brought quail,
And satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
It ran in the dry places *like* a river.

42 For He remembered His holy promise,
And Abraham His servant.
43 He brought out His people with joy,
His chosen ones with gladness.
44 He gave them the lands of the Gentiles,
And they inherited the labor of the nations,
45 That they might observe His statutes
And keep His laws.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 106

JOY IN FORGIVENESS OF ISRAEL'S SINS

Praise the LORD!

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD?
Who can declare all His praise?
3 Blessed *are* those who keep justice,
And he who does[a] righteousness at all times!

4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favor *You have toward* Your people.
Oh, visit me with Your salvation,
5 That I may see the benefit of Your chosen ones,
That I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation,
That I may glory with Your inheritance.

6 We have sinned with our fathers,
We have committed iniquity,
We have done wickedly.
7 Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders;
They did not remember the multitude of Your mercies,
But rebelled by the sea—the Red Sea.

8 Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake,
That He might make His mighty power known.
9 He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up;
So He led them through the depths,
As through the wilderness.
10 He saved them from the hand of him who hated *them,*
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
11 The waters covered their enemies;
There was not one of them left.
12 Then they believed His words;
They sang His praise.

13 They soon forgot His works;
They did not wait for His counsel,
14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,
And tested God in the desert.
15 And He gave them their request,
But sent leanness into their soul.

16 When they envied Moses in the camp,
And Aaron the saint of the LORD,

Psalm 106:17, 18

As descendants of Reuben, Jacob's firstborn son, Dathan and Abiram believed that they and their tribe—and not Moses—should have been the political leaders of Israel. Their punishment for challenging Moses' authority was as unusual and severe as it was unexpected. The earth beneath the rebels' feet opened up, and Dathan and Abiram, along with all of their belongings, disappeared into the earth. God took care of the other people who joined in the rebellion with a fireball from heaven.

17 The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan,
And covered the faction of Abiram.
18 A fire was kindled in their company;
The flame burned up the wicked.

19 They made a calf in Horeb,
And worshiped the molded image.
20 Thus they changed their glory
Into the image of an ox that eats grass.
21 They forgot God their Savior,
Who had done great things in Egypt,

IDOLATRY

- ***In what circumstances are we prone to give in to idolatry?***
- Psalm 106:19–21

22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham,
Awesome things by the Red Sea.
23 Therefore He said that He would destroy them,
Had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach,

106:3 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *those who do.*

To turn away His wrath, lest He
destroy *them.*

24 Then they despised the pleasant land;
They did not believe His word,
25 But complained in their tents,
And did not heed the voice of the
LORD.
26 Therefore He raised His hand *in an*
oath against them,
To overthrow them in the wilderness,
27 To overthrow their descendants
among the nations,
And to scatter them in the lands.

28 They joined themselves also to Baal
of Peor,
And ate sacrifices made to the dead.
29 Thus they provoked *Him* to anger with
their deeds,
And the plague broke out among
them.
30 Then Phinehas stood up and
intervened,
And the plague was stopped.
31 And that was accounted to him for
righteousness
To all generations forevermore.

32 They angered *Him* also at the waters
of strife,[a]
So that it went ill with Moses on
account of them;
33 Because they rebelled against His
Spirit,
So that he spoke rashly with his lips.

34 They did not destroy the peoples,
Concerning whom the LORD had
commanded them,
35 But they mingled with the Gentiles
And learned their works;

IDOLATRY
What is God's reaction to idol worship or the occult?
Psalm 106:36–43

36 They served their idols,
Which became a snare to them.
37 They even sacrificed their sons
And their daughters to demons,
38 And shed innocent blood,
The blood of their sons and daughters,
Whom they sacrificed to the idols of
Canaan;
And the land was polluted with blood.
39 Thus they were defiled by their own
works,
And played the harlot by their own
deeds.

40 Therefore the wrath of the LORD was
kindled against His people,
So that He abhorred His own
inheritance.
41 And He gave them into the hand of the
Gentiles,
And those who hated them ruled over
them.
42 Their enemies also oppressed them,
And they were brought into subjection
under their hand.
43 Many times He delivered them;
But they rebelled in their counsel,
And were brought low for their iniquity.

44 Nevertheless He regarded their
affliction,
When He heard their cry;
45 And for their sake He remembered His
covenant,
And relented according to the
multitude of His mercies.
46 He also made them to be pitied
By all those who carried them away
captive.

47 Save us, O LORD our God,
And gather us from among the Gentiles,
To give thanks to Your holy name,
To triumph in Your praise.

48 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!
And let all the people say, "Amen!"

Praise the LORD!

BOOK FIVE: Psalms 107—150

PSALM 107

THANKSGIVING TO THE LORD FOR HIS GREAT WORKS OF DELIVERANCE

O h, give thanks to the LORD, for *He*
is good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

106:32 [a]Or *Meribah*



LIFE APP

Heartache / Psalm 107:6

Life can be so hurtful sometimes! One day you feel all safe and secure and the next day everything just falls apart around you. Sometimes the things you get upset about are really not all that bad and they end quickly. But once in a while, something happens that totally wipes you out and breaks your heart. Usually those are the things that you just can't control; there's nothing you can do to change the situation; all you can do is hurt. The pain can get so bad that you just don't see how you can live through it.

If you've ever felt like that, you're certainly not alone. At some point, we all feel our hearts are broken beyond repair and life will never be the same. It can make you want to just give up and yell, "I surrender!" at the top of your lungs.

Many people in the Bible felt the same kind of hurt and heartache as we sometimes have to face. David was one of them. He knew what it was like to have his heart broken by events in life. But David also knew the One who heals broken hearts. He knew no trouble he faced would be beyond God's power to help.

When our hearts are in horrible pain, we can't make ourselves stop hurting. We can't turn back the clock and make the hurtful thing un-happen. All we can do is live today and hope for a better tomorrow. That one word is the key: hope. No matter how bad things are today, life doesn't stop. There is always tomorrow and tomorrow God just may bring the perfect answer or give us the ability to cope with what can't be changed. Regardless which He chooses, God will always give us a good "future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 107:14

Darkness and Light In the Bible, the word *darkness* refers to ignorance, deception, and sin. *Light* indicates truth, openness, and the presence of God. Jesus told Nicodemus, "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (John 3:19, 20). Because people loved the darkness—their evil way of life—they rejected the light, Jesus.

When you made Jesus your Lord, He rescued you from darkness. You are no longer ignorant of the wrong things you do or of God's love for you in spite of them. Even sin doesn't have to hold you back from God's love because He stands ready to forgive you the minute you ask.

Look back to the time before you were a Christian and see how far you've come. You've come out of the darkness of sin into the light and love of Jesus. (See also: Is. 9:2; Eph. 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:5.)

Words to Live By

Chains: The word translated in Psalm 107:4 as "chains" is the Hebrew word *mocerah* (mo-ser-aw'). It is a restraint by which a person learns obedience through punishment. Often, in biblical days, people were enslaved and their hands and feet were placed in chains. Before we come to the Lord, it is like we are enslaved to sin with our hands and feet in chains to keep us from getting free. But Jesus has broken the hold sin had on our lives and we are now free to serve Him and live abundant lives.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so,*
Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy,
3 And gathered out of the lands,
From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.

THANKFULNESS
What is the biggest reason we should be thankful to God?
Psalm 107:1–3

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a desolate way;
They found no city to dwell in.
5 Hungry and thirsty,
Their soul fainted in them.
6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He delivered them out of their distresses.
7 And He led them forth by the right way,
That they might go to a city for a dwelling place.
8 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
9 For He satisfies the longing soul,
And fills the hungry soul with goodness.

10 Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Bound in affliction and irons—
11 Because they rebelled against the words of God,
And despised the counsel of the Most High,
12 Therefore He brought down their heart with labor;
They fell down, and *there was* none to help.
13 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He saved them out of their distresses.

14 He brought them out of darkness and
the shadow of death,
And broke their chains in pieces.
15 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the
LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the
children of men!
16 For He has broken the gates of bronze,
And cut the bars of iron in two.

17 Fools, because of their transgression,
And because of their iniquities, were
afflicted.
18 Their soul abhorred all manner of
food,
And they drew near to the gates of
death.
19 Then they cried out to the LORD in
their trouble,
And He saved them out of their
distresses.
20 He sent His word and healed them,
And delivered *them* from their
destructions.
21 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the
LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the
children of men!
22 Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of
thanksgiving,
And declare His works with rejoicing.

23 Those who go down to the sea in ships,
Who do business on great waters,
24 They see the works of the LORD,
And His wonders in the deep.
25 For He commands and raises the
stormy wind,
Which lifts up the waves of the sea.
26 They mount up to the heavens,
They go down again to the depths;
Their soul melts because of trouble.
27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a
drunken man,
And are at their wits' end.
28 Then they cry out to the LORD in their
trouble,
And He brings them out of their
distresses.
29 He calms the storm,
So that its waves are still.
30 Then they are glad because they are
quiet;
So He guides them to their desired
haven.

31 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the
LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the
children of men!
32 Let them exalt Him also in the
assembly of the people,
And praise Him in the company of the
elders.

33 He turns rivers into a wilderness,
And the watersprings into dry ground;
34 A fruitful land into barrenness,
For the wickedness of those who dwell
in it.
35 He turns a wilderness into pools of
water,
And dry land into watersprings.
36 There He makes the hungry dwell,
That they may establish a city for a
dwelling place,
37 And sow fields and plant vineyards,
That they may yield a fruitful harvest.
38 He also blesses them, and they
multiply greatly;
And He does not let their cattle
decrease.

39 When they are diminished and
brought low
Through oppression, affliction, and
sorrow,
40 He pours contempt on princes,
And causes them to wander in the
wilderness *where there is* no way;
41 Yet He sets the poor on high, far from
affliction,
And makes *their* families like a flock.
42 The righteous see *it* and rejoice,
And all iniquity stops its mouth.

43 Whoever *is* wise will observe these
things,
And they will understand the
lovingkindness of the LORD.

PSALM 108

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S VICTORY OVER ENEMIES

A Song. A Psalm of David.

O God, my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and give praise, even
with my glory.
2 Awake, lute and harp!
I will awaken the dawn.

3 I will praise You, O LORD, among the peoples,
And I will sing praises to You among the nations.
4 For Your mercy *is* great above the heavens,
And Your truth *reaches* to the clouds.

5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,
And Your glory above all the earth;
6 That Your beloved may be delivered,
Save *with* Your right hand, and hear me.

7 God has spoken in His holiness:
"I will rejoice;
I will divide Shechem
And measure out the Valley of Succoth.
8 Gilead *is* Mine; Manasseh *is* Mine;
Ephraim also *is* the helmet for My head;
Judah *is* My lawgiver.
9 Moab *is* My washpot;
Over Edom I will cast My shoe;
Over Philistia I will triumph."

10 Who will bring me *into* the strong city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
11 *Is it* not *You,* O God, *who* cast us off?
And *You,* O God, *who* did not go out with our armies?
12 Give us help from trouble,
For the help of man is useless.
13 Through God we will do valiantly,
For *it is* He *who* shall tread down our enemies.[a]

PSALM 109

PLEA FOR JUDGMENT OF FALSE ACCUSERS

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Do not keep silent,
O God of my praise!
2 For the mouth of the wicked and
the mouth of the deceitful
Have opened against me;
They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.
3 They have also surrounded me with words of hatred,
And fought against me without a cause.
4 In return for my love they are my accusers,
But I *give myself to* prayer.
5 Thus they have rewarded me evil for good,
And hatred for my love.

6 Set a wicked man over him,
And let an accuser[a] stand at his right hand.
7 When he is judged, let him be found guilty,
And let his prayer become sin.
8 Let his days be few,
And let another take his office.
9 Let his children be fatherless,
And his wife a widow.
10 Let his children continually be vagabonds, and beg;
Let them seek *their bread*[a] also from their desolate places.
11 Let the creditor seize all that he has,
And let strangers plunder his labor.
12 Let there be none to extend mercy to him,
Nor let there be any to favor his fatherless children.
13 Let his posterity be cut off,
And in the generation following let their name be blotted out.

14 Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD,
And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.
15 Let them be continually before the LORD,
That He may cut off the memory of them from the earth;
16 Because he did not remember to show mercy,
But persecuted the poor and needy man,
That he might even slay the broken in heart.
17 As he loved cursing, so let it come to him;
As he did not delight in blessing, so let it be far from him.
18 As he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment,
So let it enter his body like water,
And like oil into his bones.
19 Let it be to him like the garment which covers him,

108:13 [a]Compare verses 6–13 with 60:5–12
109:6 [a]Hebrew *satan* **109:10** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *be cast out.*

And for a belt with which he girds
himself continually.
20 *Let* this *be* the LORD's reward to my
accusers,
And to those who speak evil against
my person.

21 But You, O GOD the Lord,
Deal with me for Your name's sake;
Because Your mercy *is* good, deliver me.
22 For I *am* poor and needy,
And my heart is wounded within me.
23 I am gone like a shadow when it
lengthens;
I am shaken off like a locust.
24 My knees are weak through fasting,
And my flesh is feeble from lack of
fatness.
25 I also have become a reproach to them;
When they look at me, they shake their
heads.

26 Help me, O LORD my God!
Oh, save me according to Your mercy,
27 That they may know that this *is* Your
hand—
That You, LORD, have done it!
28 Let them curse, but You bless;
When they arise, let them be ashamed,
But let Your servant rejoice.
29 Let my accusers be clothed with shame,
And let them cover themselves with
their own disgrace as with a
mantle.

30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my
mouth;
Yes, I will praise Him among the
multitude.
31 For He shall stand at the right hand of
the poor,
To save *him* from those who condemn
him.

PSALM 110

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MESSIAH'S REIGN

A Psalm of David.

The LORD said to my Lord,
"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your
footstool."
2 The LORD shall send the rod of Your
strength out of Zion.
Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

Psalm 110:1

This is what Bible experts call a "messianic psalm," meaning that it predicts something about Jesus Christ, the Messiah. You might be interested to know that this psalm holds the record for being quoted more often in the New Testament than any other psalm in the Bible.

3 Your people *shall be* volunteers
In the day of Your power;
In the beauties of holiness, from the
womb of the morning,
You have the dew of Your youth.

Psalm 110:4

Melchizedek is one of the most mysterious figures in the Bible; we know very little about him. During the time of Abraham, Melchizedek was the king of Salem, a city whose name was later expanded to Jerusalem. When Abraham met Melchizedek, he gave the king ten percent of what he had just won in battle. That would seem to indicate Abraham viewed Melchizedek as having the authority of a priest. Many Bible experts believe that Melchizedek was an Old Testament preview of Christ, who is also described in the Bible as both a king and a priest.

4 The LORD has sworn
And will not relent,
"You *are* a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek."

5 The Lord *is* at Your right hand;
He shall execute kings in the day of His
wrath.
6 He shall judge among the nations,
He shall fill *the places* with dead
bodies,
He shall execute the heads of many
countries.
7 He shall drink of the brook by the
wayside;
Therefore He shall lift up the head.

PSALM 111

PRAISE TO GOD FOR HIS FAITHFULNESS AND JUSTICE

Praise the LORD!

I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart,
In the assembly of the upright and *in* the congregation.

2 The works of the LORD *are* great,
Studied by all who have pleasure in them.
3 His work *is* honorable and glorious,
And His righteousness endures forever.
4 He has made His wonderful works to be remembered;
The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.
5 He has given food to those who fear Him;
He will ever be mindful of His covenant.
6 He has declared to His people the power of His works,
In giving them the heritage of the nations.

7 The works of His hands *are* verity and justice;
All His precepts *are* sure.
8 They stand fast forever and ever,
And are done in truth and uprightness.
9 He has sent redemption to His people;
He has commanded His covenant forever:
Holy and awesome *is* His name.

10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments.*
His praise endures forever.

PSALM 112

THE BLESSED STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Praise the LORD!

Blessed *is* the man *who* fears the LORD,
Who delights greatly in His commandments.
2 His descendants will be mighty on earth;
The generation of the upright will be blessed.
3 Wealth and riches *will be* in his house,
And his righteousness endures forever.

FEAR
What kind of life will lead to a total lack of fear?
Psalm 112:4–8

4 Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness;
He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
5 A good man deals graciously and lends;
He will guide his affairs with discretion.
6 Surely he will never be shaken;
The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance.
7 He will not be afraid of evil tidings;
His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.
8 His heart *is* established;
He will not be afraid,
Until he sees *his desire* upon his enemies.

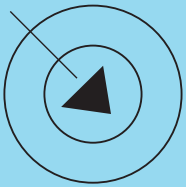
9 He has dispersed abroad,
He has given to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever;
His horn will be exalted with honor.
10 The wicked will see *it* and be grieved;
He will gnash his teeth and melt away;
The desire of the wicked shall perish.

PSALM 113

THE MAJESTY AND CONDESCENSION OF GOD

Praise the LORD!

Praise, O servants of the LORD,
Praise the name of the LORD!
2 Blessed be the name of the LORD
From this time forth and forevermore!
3 From the rising of the sun to its going down
The LORD's name *is* to be praised.



PROMISE

God promises to bless His worshipers.

He will bless those who fear the LORD, *both small and great* (Ps. 115:13).

Worshiping the Lord involves being in His presence, looking with the eyes of your heart at His awesome greatness. Although you can't possibly understand everything about God, piece by piece He'll reveal Himself to you as you keep looking at Him, worshiping Him with your whole heart, living your life in His presence.

There is a power in His presence, in continually looking at Him, that changes you way down deep. Paul described it this way: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

This is the blessing that He promises to His worshipers—change from the inside out. This blessing allows you to accomplish what God had in mind when He made you—to have a growing friendship with Him and to become more and more like Jesus, His Son.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 115:12, 13; 128:1–4

4 The LORD *is* high above all nations,
His glory above the heavens.
5 Who *is* like the LORD our God,
Who dwells on high,
6 Who humbles Himself to behold
The things that are in the heavens and
in the earth?

7 He raises the poor out of the dust,
And lifts the needy out of the ash
heap,
8 That He may seat *him* with princes—
With the princes of His people.
9 He grants the barren woman a home,
Like a joyful mother of children.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 114

THE POWER OF GOD IN HIS DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL

When Israel went out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob from a people
of strange language,
2 Judah became His sanctuary,
And Israel His dominion.

3 The sea saw *it* and fled;
Jordan turned back.
4 The mountains skipped like rams,
The little hills like lambs.

5 What ails you, O sea, that you fled?
O Jordan, *that* you turned back?
6 O mountains, *that* you skipped like
rams?
O little hills, like lambs?

7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of
the Lord,
At the presence of the God of Jacob,
8 Who turned the rock *into* a pool of
water,
The flint into a fountain of waters.

PSALM 115

THE FUTILITY OF IDOLS AND THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF GOD

Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us,
But to Your name give glory,
Because of Your mercy,
Because of Your truth.
2 Why should the Gentiles say,
"So where *is* their God?"

3 But our God *is* in heaven;
He does whatever He pleases.
4 Their idols *are* silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.
5 They have mouths, but they do not
speak;
Eyes they have, but they do not see;
6 They have ears, but they do not hear;

Noses they have, but they do not smell;
7 They have hands, but they do not handle;
Feet they have, but they do not walk;
Nor do they mutter through their throat.
8 Those who make them are like them;
So is everyone who trusts in them.

9 O Israel, trust in the LORD;
He *is* their help and their shield.
10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD;
He *is* their help and their shield.
11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD;
He *is* their help and their shield.

12 The LORD has been mindful of *us;*
He will bless us;
He will bless the house of Israel;
He will bless the house of Aaron.
13 He will bless those who fear the LORD,
Both small and great.

14 May the LORD give you increase more and more,
You and your children.
15 *May* you *be* blessed by the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.

16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD's;
But the earth He has given to the children of men.
17 The dead do not praise the LORD,
Nor any who go down into silence.
18 But we will bless the LORD
From this time forth and forevermore.

Praise the LORD!

DEATH
Should Christians be afraid of death?
Psalm 116:1–15

PSALM 116

THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH

I love the LORD, because He has heard
My voice *and* my supplications.
2 Because He has inclined His ear to me,
Therefore I will call *upon Him* as long as I live.

3 The pains of death surrounded me,
And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me;
I found trouble and sorrow.
4 Then I called upon the name of the LORD:
"O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!"

5 Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous;
Yes, our God *is* merciful.
6 The LORD preserves the simple;
I was brought low, and He saved me.
7 Return to your rest, O my soul,
For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.

8 For You have delivered my soul from death,
My eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.
9 I will walk before the LORD
In the land of the living.
10 I believed, therefore I spoke,
"I am greatly afflicted."
11 I said in my haste,
"All men *are* liars."

12 What shall I render to the LORD
For all His benefits toward me?
13 I will take up the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of the LORD.
14 I will pay my vows to the LORD
Now in the presence of all His people.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD
Is the death of His saints.

16 O LORD, truly I *am* Your servant;
I *am* Your servant, the son of Your maidservant;
You have loosed my bonds.
17 I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And will call upon the name of the LORD.

18 I will pay my vows to the LORD
Now in the presence of all His people,
19 In the courts of the LORD's house,
In the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 117

LET ALL PEOPLES PRAISE THE LORD

Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!
Laud Him, all you peoples!
2For His merciful kindness is great
toward us,
And the truth of the LORD *endures*
forever.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 118

PRAISE TO GOD FOR HIS EVERLASTING MERCY

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

2Let Israel now say,
"His mercy *endures* forever."
3Let the house of Aaron now say,
"His mercy *endures* forever."
4Let those who fear the LORD now say,
"His mercy *endures* forever."

5I called on the LORD in distress;
The LORD answered me *and set me* in a
broad place.
6The LORD *is* on my side;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?
7The LORD is for me among those who
help me;
Therefore I shall see *my desire* on those
who hate me.
8*It is* better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in man.
9*It is* better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in princes.

10All nations surrounded me,
But in the name of the LORD I will
destroy them.
11They surrounded me,
Yes, they surrounded me;
But in the name of the LORD I will
destroy them.
12They surrounded me like bees;
They were quenched like a fire of
thorns;
For in the name of the LORD I will
destroy them.
13You pushed me violently, that I might
fall,
But the LORD helped me.
14The LORD *is* my strength and song,
And He has become my salvation.[a]

15The voice of rejoicing and salvation
Is in the tents of the righteous;
The right hand of the LORD does
valiantly.
16The right hand of the LORD is exalted;
The right hand of the LORD does
valiantly.
17I shall not die, but live,
And declare the works of the LORD.
18The LORD has chastened me severely,
But He has not given me over to death.

19Open to me the gates of
righteousness;
I will go through them,
And I will praise the LORD.
20This is the gate of the LORD,
Through which the righteous shall
enter.

21I will praise You,
For You have answered me,
And have become my salvation.

22The stone *which* the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone.
23This was the LORD's doing;
It *is* marvelous in our eyes.
24This *is* the day the LORD has made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

25Save now, I pray, O LORD;
O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity.
26Blessed *is* he who comes in the name
of the LORD!
We have blessed you from the house of
the LORD.
27God *is* the LORD,
And He has given us light;
Bind the sacrifice with cords to the
horns of the altar.
28You *are* my God, and I will praise You;
You are my God, I will exalt You.

29Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is*
good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

118:14 [a]Compare Exodus 15:2

PURITY
How can we remain pure?
Psalm 119:1–20

PSALM 119

MEDITATIONS ON THE EXCELLENCIES OF THE WORD OF GOD

א Aleph

Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way,
Who walk in the law of the LORD!
2 Blessed *are* those who keep His testimonies,
Who seek Him with the whole heart!
3 They also do no iniquity;
They walk in His ways.
4 You have commanded *us*
To keep Your precepts diligently.
5 Oh, that my ways were directed
To keep Your statutes!
6 Then I would not be ashamed,
When I look into all Your commandments.
7 I will praise You with uprightness of heart,
When I learn Your righteous judgments.
8 I will keep Your statutes;
Oh, do not forsake me utterly!

ב Beth

9 How can a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed according to Your word.
10 With my whole heart I have sought You;
Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!
11 Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.
12 Blessed *are* You, O LORD!
Teach me Your statutes.
13 With my lips I have declared
All the judgments of Your mouth.
14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies,
As *much as* in all riches.
15 I will meditate on Your precepts,
And contemplate Your ways.
16 I will delight myself in Your statutes;
I will not forget Your word.

ג Gimel

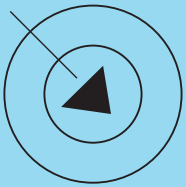
17 Deal bountifully with Your servant,
That I may live and keep Your word.
18 Open my eyes, that I may see
Wondrous things from Your law.
19 I *am* a stranger in the earth;
Do not hide Your commandments from me.
20 My soul breaks with longing
For Your judgments at all times.
21 You rebuke the proud—the cursed,
Who stray from Your commandments.
22 Remove from me reproach and contempt,
For I have kept Your testimonies.
23 Princes also sit *and* speak against me,
But Your servant meditates on Your statutes.
24 Your testimonies also *are* my delight
And my counselors.

ד Daleth

25 My soul clings to the dust;
Revive me according to Your word.
26 I have declared my ways, and You answered me;
Teach me Your statutes.
27 Make me understand the way of Your precepts;
So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.
28 My soul melts from heaviness;
Strengthen me according to Your word.
29 Remove from me the way of lying,
And grant me Your law graciously.
30 I have chosen the way of truth;
Your judgments I have laid *before me.*
31 I cling to Your testimonies;
O LORD, do not put me to shame!
32 I will run the course of Your commandments,
For You shall enlarge my heart.

ה He

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes,
And I shall keep it *to* the end.
34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law;
Indeed, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.
35 Make me walk in the path of Your commandments,



PROMISE

God promises to strengthen you.

My soul melts from heaviness; strengthen me according to Your word (Ps. 119:28).

Have you ever had one of those blacker than black days? Have you ever felt like you just wanted the world to stop so you could get off? Days like that make you think that life just doesn't make sense, there is no hope, and nothing can help. When sorrow and pain fill you and tears are just under the surface, it can seem no one could possibly understand. Maybe no person can; but God can.

God knows you like no one else and loves you more than anyone else possibly could. And He promises to encourage you in your darkest hour. If you will seek Him with all of your heart, He will come to you. He will show you the path that leads out of your situation. He will conduct a holy pep rally just for you. He will wipe away your tears. He will carry your heavy load. God knows all the answers and exactly how to handle whatever life can throw your way. When you feel there is no hope turn to the Source of hope and comfort. Climb up into God's strong arms. Lay your head down and rest.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 40:1–3; Matthew 11:28–30; Romans 15:4, 5

For I delight in it.
36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies,
And not to covetousness.
37 Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things,
And revive me in Your way.[a]
38 Establish Your word to Your servant,
Who *is devoted* to fearing You.
39 Turn away my reproach which I dread,
For Your judgments *are* good.
40 Behold, I long for Your precepts;
Revive me in Your righteousness.

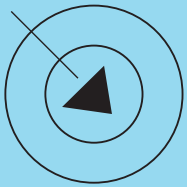
ו Waw

41 Let Your mercies come also to me,
O LORD—
Your salvation according to Your word.
42 So shall I have an answer for him who reproaches me,
For I trust in Your word.
43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,
For I have hoped in Your ordinances.
44 So shall I keep Your law continually,
Forever and ever.
45 And I will walk at liberty,
For I seek Your precepts.
46 I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings,
And will not be ashamed.
47 And I will delight myself in Your commandments,
Which I love.
48 My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments,
Which I love,
And I will meditate on Your statutes.

ז Zayin

49 Remember the word to Your servant,
Upon which You have caused me to hope.
50 This *is* my comfort in my affliction,
For Your word has given me life.
51 The proud have me in great derision,
Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.
52 I remembered Your judgments of old,
O LORD,
And have comforted myself.
53 Indignation has taken hold of me
Because of the wicked, who forsake Your law.
54 Your statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.
55 I remember Your name in the night,
O LORD,
And I keep Your law.

119:37 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Targum reads *Your words*.



PROMISE

God promises to comfort you with His kindness.

Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Your word to Your servant (Ps. 119:76).

You studied your brains out for the chemistry exam, but the teacher handed it back to you with a big fat D on it. Someone you barely know posted mean and hurtful things about you online. A video of you acting silly and trying to sing went viral throughout the school and everyone is laughing at you. The coolest guy in school asked you out and then only wanted you to write his research paper.

Disappointment. Rejection. Failure. Sometimes it seems unbearable. You need someone to hear your story and say they understand. You need someone to let you cry and give you a big hug. You need someone to comfort you. Where do you go?

There are lots of places to run to, but most of them will leave you empty. God promises to be there and to really help you. His love brings faith and courage to make it through today and hope for better tomorrows. God gives you strength when you don't have any. He looks into your heart and sees how you're feeling and what you need. Then He pours out whatever you need by His Holy Spirit. No wonder He is called the Helper—He will always be there to help you and comfort you through even the hardest times.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Isaiah 49:13; John 14:15–18; 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4



56 This has become mine,
Because I kept Your precepts.

ח Heth

57 *You are* my portion, O Lord;
I have said that I would keep Your words.
58 I entreated Your favor with *my* whole heart;
Be merciful to me according to Your word.
59 I thought about my ways,
And turned my feet to Your testimonies.
60 I made haste, and did not delay
To keep Your commandments.
61 The cords of the wicked have bound me,
But I have not forgotten Your law.
62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You,
Because of Your righteous judgments.
63 I *am* a companion of all who fear You,
And of those who keep Your precepts.
64 The earth, O Lord, is full of Your mercy;
Teach me Your statutes.

ט Teth

65 You have dealt well with Your servant,
O Lord, according to Your word.
66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge,
For I believe Your commandments.
67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,
But now I keep Your word.
68 You *are* good, and do good;
Teach me Your statutes.
69 The proud have forged a lie against me,
But I will keep Your precepts with *my* whole heart.
70 Their heart is as fat as grease,
But I delight in Your law.
71 *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted,
That I may learn Your statutes.
72 The law of Your mouth *is* better to me
Than thousands of *coins of* gold and silver.

י Yod

73 Your hands have made me and fashioned me;
Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.

74 Those who fear You will be glad when
they see me,
Because I have hoped in Your word.
75 I know, O LORD, that Your judgments
are right,
And *that* in faithfulness You have
afflicted me.
76 Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be
for my comfort,
According to Your word to Your
servant.
77 Let Your tender mercies come to me,
that I may live;
For Your law *is* my delight.
78 Let the proud be ashamed,
For they treated me wrongfully with
falsehood;
But I will meditate on Your precepts.
79 Let those who fear You turn to me,
Those who know Your testimonies.
80 Let my heart be blameless regarding
Your statutes,
That I may not be ashamed.

כ KAPH

81 My soul faints for Your salvation,
But I hope in Your word.
82 My eyes fail *from searching* Your word,
Saying, "When will You comfort me?"
83 For I have become like a wineskin in
smoke,
Yet I do not forget Your statutes.
84 How many *are* the days of Your
servant?
When will You execute judgment on
those who persecute me?
85 The proud have dug pits for me,
Which *is* not according to Your law.
86 All Your commandments *are* faithful;
They persecute me wrongfully;
Help me!
87 They almost made an end of me on
earth,
But I did not forsake Your precepts.
88 Revive me according to Your
lovingkindness,
So that I may keep the testimony of
Your mouth.

ל LAMED

89 Forever, O LORD,
Your word is settled in heaven.
90 Your faithfulness *endures* to all
generations;
You established the earth, and it
abides.
91 They continue this day according to
Your ordinances,
For all *are* Your servants.
92 Unless Your law *had been* my delight,
I would then have perished in my
affliction.
93 I will never forget Your precepts,
For by them You have given me life.
94 I *am* Yours, save me;
For I have sought Your precepts.
95 The wicked wait for me to destroy me,
But I will consider Your testimonies.
96 I have seen the consummation of all
perfection,
But Your commandment *is*
exceedingly broad.

BIBLE
What can we gain by knowing the Bible?
Psalm 119:97–100

מ MEM

97 Oh, how I love Your law!
It *is* my meditation all the day.
98 You, through Your commandments,
make me wiser than my enemies;
For they *are* ever with me.
99 I have more understanding than all
my teachers,
For Your testimonies *are* my
meditation.
100 I understand more than the ancients,
Because I keep Your precepts.
101 I have restrained my feet from every
evil way,
That I may keep Your word.
102 I have not departed from Your
judgments,
For You Yourself have taught me.
103 How sweet are Your words to my
taste,
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!
104 Through Your precepts I get
understanding;
Therefore I hate every false way.

נ NUN

105 Your word *is* a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.
106 I have sworn and confirmed

That I will keep Your righteous judgments.
107 I am afflicted very much;
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.
108 Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD,
And teach me Your judgments.
109 My life *is* continually in my hand,
Yet I do not forget Your law.
110 The wicked have laid a snare for me,
Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.
111 Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever,
For they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.
112 I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes
Forever, to the very end.

ד SAMEK

113 I hate the double-minded,
But I love Your law.
114 You *are* my hiding place and my shield;
I hope in Your word.
115 Depart from me, you evildoers,
For I will keep the commandments of my God!
116 Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live;
And do not let me be ashamed of my hope.
117 Hold me up, and I shall be safe,
And I shall observe Your statutes continually.
118 You reject all those who stray from Your statutes,
For their deceit *is* falsehood.
119 You put away all the wicked of the earth *like* dross;
Therefore I love Your testimonies.
120 My flesh trembles for fear of You,
And I am afraid of Your judgments.

ע AYIN

121 I have done justice and righteousness;
Do not leave me to my oppressors.
122 Be surety for Your servant for good;
Do not let the proud oppress me.
123 My eyes fail *from seeking* Your salvation
And Your righteous word.
124 Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy,
And teach me Your statutes.
125 I *am* Your servant;
Give me understanding,
That I may know Your testimonies.
126 *It is* time for *You* to act, O LORD,
For they have regarded Your law as void.

CULT
What should our reaction be to false teaching and cults?
Psalm 119:127, 128

127 Therefore I love Your commandments
More than gold, yes, than fine gold!
128 Therefore all *Your* precepts *concerning* all *things*
I consider *to be* right;
I hate every false way.

פ PE

129 Your testimonies are wonderful;
Therefore my soul keeps them.
130 The entrance of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple.
131 I opened my mouth and panted,
For I longed for Your commandments.
132 Look upon me and be merciful to me,
As Your custom *is* toward those who love Your name.
133 Direct my steps by Your word,
And let no iniquity have dominion over me.
134 Redeem me from the oppression of man,
That I may keep Your precepts.
135 Make Your face shine upon Your servant,
And teach me Your statutes.
136 Rivers of water run down from my eyes,
Because *men* do not keep Your law.

צ TSADDE

137 Righteous *are* You, O LORD,
And upright *are* Your judgments.
138 Your testimonies, *which* You have commanded,
Are righteous and very faithful.
139 My zeal has consumed me,
Because my enemies have forgotten Your words.
140 Your word *is* very pure;
Therefore Your servant loves it.

141 I *am* small and despised,
Yet I do not forget Your precepts.
142 Your righteousness *is* an everlasting
righteousness,
And Your law *is* truth.
143 Trouble and anguish have
overtaken me,
Yet Your commandments *are* my
delights.
144 The righteousness of Your testimonies
is everlasting;
Give me understanding, and I shall
live.

ק Qoph

145 I cry out with *my* whole heart;
Hear me, O LORD!
I will keep Your statutes.
146 I cry out to You;
Save me, and I will keep Your
testimonies.
147 I rise before the dawning of the
morning,
And cry for help;
I hope in Your word.
148 My eyes are awake through the *night*
watches,
That I may meditate on Your word.
149 Hear my voice according to Your
lovingkindness;
O LORD, revive me according to Your
justice.
150 They draw near who follow after
wickedness;
They are far from Your law.
151 You *are* near, O LORD,
And all Your commandments *are* truth.
152 Concerning Your testimonies,
I have known of old that You have
founded them forever.

ר Resh

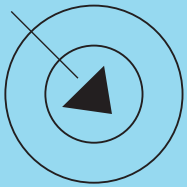
153 Consider my affliction and
deliver me,
For I do not forget Your law.
154 Plead my cause and redeem me;
Revive me according to Your word.
155 Salvation *is* far from the wicked,
For they do not seek Your statutes.
156 Great *are* Your tender mercies,
O LORD;
Revive me according to Your
judgments.
157 Many *are* my persecutors and my
enemies,
Yet I do not turn from Your
testimonies.
158 I see the treacherous, and am
disgusted,
Because they do not keep Your word.
159 Consider how I love Your precepts;
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your
lovingkindness.
160 The entirety of Your word *is* truth,
And every one of Your righteous
judgments *endures* forever.

שׁ Shin

161 Princes persecute me without a cause,
But my heart stands in awe of Your
word.
162 I rejoice at Your word
As one who finds great treasure.
163 I hate and abhor lying,
But I love Your law.
164 Seven times a day I praise You,
Because of Your righteous judgments.
165 Great peace have those who love Your
law,
And nothing causes them to stumble.
166 LORD, I hope for Your salvation,
And I do Your commandments.
167 My soul keeps Your testimonies,
And I love them exceedingly.
168 I keep Your precepts and Your
testimonies,
For all my ways *are* before You.

ת Tau

169 Let my cry come before You, O LORD;
Give me understanding according to
Your word.
170 Let my supplication come before You;
Deliver me according to Your word.
171 My lips shall utter praise,
For You teach me Your statutes.
172 My tongue shall speak of Your word,
For all Your commandments *are*
righteousness.
173 Let Your hand become my help,
For I have chosen Your precepts.
174 I long for Your salvation, O LORD,
And Your law *is* my delight.
175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise
You;
And let Your judgments help me.
176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep;
Seek Your servant,
For I do not forget Your
commandments.



PROMISE

God promises to always watch out for you.

Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep (Ps. 121:4).

The Lord is the protector of Israel—God protects everyone who trusts in Him. He protects us from the enemy of His people, Satan. Satan hates those who want to live for God. He will throw whatever he can at us to get us off track. But as long as we stand under God's protection—trusting Him and obeying Him—Satan's plans will never keep us down.

And God doesn't ever let His guard down. He doesn't get bored or tired. He never tunes you out and will never let you down. You can call on Him anytime you feel the enemy's attack. If Satan needles you with doubt at midnight, if he attacks you with fear at three a.m., if he throws you a temptation at high noon—whatever and whenever—the Lord can hear you call Him and will rescue you.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 11:4; Isaiah 40:28

PSALM 120

PLEA FOR RELIEF FROM BITTER FOES

A Song of Ascents.

In my distress I cried to the LORD,
And He heard me.
2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips
And from a deceitful tongue.

3 What shall be given to you,
Or what shall be done to you,
You false tongue?
4 Sharp arrows of the warrior,
With coals of the broom tree!

5 Woe is me, that I dwell in Meshech,
That I dwell among the tents of Kedar!
6 My soul has dwelt too long
With one who hates peace.
7 I *am for* peace;
But when I speak, they *are* for war.

PSALM 121

GOD THE HELP OF THOSE WHO SEEK HIM

A Song of Ascents.

I will lift up my eyes to the hills—
From whence comes my help?
2 My help *comes* from the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not allow your foot to be moved;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
4 Behold, He who keeps Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD *is* your keeper;
The LORD *is* your shade at your right hand.
6 The sun shall not strike you by day,
Nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD shall preserve you from all evil;
He shall preserve your soul.
8 The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in
From this time forth, and even forevermore.

PSALM 122

THE JOY OF GOING TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go into the house of the LORD."
2 Our feet have been standing
Within your gates, O Jerusalem!

3 Jerusalem is built
As a city that is compact together,
4 Where the tribes go up,
The tribes of the LORD,
To the Testimony of Israel,

MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 122:1

Church Going to church services regularly is important for at least three huge reasons. First, God wants us to gather together with other believers so we can learn about Him, serve Him, and worship Him. Second, church meetings and other functions are great opportunities for you to find Christian friends and people you can look up to. Third, when you get together with people who know and love the Lord, they can help you grow in your relationship with God and learn more about His Word. They can also give you encouragement when you need it.

You may think the church is filled with hypocrites who don't do what God wants. In many cases, you're exactly right. But the church is flawed because it's full of humans—imperfect people who mess up, just like you. Jesus came to help imperfect people. Remember, Christians aren't perfect people, they are just forgiven people.

Give the family of God a chance. Check out different churches; just make sure the one you choose confesses Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Savior. Pray about your decision and ask God to help you find your place. Then get involved and grow with other Christians. You'll be glad you did. (See also: Ps. 26:8; John 2:17; Acts 2:46, 47; Heb. 10:25.)

Words to Live By

House: The word translated in Psalm 122:1 as "house" is the Hebrew word *bayith* (bah'-yith). A *bayith* is the place where someone lives. In the Old Testament, God would symbolically show His presence in His holy temple, His house. Since we now know the church is not the building but the people, it may be confusing to hear about the "house of the Lord." In the New Testament, we learn that the Holy Spirit lives within God's people (John 14:15–17). We are actually His "house," His *bayith*.

To give thanks to the name of the LORD.
5For thrones are set there for judgment,
The thrones of the house of David.

6Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
"May they prosper who love you.
7Peace be within your walls,
Prosperity within your palaces."
8For the sake of my brethren and companions,
I will now say, "Peace *be* within you."
9Because of the house of the LORD our God
I will seek your good.

PSALM 123

PRAYER FOR RELIEF FROM CONTEMPT

A Song of Ascents.

Unto You I lift up my eyes,
O You who dwell in the heavens.
2Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* to the hand of their masters,
As the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
So our eyes *look* to the LORD our God,
Until He has mercy on us.

3Have mercy on us, O LORD, have mercy on us!
For we are exceedingly filled with contempt.
4Our soul is exceedingly filled
With the scorn of those who are at ease,
With the contempt of the proud.

PSALM 124

THE LORD THE DEFENSE OF HIS PEOPLE

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

\\ If it had not been the LORD who was on our side,"
Let Israel now say—
2"If it had not been the LORD who was on our side,

When men rose up against us,
3Then they would have swallowed us
alive,
When their wrath was kindled
against us;
4Then the waters would have
overwhelmed us,
The stream would have gone over our
soul;
5Then the swollen waters
Would have gone over our soul."

6Blessed *be* the LORD,
Who has not given us *as* prey to their
teeth.
7Our soul has escaped as a bird from
the snare of the fowlers;[a]
The snare is broken, and we have
escaped.
8Our help *is* in the name of the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.

PSALM 125

THE LORD THE STRENGTH OF HIS PEOPLE

A Song of Ascents.

Those who trust in the LORD
Are like Mount Zion,
Which cannot be moved, *but* abides
forever.

Psalm 125:2

Jerusalem was a fairly well-protected city. The mountains that surrounded Jerusalem sloped into valleys on the eastern and western sides of the city, making it difficult for opposing armies to attack from those directions. The ravines that lay south of the city made it difficult for an enemy to approach from that direction as well.

2As the mountains surround
Jerusalem,
So the LORD surrounds His people
From this time forth and forever.

3For the scepter of wickedness shall
not rest
On the land allotted to the righteous,
Lest the righteous reach out their
hands to iniquity.

4Do good, O LORD, to *those who are* good,
And to *those who are* upright in their
hearts.

5As for such as turn aside to their
crooked ways,
The LORD shall lead them away
With the workers of iniquity.

Peace *be* upon Israel!

PSALM 126

A JOYFUL RETURN TO ZION

A Song of Ascents.

When the LORD brought back the
captivity of Zion,
We were like those who dream.
2Then our mouth was filled with
laughter,
And our tongue with singing.
Then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for
them."
3The LORD has done great things for us,
And we are glad.

4Bring back our captivity, O LORD,
As the streams in the South.

5Those who sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.
6He who continually goes forth
weeping,
Bearing seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come again with
rejoicing,
Bringing his sheaves *with him.*

PSALM 127

LABORING AND PROSPERING WITH THE LORD

A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.

Unless the LORD builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it;
Unless the LORD guards the city,
The watchman stays awake in vain.
2*It is* vain for you to rise up early,
To sit up late,
To eat the bread of sorrows;
For so He gives His beloved sleep.

124:7 [a]That is, persons who catch birds in a trap or snare

MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 125:1

Trust Real trust in God goes a lot deeper than being able to say, "Yeah, sure, I believe in God." James said, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!" (James 2:19). Real trust means letting go of your life and your heart and giving God control of them. It means obeying Him. James used Abraham as an example: "Do you see that faith was working together with [Abraham's] works, and by works faith was made perfect?" (James 2:22).

People who trust God in this way are like Mount Zion. They're immovable, unshakable. The way a mountain stands up against the forces of nature, they are able, by God's Spirit, to stand against all the stuff that life throws at them.

But Mount Zion isn't just any mountain. This is the spot in Jerusalem God chose for His temple, the place where He would live among His people. Now that you've put your trust in Him, He makes His home in you. (See also: John 14:15–17; Heb. 12:22–29.)

Words to Live By

Trust: The word translated as "trust" in Psalm 125:1 is the Hebrew word *batach* (baw-takh'). This word means "to be bold and confident and have absolute assurance." The meaning of *batach* implies a feeling of complete security and safety. With this definition in mind, is there anyone besides God who is deserving of our *batach*?

3 Behold, children *are* a heritage from the LORD,
The fruit of the womb *is* a reward.
4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So *are* the children of one's youth.
5 Happy *is* the man who has his quiver full of them;
They shall not be ashamed,
But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

ABORTION
How does God view all children?
Psalm 127:3–5

PSALM 128

BLESSINGS OF THOSE WHO FEAR THE LORD

A Song of Ascents.

Blessed *is* every one who fears the LORD,
Who walks in His ways.

2 When you eat the labor of your hands,
You *shall be* happy, and *it shall be* well with you.
3 Your wife *shall be* like a fruitful vine
In the very heart of your house,
Your children like olive plants
All around your table.
4 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed
Who fears the LORD.

5 The LORD bless you out of Zion,
And may you see the good of Jerusalem
All the days of your life.
6 Yes, may you see your children's children.

Peace *be* upon Israel!

PSALM 129

SONG OF VICTORY OVER ZION'S ENEMIES

Song of Ascents.

"Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth,"
Let Israel now say—
2 "Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth;



LIFE APP

Worry / Psalm 127:2

Most of us are familiar with anxiety and worry. This world is full of pressures and deadlines and stresses. Before you know it, anxiety can take over your heart and mind leaving you unable to function effectively in your own life. You may find yourself pushing so hard that when you finally lay your head down at night, it can seem only a moment passes by before you're up again, facing another day of expectations. In a life filled with anxiety and worry, each day may look a little darker than the one before. Constant worry caused by trying to keep up in the world's rat race can rob you of joy, peace, and rest.

Is that really what life is supposed to be about? Is doing what we think we have to do to get ahead worth the damage that anxiety is doing to our minds and bodies? Not according to Psalm 127:2: "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep." When you continue to "eat the bread of sorrows," or try to live only by what the world can offer, you will not be able to have true rest or peace.

But by focusing your life instead on Christ, you can live in His peace and joy, which surpass anything the world could offer. This doesn't mean you will never get stressed out, or that nothing will ever make you nervous or concerned. But it does mean that no matter what pressures this world throws at you, you can ultimately know that you're alright. The Lord can restore to you the rest and peace that anxiety and worry try to steal. He will give you joy that does not depend on your circumstances. The cares and worries of the world will exist until Jesus returns. You will have to deal with them, but they do not have to control your life. You can cast "your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 129:4

God Is Just God is completely righteous. That doesn't just mean that He follows the rules. Of course He does—they're His rules. But He goes beyond that. He always does what is right for *you*. He knows you inside and out. He only allows things into your life that will help you grow and become the person He knows you can be; He knows the things that will make you more like Jesus.

That doesn't mean that everything that happens to you came from God. People make the choice to sin and it can have a huge affect on a lot of lives; but sin is *never* God's will. Sometimes Satan will throw hurtful things into your life. God allowed him to do that with Job—the bad things that happened to Job did not come from God, but He knew what Job was going through and made everything come out right in the end.

That's what's cool—God can even take people's mistakes and Satan's wicked plans and turn them into something good. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." He is so good at doing right, He takes even the awful stuff in your life and turns it into something great—something that makes you stronger and brings you closer to Him. (See also: Ps. 7:9; 119:137; Is. 30:18.)

Words to Live By

Righteous: The word translated as "righteous" in Psalm 129:4 is the Hebrew word *tsaddiyq* (tsad-deek'). It is an adjective meaning "just and morally right." God is guided by truth, reason, and justice at all times. Only God is truly and completely righteous.

Yet they have not prevailed
against me.
3 The plowers plowed on my back;
They made their furrows long."
4 The LORD *is* righteous;
He has cut in pieces the cords of the
wicked.

5 Let all those who hate Zion
Be put to shame and turned back.
6 Let them be as the grass *on* the
housetops,
Which withers before it grows up,
7 With which the reaper does not fill
his hand,
Nor he who binds sheaves, his
arms.
8 Neither let those who pass by them
say,
"The blessing of the LORD *be* upon
you;
We bless you in the name of the
LORD!"

PSALM 130

WAITING FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THE LORD

A Song of Ascents.

Out of the depths I have cried to
You, O LORD;
2 Lord, hear my voice!
Let Your ears be attentive
To the voice of my supplications.

3 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
4 But *there is* forgiveness with You,
That You may be feared.

5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
And in His word I do hope.
6 My soul *waits* for the Lord
More than those who watch for the
morning—
Yes, more than those who watch for the
morning.

7 O Israel, hope in the LORD;
For with the LORD *there is* mercy,
And with Him *is* abundant redemption.
8 And He shall redeem Israel
From all his iniquities.

PSALM 131

SIMPLE TRUST IN THE LORD

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

LORD, my heart is not haughty,
Nor my eyes lofty.
Neither do I concern myself with great matters,
Nor with things too profound for me.

2 Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul,
Like a weaned child with his mother;
Like a weaned child *is* my soul within me.

3 O Israel, hope in the LORD
From this time forth and forever.

PSALM 132

THE ETERNAL DWELLING OF GOD IN ZION

A Song of Ascents.

LORD, remember David
And all his afflictions;
2 How he swore to the LORD,
And vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob:
3 "Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house,
Or go up to the comfort of my bed;
4 I will not give sleep to my eyes
Or slumber to my eyelids,
5 Until I find a place for the LORD,
A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

Psalm 132:6

If the town's name had not been changed somewhere along the line, we might be singing "O Little Town of Ephrathah" at Christmastime. Ephrathah is the ancient name for the town of Bethlehem.

6 Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah;
We found it in the fields of the woods.[a]

7 Let us go into His tabernacle;
Let us worship at His footstool.
8 Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place,
You and the ark of Your strength.
9 Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness,
And let Your saints shout for joy.

10 For Your servant David's sake,
Do not turn away the face of Your Anointed.

11 The LORD has sworn *in* truth to David;
He will not turn from it:
"I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body.
12 If your sons will keep My covenant
And My testimony which I shall teach them,
Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore."

13 For the LORD has chosen Zion;
He has desired *it* for His dwelling place:
14 "This *is* My resting place forever;
Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.
15 I will abundantly bless her provision;
I will satisfy her poor with bread.
16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation,
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
17 There I will make the horn of David grow;
I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed.
18 His enemies I will clothe with shame,
But upon Himself His crown shall flourish."

PSALM 133

BLESSED UNITY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is*
For brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 *It is* like the precious oil upon the head,
Running down on the beard,
The beard of Aaron,

132:6 [a] Hebrew *Jaar*



WORLD APP

Patriotism / Psalm 133:1

Patriotism is normally defined as "the feeling of love and devotion people feel toward their country." When citizens of the United States think of patriotism, they most likely recall the words of the Pledge of Allegiance they learned as children: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Those words mean we promise, as citizens of the US, to always seek to do what's best for our country. It means we believe each citizen deserves freedom and justice. It means we will be loyal to our leaders. But it also means we recognize that God is the One who has the final say.

The most important aspect of patriotism is the effect it has on the people in a nation. When people are patriotic, they see more clearly that the people of a nation need to operate in unity (working together with the same goal in mind). Where unity exists, much good can be accomplished. When there is discord and strong disagreement, very little ever gets done. Jesus said, "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand" (Mark 3:24).

Patriotism is not a subject that is directly addressed in the Bible. But the principle of unity is often presented as a quality God desires for His people. We should always strive to do what's best for our country and obey its laws. But we should never forget the most important part of our pledge to the flag: we are one nation *under God*.



LIFE APP

Denominations / Psalm 133:1

There are Baptists and Presbyterians and Catholics and . . . the list of denominations in the Christian church goes on and on. So what's up with so many different kinds of churches? If we all love and serve God, why can't we all just worship Him together?

To understand, we must first realize that any church that teaches the basics of Christianity is a Christian church. Those basics are: Jesus is the Son of God; He was born as a man, died on the cross for our sins, rose again on the third day, and is seated at the right hand of God in heaven. If any religious group doesn't believe and teach all those things, they are not Christians. Just like everyone has their own personality, so does each denomination in the Christian faith. Some denominations are more formal and the leaders wear beautiful robes; some denominations are a bit more casual and the pastor may wear jeans. Some enjoy organ music and some prefer drums and guitars. Some church buildings have gorgeous stained-glass windows and some groups meet in high school gymnasiums. The one thing they have in common is they all worship Jesus as the Son of God.

Unfortunately, some people see the different expressions of faith as proof that Christianity is not for real. They think all the denominations disagree with one another, so they think no one really knows the truth. This can even cause some people to deny God—if the ones who serve Him can't get it together, there must be no truth in what they believe.

Even though the Christian church may be expressed in a lot of different ways, it is the same faith. The Bible tells us that other people will know we are Christians and what we believe is real by the way we love each other (John 13:35; James 2:14–17; 1 John 4:12–16). Instead of arguing about denominations, we should realize we all worship the same Lord; we just do it in different ways. Then we can serve God together and the world will see the truth of God's love in our lives.

Running down on the edge of his
garments.
3 *It is* like the dew of Hermon,
Descending upon the mountains of
Zion;
For there the LORD commanded the
blessing—
Life forevermore.

PSALM 134

PRAISING THE LORD IN HIS HOUSE AT NIGHT

A Song of Ascents.

Behold, bless the LORD,
All *you* servants of the LORD,
Who by night stand in the house of
the LORD!
2 Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary,
And bless the LORD.

3 The LORD who made heaven and
earth
Bless you from Zion!

PSALM 135

PRAISE TO GOD IN CREATION AND REDEMPTION

Praise the LORD!

Praise the name of the LORD;
Praise *Him,* O you servants of the
LORD!
2 You who stand in the house of the
LORD,
In the courts of the house of our God,
3 Praise the LORD, for the LORD *is*
good;
Sing praises to His name, for *it is*
pleasant.
4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob for
Himself,
Israel for His special treasure.

5 For I know that the LORD *is* great,
And our Lord *is* above all gods.
6 Whatever the LORD pleases He does,
In heaven and in earth,
In the seas and in all deep places.
7 He causes the vapors to ascend from
the ends of the earth;
He makes lightning for the rain;
He brings the wind out of His
treasuries.
8 He destroyed the firstborn of Egypt,
Both of man and beast.
9 He sent signs and wonders into the
midst of you, O Egypt,
Upon Pharaoh and all his servants.
10 He defeated many nations
And slew mighty kings—
11 Sihon king of the Amorites,
Og king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan—

Psalm 135:11

Sihon and Og were the first kings to try to stand in the way of the Israelites as they marched to the land God had promised them. Both kings attacked without cause when the Israelites tried to pass peacefully through their land. As you may have guessed, both kings were soundly defeated.

12 And gave their land *as* a heritage,
A heritage to Israel His people.

13 Your name, O LORD, *endures* forever,
Your fame, O LORD, throughout all
generations.
14 For the LORD will judge His people,
And He will have compassion on His
servants.

15 The idols of the nations *are* silver and
gold,
The work of men's hands.
16 They have mouths, but they do not
speak;
Eyes they have, but they do not see;
17 They have ears, but they do not hear;
Nor is there *any* breath in their
mouths.
18 Those who make them are like
them;
So is everyone who trusts in them.

19 Bless the LORD, O house of Israel!
Bless the LORD, O house of Aaron!
20 Bless the LORD, O house of Levi!
You who fear the LORD, bless the
LORD!
21 Blessed be the LORD out of Zion,
Who dwells in Jerusalem!

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 136

THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS ENDURING MERCY

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.
2Oh, give thanks to the God of gods!
For His mercy *endures* forever.
3Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords!
For His mercy *endures* forever:

4To Him who alone does great wonders,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
5To Him who by wisdom made the heavens,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
6To Him who laid out the earth above the waters,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
7To Him who made great lights,
For His mercy *endures* forever—
8The sun to rule by day,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
9The moon and stars to rule by night,
For His mercy *endures* forever.

10To Him who struck Egypt in their firstborn,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
11And brought out Israel from among them,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
12With a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
13To Him who divided the Red Sea in two,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
14And made Israel pass through the midst of it,

For His mercy *endures* forever;
15But overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
16To Him who led His people through the wilderness,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
17To Him who struck down great kings,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
18And slew famous kings,
For His mercy *endures* forever—
19Sihon king of the Amorites,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
20And Og king of Bashan,
For His mercy *endures* forever—
21And gave their land as a heritage,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
22A heritage to Israel His servant,
For His mercy *endures* forever.

23Who remembered us in our lowly state,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
24And rescued us from our enemies,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
25Who gives food to all flesh,
For His mercy *endures* forever.

26Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

PSALM 137

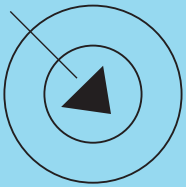
LONGING FOR ZION IN A FOREIGN LAND

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept
When we remembered Zion.
2We hung our harps
Upon the willows in the midst of it.
3For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song,
And those who plundered us *requested* mirth,
Saying, "Sing us *one* of the songs of Zion!"

4How shall we sing the LORD's song
In a foreign land?
5If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *its skill!*
6If I do not remember you,
Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth—
If I do not exalt Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.

7Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom
The day of Jerusalem,
Who said, "Raze *it,* raze *it,*
To its very foundation!"

8O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed,
Happy the one who repays you as you have served us!



PROMISE

God promises always to be merciful to you.

The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever; do not forsake the works of Your hands (Ps. 138:8).

Some people think of God as some kind of holy hater sitting up in heaven with a giant taser just waiting for someone to step out of line so He can use it. It's true that God isn't pleased when you do something you know you shouldn't, but He's not the guy with the taser. His discipline comes out of His love. Everything He does, even if it's not so pleasant to you at the time, has your best interest at heart.

Look at how Jesus talked to Martha when she complained to Him about her sister: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41, 42). Jesus didn't scream at Martha; He gently pointed her in the right way. He treated Thomas the same way. When Thomas wouldn't believe that Jesus had risen from the dead until he saw and touched Jesus' wounded hands, Jesus didn't refuse to show him what he needed to see. He simply said, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

You can count on God to treat you gently and mercifully, even when He's letting you know you're out of line.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// 2 Chronicles 30:9; Lamentations 3:22, 23; Proverbs 13:24; Hebrews 12:5–11

9 Happy the one who takes and dashes
Your little ones against the rock!

THANKFULNESS

What reasons do we have to be thankful to God?

Psalm 138:1–8

PSALM 138

THE LORD'S GOODNESS TO THE FAITHFUL

A Psalm of David.

I will praise You with my whole heart;
Before the gods I will sing praises to You.
2 I will worship toward Your holy temple,
And praise Your name
For Your lovingkindness and Your truth;
For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.
3 In the day when I cried out, You answered me,
And made me bold *with* strength in my soul.

4 All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O LORD,
When they hear the words of Your mouth.
5 Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the LORD,
For great *is* the glory of the LORD.
6 Though the LORD *is* on high,
Yet He regards the lowly;
But the proud He knows from afar.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
You will revive me;
You will stretch out Your hand
Against the wrath of my enemies,
And Your right hand will save me.
8 The LORD will perfect *that which* concerns me;
Your mercy, O LORD, *endures* forever;

Do not forsake the works of Your
hands.

PSALM 139

GOD'S PERFECT KNOWLEDGE OF MAN

For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

O LORD, You have searched me and
known *me.*
2You know my sitting down and
my rising up;
You understand my thought afar off.
3You comprehend my path and my
lying down,
And are acquainted with all my ways.
4For *there is* not a word on my tongue,
But behold, O LORD, You know it
altogether.
5You have hedged me behind and
before,
And laid Your hand upon me.
6*Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful
for me;
It is high, I cannot *attain* it.

7Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your
presence?
8If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You
are there.
9*If* I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of
the sea,
10Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.
11If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall[a]
on me,"
Even the night shall be light about me;
12Indeed, the darkness shall not hide
from You,
But the night shines as the day;
The darkness and the light *are* both
alike *to You.*

LIFE
Does God create each person carefully?
Psalm 139:13, 14

13For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother's womb.
14I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and*
wonderfully made;[a]
Marvelous are Your works,
And *that* my soul knows very well.
15My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And skillfully wrought in the lowest
parts of the earth.
16Your eyes saw my substance, being yet
unformed.
And in Your book they all were
written,
The days fashioned for me,
When *as yet there were* none of them.

ABORTION
Are children formed by chance?
Psalm 139:13–16

17How precious also are Your thoughts
to me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
18*If* I should count them, they would be
more in number than the sand;
When I awake, I am still with You.

19Oh, that You would slay the wicked,
O God!
Depart from me, therefore, you
bloodthirsty men.
20For they speak against You wickedly;
Your enemies take *Your name* in
vain.[a]
21Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate
You?
And do I not loathe those who rise up
against You?
22I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.

23Search me, O God, and know my
heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
24And see if *there is any* wicked way
in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

139:11 [a]Vulgate and Symmachus read *cover.*
139:14 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *You are fearfully wonderful.* **139:20** [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *They take your cities in vain.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 139:7

God's Presence Do you ever wish you could hide from God? Maybe you really want to do something you know God won't like. Is it easier to go against your conscience if you pretend that God doesn't know what you're up to?

The truth is you can't hide from God. When you run a red light, He's there. He's there when you cheat on a test. When you treat someone badly, He sees it. If you say ugly things about someone, He hears you.

You can't even hide your thoughts and feelings from God. He's spirit, and He's everywhere—even inside your head and heart. He sees when you're jealous or angry. He knows when you're lonely or sad. You can't get away from Him. And once you realize what He's all about and how much He loves you, why would you want to? It's okay for Him to see all about you. He made you. He knows you're not perfect, but He's working in you to help you become all He created you to be. (See also: Ps. 139; Jer. 23:23; Rom. 8:38, 39.)

Words to Live By

Presence: The word translated as "presence" in Psalm 139:7 is the Hebrew word *paneh* (paw-neh'). The literal meaning of this word is "face." It also implies the idea of turning toward or looking at something. God is always turned toward His people. He always watches; there is nothing that can happen to us without God being aware. His *paneh* is always with us.

PSALM 140

PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL MEN

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Deliver me, O LORD, from evil men;
Preserve me from violent men,
2 Who plan evil things in *their* hearts;
They continually gather together *for* war.
3 They sharpen their tongues like a serpent;
The poison of asps *is* under their lips.
Selah

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked;
Preserve me from violent men,
Who have purposed to make my steps stumble.
5 The proud have hidden a snare for me, and cords;
They have spread a net by the wayside;
They have set traps for me. *Selah*

6 I said to the LORD: "You *are* my God;
Hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.
7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation,
You have covered my head in the day of battle.
8 Do not grant, O LORD, the desires of the wicked;
Do not further his *wicked* scheme,
Lest they be exalted. *Selah*

9 "*As for* the head of those who surround me,
Let the evil of their lips cover them;
10 Let burning coals fall upon them;
Let them be cast into the fire,
Into deep pits, that they rise not up again.
11 Let not a slanderer be established in the earth;
Let evil hunt the violent man to overthrow *him*."

12 I know that the LORD will maintain
The cause of the afflicted,
And justice for the poor.
13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name;
The upright shall dwell in Your presence.

PSALM 141

PRAYER FOR SAFEKEEPING FROM WICKEDNESS

A Psalm of David.

LORD, I cry out to You;
Make haste to me!
Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You.
2Let my prayer be set before You *as* incense,
The lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice.

3Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;
Keep watch over the door of my lips.
4Do not incline my heart to any evil thing,
To practice wicked works
With men who work iniquity;
And do not let me eat of their delicacies.

5Let the righteous strike me;
It shall be a kindness.
And let him rebuke me;
It shall be as excellent oil;
Let my head not refuse it.

For still my prayer *is* against the deeds of the wicked.
6Their judges are overthrown by the sides of the cliff,
And they hear my words, for they are sweet.
7Our bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave,
As when one plows and breaks up the earth.

8But my eyes *are* upon You, O GOD the Lord;
In You I take refuge;
Do not leave my soul destitute.
9Keep me from the snares they have laid for me,
And from the traps of the workers of iniquity.

10Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
While I escape safely.

DISCOURAGEMENT
To whom should we voice our concerns?
Psalm 142:1–7

PSALM 142

A PLEA FOR RELIEF FROM PERSECUTORS

A Contemplation[a] of David. A Prayer when he was in the cave.

I cry out to the LORD with my voice;
With my voice to the LORD I make my supplication.
2I pour out my complaint before Him;
I declare before Him my trouble.

3When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,
Then You knew my path.
In the way in which I walk
They have secretly set a snare for me.
4Look on *my* right hand and see,
For *there is* no one who acknowledges me;
Refuge has failed me;
No one cares for my soul.

5I cried out to You, O LORD:
I said, "You *are* my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living.
6Attend to my cry,
For I am brought very low;
Deliver me from my persecutors,
For they are stronger than I.
7Bring my soul out of prison,
That I may praise Your name;
The righteous shall surround me,
For You shall deal bountifully with me."

PSALM 143

AN EARNEST APPEAL FOR GUIDANCE AND DELIVERANCE

A Psalm of David.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
Give ear to my supplications!
In Your faithfulness answer me,
And in Your righteousness.
2Do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For in Your sight no one living is righteous.

142:title [a]Hebrew *Maschil*

MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 144:4

Shadows that Count Sometimes on an overcast day, there's a tiny break in the clouds that allows the sun to peak through. When that happens, for a brief second you can see your shadow—just barely—on the ground. But when the clouds shift, your shadow disappears.

David said your life on earth is like that shadow—it shows up for just a short moment, and then it's gone. It may not seem that way right now. Maybe you see your life stretching out forever in front of you. But when compared with eternity, even the longest life on earth is a "passing shadow."

This isn't cause to fear or be depressed. Instead, it's a reminder to make the most out of each moment of life you have. The old saying "time flies when you're having fun" is true. One day you'll wake up and wonder how the years went by so quickly. So cherish and appreciate each moment God gives you. Pay attention to your life every day. Don't waste it by wishing to be older or smarter or better-looking. Appreciate the moment you're living in, and make it count. (See also: Ps. 39:5; 62:9; Eccl. 6:12.)

Words to Live By

Shadow: The word translated in Psalm 144:4 as "shadow" is the Hebrew word *tsel* (tsale). It means "shade" or "shadow." This word is often used in the Bible to communicate the idea of something very temporary. Sometimes life throws difficult things at us that can seem endless, but those things are really like shadows—they are temporary. In those challenging times, we just need to hold on to Jesus and He'll get us through.

3 For the enemy has persecuted my soul;
He has crushed my life to the ground;
He has made me dwell in darkness,
Like those who have long been dead.
4 Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me;
My heart within me is distressed.

5 I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all Your works;
I muse on the work of Your hands.
6 I spread out my hands to You;
My soul *longs* for You like a thirsty land. *Selah*

7 Answer me speedily, O LORD;
My spirit fails!
Do not hide Your face from me,
Lest I be like those who go down into the pit.
8 Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning,
For in You do I trust;
Cause me to know the way in which I should walk,
For I lift up my soul to You.

9 Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies;
In You I take shelter.[a]
10 Teach me to do Your will,
For You *are* my God;
Your Spirit *is* good.
Lead me in the land of uprightness.

11 Revive me, O LORD, for Your name's sake!
For Your righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.
12 In Your mercy cut off my enemies,
And destroy all those who afflict my soul;
For I *am* Your servant.

PSALM 144

A SONG TO THE LORD WHO PRESERVES AND PROSPERS HIS PEOPLE

A Psalm of David.

Blessed *be* the LORD my Rock,
Who trains my hands for war,
And my fingers for battle—

143:9 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *To You I flee.*

2 My lovingkindness and my fortress,
My high tower and my deliverer,
My shield and *the One* in whom I take refuge,
Who subdues my people[a] under me.

3 LORD, what *is* man, that You take knowledge of him?
Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him?
4 Man is like a breath;
His days *are* like a passing shadow.

5 Bow down Your heavens, O LORD, and come down;
Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
6 Flash forth lightning and scatter them;
Shoot out Your arrows and destroy them.
7 Stretch out Your hand from above;
Rescue me and deliver me out of great waters,
From the hand of foreigners,
8 Whose mouth speaks lying words,
And whose right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.

9 I will sing a new song to You, O God;
On a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You,
10 *The One* who gives salvation to kings,
Who delivers David His servant
From the deadly sword.

11 Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of foreigners,
Whose mouth speaks lying words,
And whose right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood—
12 That our sons *may be* as plants grown up in their youth;
That our daughters *may be* as pillars,
Sculptured in palace style;
13 *That* our barns *may be* full,
Supplying all kinds of produce;
That our sheep may bring forth thousands
And ten thousands in our fields;
14 *That* our oxen *may be* well laden;
That there be no breaking in or going out;
That there be no outcry in our streets.
15 Happy *are* the people who are in such a state;
Happy *are* the people whose God *is* the LORD!

PSALM 145

A SONG OF GOD'S MAJESTY AND LOVE

A Praise of David.

I will extol You, my God, O King;
And I will bless Your name forever and ever.

Psalm 145:1

This psalm was written as an acrostic. In its original Hebrew form, each of the psalm's twenty-two sections begins with a corresponding letter of the Hebrew alphabet—from *aleph* to *tav*. (If it were written in English, the first line of the first section would begin with A, the second section would begin with B, and so on.)

2 Every day I will bless You,
And I will praise Your name forever and ever.
3 Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
And His greatness *is* unsearchable.

4 One generation shall praise Your works to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.
5 I[a] will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty,
And on Your wondrous works.[b]
6 *Men* shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts,
And I will declare Your greatness.
7 They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness,
And shall sing of Your righteousness.

8 The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion,
Slow to anger and great in mercy.
9 The LORD *is* good to all,

144:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Syriac and Targum read *the peoples* (compare 18:47). **145:5** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *They*. [b]Literally *on the words of Your wondrous works*

And His tender mercies *are* over all
His works.

10 All Your works shall praise You,
O LORD,
And Your saints shall bless You.
11 They shall speak of the glory of Your
kingdom,
And talk of Your power,
12 To make known to the sons of men His
mighty acts,
And the glorious majesty of His
kingdom.
13 Your kingdom *is* an everlasting
kingdom,
And Your dominion *endures*
throughout all generations.[a]

14 The LORD upholds all who fall,
And raises up all *who are* bowed
down.
15 The eyes of all look expectantly to
You,
And You give them their food in due
season.
16 You open Your hand
And satisfy the desire of every living
thing.

17 The LORD *is* righteous in all His ways,
Gracious in all His works.
18 The LORD *is* near to all who call upon
Him,
To all who call upon Him in truth.
19 He will fulfill the desire of those who
fear Him;
He also will hear their cry and save
them.
20 The LORD preserves all who love Him,
But all the wicked He will destroy.
21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the
LORD,
And all flesh shall bless His holy name
Forever and ever.

PSALM 146

THE HAPPINESS OF THOSE WHOSE HELP IS THE LORD

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!
2 While I live I will praise the LORD;
I will sing praises to my God while I
have my being.
3 Do not put your trust in princes,
Nor in a son of man, in whom *there is*
no help.
4 His spirit departs, he returns to his
earth;
In that very day his plans perish.

5 Happy *is he* who *has* the God of Jacob
for his help,
Whose hope *is* in the LORD his God,
6 Who made heaven and earth,
The sea, and all that *is* in them;
Who keeps truth forever,
7 Who executes justice for the
oppressed,
Who gives food to the hungry.
The LORD gives freedom to the
prisoners.

8 The LORD opens *the eyes of* the
blind;
The LORD raises those who are
bowed down;
The LORD loves the righteous.
9 The LORD watches over the
strangers;
He relieves the fatherless and
widow;
But the way of the wicked He turns
upside down.

10 The LORD shall reign forever—
Your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 147

PRAISE TO GOD FOR HIS WORD AND PROVIDENCE

Praise the LORD!
For *it is* good to sing praises to our
God;
For *it is* pleasant, *and* praise is
beautiful.

2 The LORD builds up Jerusalem;
He gathers together the outcasts of
Israel.
3 He heals the brokenhearted

145:13 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate add *The LORD is faithful in all His words, And holy in all His works.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PSALM 147:5

Understanding What tests the limits of your understanding? Advanced calculus? Statistics? Gravity-defying slam dunks? Italian opera? The creation of the world in six days? We all have limits to our understanding. We all reach some point at which we just don't get it. It's beyond us. We can't get our heads around it. Our brains won't process anymore.

Our capacity to understand is limited, but God's is not; He understands everything. Sometimes we don't even understand why we do the things we do. But God does. He has infinite understanding. He sees into our souls very clearly. So when you're feeling confused and not sure what to do or which way to turn, turn to the One who understands everything infinitely. He gives flawless directions, and His advice is perfect. (See also: Ps. 139; Heb. 4:13; 1 John 3:20.)

Words to Live By

Understanding: The word translated in Psalm 147:5 as "understanding" is the Hebrew word *tebuwnah* (teb-oo-naw'). The same word is used throughout Proverbs (for example: 2:3; 3:13; 5:1). It conveys the idea of knowledge we are to seek out and cherish. The more we learn about God and our world, the more we will be able to understand—not just facts but pure truth from God.

And binds up their wounds.
4 He counts the number of the stars;
He calls them all by name.
5 Great *is* our Lord, and mighty in power;
His understanding *is* infinite.
6 The LORD lifts up the humble;
He casts the wicked down to the ground.

7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;
Sing praises on the harp to our God,
8 Who covers the heavens with clouds,
Who prepares rain for the earth,
Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.
9 He gives to the beast its food,
And to the young ravens that cry.

10 He does not delight in the strength of the horse;
He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.
11 The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him,
In those who hope in His mercy.

12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!
Praise your God, O Zion!
13 For He has strengthened the bars of your gates;
He has blessed your children within you.
14 He makes peace *in* your borders,
And fills you with the finest wheat.

15 He sends out His command *to the* earth;
His word runs very swiftly.
16 He gives snow like wool;
He scatters the frost like ashes;
17 He casts out His hail like morsels;
Who can stand before His cold?
18 He sends out His word and melts them;
He causes His wind to blow, *and* the waters flow.

19 He declares His word to Jacob,
His statutes and His judgments to Israel.
20 He has not dealt thus with any nation;
And *as for His* judgments, they have not known them.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 148

PRAISE TO THE LORD FROM CREATION

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;
Praise Him in the heights!
2Praise Him, all His angels;
Praise Him, all His hosts!

ANGELS
Who do angels praise?
Psalm 148:1, 2

3Praise Him, sun and moon;
Praise Him, all you stars of light!
4Praise Him, you heavens of heavens,
And you waters above the heavens!

5Let them praise the name of the LORD,
For He commanded and they were created.
6He also established them forever and ever;
He made a decree which shall not pass away.

7Praise the LORD from the earth,
You great sea creatures and all the depths;
8Fire and hail, snow and clouds;
Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;
9Mountains and all hills;
Fruitful trees and all cedars;
10Beasts and all cattle;
Creeping things and flying fowl;
11Kings of the earth and all peoples;
Princes and all judges of the earth;
12Both young men and maidens;
Old men and children.

13Let them praise the name of the LORD,
For His name alone is exalted;
His glory *is* above the earth and heaven.
14And He has exalted the horn of His people,
The praise of all His saints—
Of the children of Israel,
A people near to Him.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 149

PRAISE TO GOD FOR HIS SALVATION AND JUDGMENT

Praise the LORD!

Sing to the LORD a new song,
And His praise in the assembly of saints.

2Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
3Let them praise His name with the dance;
Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.

Psalm 149:3
In ancient Israel, dancing was considered a form of celebration and worship. As an expression of joy, both men and women danced to the music of tambourines and stringed instruments.

4For the LORD takes pleasure in His people;
He will beautify the humble with salvation.

5Let the saints be joyful in glory;
Let them sing aloud on their beds.
6*Let* the high praises of God *be* in their mouth,
And a two-edged sword in their hand,
7To execute vengeance on the nations,
And punishments on the peoples;
8To bind their kings with chains,
And their nobles with fetters of iron;
9To execute on them the written judgment—
This honor have all His saints.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 150

LET ALL THINGS PRAISE THE LORD

Praise the LORD!

Praise God in His sanctuary;
Praise Him in His mighty firmament!

[2]Praise Him for His mighty acts;
Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

[3]Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet;
Praise Him with the lute and harp!
[4]Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;
Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!
[5]Praise Him with loud cymbals;
Praise Him with clashing cymbals!

[6]Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD!

Proverbs

DATE OF WRITING: 950–700 B.C.
AUTHOR: MAINLY SOLOMON WITH PORTIONS BY AGUR AND KING LEMUEL
THEME: UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES FOR LIVING
PURPOSE: THE WISE PERSON MAKES CHOICES THAT ARE BOTH GODLY AND PRACTICAL.

OUTLINE

1:1–7 .....Introduction: How Proverbs Can Be Used
1:8—7:27 .....Parental Advice on the Importance of Seeking Wisdom and Not Being Foolish
8:1–36 .....In Praise of Wisdom
9:1–18 .....Wisdom's Invitation to Feast
10:1—24:34 .....Solomon's Wise Sayings
25:1—29:27 .....More of Solomon's Wise Sayings
30:1–33.....The Wisdom of Agur
31:1–31.....The Words King Lemuel's Mother Taught Him

KEY VERSE:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

THEN /// It seems like everyone speaks a proverb at some time in their lives: "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched." "Look before you leap." "Give him an inch and he'll take a mile." Proverbs are colorful ways to say something wise. They are little pieces of truth wrapped up in something sweet so we can swallow them more easily.

The problem with human proverbs is that they often contradict one another: "Look before you leap" (be cautious), but "he who hesitates is lost" (don't be too cautious). "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" (your boyfriend/girlfriend will like you *more* after summer break), but "Out of sight, out of mind" (your boyfriend/girlfriend won't like you at all after summer break).

The Book of Proverbs is different in that it is *God's* wisdom. It was written as intentional, practical wisdom and preparation for life on this earth that He created. The very foundation of this wisdom is laid with the "fear of the LORD" (1:7). With the proper respect and love for God, we will obey Him, and that obedience leads us to true wisdom. That wisdom will be a trusted, practical guide throughout the adventure of living in the real world.

NOW /// Some of Proverbs is lighthearted. Some is even downright funny. Don't be fooled, though. It is God's truth.

Every proverb is not a specific promise but rather general wisdom on how to live. Reading Proverbs is like sitting on the porch of heaven and listening to the wisest, most famous of the saints telling us what they have learned about life. Better than that, though, the proverbs are like God Himself giving us everyday advice about everyday situations. Who better to tell us the best way to live in the real world than the God who created both us and the real world?

REALITY CHECK /// Sometimes the Bible gets the reputation for not being practical . . . particularly by people who never read it. For so long, the only English Bible we had to read was one that used really old ways of speaking and was pretty difficult to understand. But whether the Bible is written in modern English, old English, or not English at all, the truth is that the Bible was written by God. He wrote it through the minds and experiences of real people who faced life just like we do—by faith.

Proverbs is a great example of how practical the Bible truly is. We have a whole book on making good choices—not being lazy, loving your parents, being a good friend. This is real life stuff. This is the stuff we care about. This is the stuff that God helps us with.

THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

2 To know wisdom and instruction,
To perceive the words of understanding,
3 To receive the instruction of wisdom,
Justice, judgment, and equity;
4 To give prudence to the simple,
To the young man knowledge and discretion—
5 A wise *man* will hear and increase learning,
And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,
6 To understand a proverb and an enigma,
The words of the wise and their riddles.

Proverbs 1:1

Solomon was young, perhaps no more than twenty years old, when he became the third king of Israel. During his forty-year reign, from about 970 to 930 B.C., Solomon became so famous for his wisdom that people from other nations traveled to Jerusalem just to hear him speak.

WORLD APP

Education / Proverbs 1:1–7

When you think of excitement, your homeroom class may not be the first image that comes to mind. When you're in high school it can be easy to wonder if all these classes are really necessary. It seems like there's a whole wide world out there, just waiting for you to explore and conquer it. And there you sit in trigonometry class.

Although moments like that can be frustrating, the truth is that what you're doing right now is building an essential foundation for your life. You are training your mind to think critically and learning how to ask the right questions. Rather than being the end of the journey, high school graduation is just the beginning. You can take all the knowledge and skills you've learned so far and apply them to every experience that lies ahead.

That is why education is more than just classes at school. It is a way of life, especially for a follower of Christ. "A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel" (Prov. 1:5). When Jesus was on earth, He showed us this example, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). True learning starts with seeking God and learning diligently about Him and His creation. In this way, you too can "grow in favor" as well as in understanding.

We are called to love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds (Matt. 22:37). Godly education is not just the empty pursuit of knowledge. Rather, it is loving God with all our minds by studying His Word and using the full abilities He's given us to learn and grow in wisdom and understanding. Because God's creation is so vast and amazing, our education should never end. The more we learn, the more we'll want to learn because it will cause us to appreciate even more the power, wonder, beauty, and majesty of our God. We will find this awe of our Creator truly is "the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7).

WISDOM
How can wise people increase their understanding?
Proverbs 1:5

7 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

SHUN EVIL COUNSEL

8 My son, hear the instruction of your father,
And do not forsake the law of your mother;
9 For they *will be* a graceful ornament on your head,
And chains about your neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice you,
Do not consent.
11 If they say, "Come with us,
Let us lie in wait to *shed* blood;
Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause;
12 Let us swallow them alive like Sheol,[a]
And whole, like those who go down to the Pit;
13 We shall find all *kinds* of precious possessions,
We shall fill our houses with spoil;
14 Cast in your lot among us,
Let us all have one purse"—
15 My son, do not walk in the way with them,
Keep your foot from their path;
16 For their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed blood.
17 Surely, in vain the net is spread
In the sight of any bird;
18 But they lie in wait for their *own* blood,
They lurk secretly for their *own* lives.
19 So *are* the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain;
It takes away the life of its owners.

THE CALL OF WISDOM

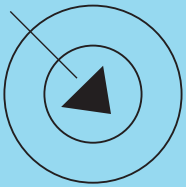
20 Wisdom calls aloud outside;
She raises her voice in the open squares.
21 She cries out in the chief concourses,[a]
At the openings of the gates in the city
She speaks her words:
22 "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity?
For scorners delight in their scorning,
And fools hate knowledge.
23 Turn at my rebuke;
Surely I will pour out my spirit on you;
I will make my words known to you.
24 Because I have called and you refused,
I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded,
25 Because you disdained all my counsel,
And would have none of my rebuke,
26 I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when your terror comes,
27 When your terror comes like a storm,
And your destruction comes like a whirlwind,
When distress and anguish come upon you.

28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;
They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.
29 Because they hated knowledge
And did not choose the fear of the LORD,
30 They would have none of my counsel
And despised my every rebuke.
31 Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,
And be filled to the full with their own fancies.
32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them,
And the complacency of fools will destroy them;
33 But whoever listens to me will dwell safely,
And will be secure, without fear of evil."

THE VALUE OF WISDOM

2 My son, if you receive my words,
And treasure my commands within you,
2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom,

1:12 [a]Or *the grave* **1:21** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *top of the walls;* Vulgate reads *the head of multitudes.*



PROMISE

God promises to give you wisdom and understanding.

For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly (Prov. 2:6, 7).

Have you ever tried to ignore directions and do something your own way instead? It almost never works out. When you don't follow directions, you usually end up lost, or confused, and most of the time you find yourself in the middle of a mess. It's amazing how much easier life can be when you simply follow directions.

God promises He will give you direction and understanding for all the most important things in life. He will give you all the wisdom and knowledge you need to make good and right choices. He says that you just have to search for Him, take time to ask Him, obey Him, and He will be faithful to give you the help you need. He is the Source of all wisdom and knowledge—there is absolutely nothing God does not know. He waits patiently for you to stop fumbling around and ask Him to give you the right directions for your life.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Micah 7:7; Luke 11:10; James 1:5

And apply your heart to
understanding;
3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment,
And lift up your voice for
understanding,
4 If you seek her as silver,
And search for her as *for* hidden
treasures;
5 Then you will understand the fear of
the LORD,
And find the knowledge of God.
6 For the LORD gives wisdom;
From His mouth *come* knowledge and
understanding;
7 He stores up sound wisdom for the
upright;
He is a shield to those who walk
uprightly;
8 He guards the paths of justice,
And preserves the way of His saints.
9 Then you will understand
righteousness and justice,
Equity *and* every good path.

10 When wisdom enters your heart,
And knowledge is pleasant to your
soul,
11 Discretion will preserve you;
Understanding will keep you,
12 To deliver you from the way of evil,
From the man who speaks perverse
things,
13 From those who leave the paths of
uprightness
To walk in the ways of darkness;
14 Who rejoice in doing evil,
And delight in the perversity of the
wicked;

TEMPTATION

How do we guard against temptation?

Proverbs 2:10–14

15 Whose ways *are* crooked,
And *who are* devious in their paths;
16 To deliver you from the immoral
woman,
From the seductress *who* flatters with
her words,
17 Who forsakes the companion of her
youth,
And forgets the covenant of her God.
18 For her house leads down to death,
And her paths to the dead;
19 None who go to her return,
Nor do they regain the paths of
life—

Proverbs 2:18

Ancient Israelites believed when people died, their souls went to a dark underground region called *Sheol*. They believed the souls that existed in this world of the dead could not eat, drink, work, worship, or experience joy like they could when they were alive.

20 So you may walk in the way of
goodness,
And keep *to* the paths of
righteousness.
21 For the upright will dwell in the land,
And the blameless will remain in it;
22 But the wicked will be cut off from the
earth,
And the unfaithful will be uprooted
from it.

GUIDANCE FOR THE YOUNG

3 My son, do not forget my law,
But let your heart keep my
commands;
2 For length of days and long life
And peace they will add to you.

MERCY

Why is mercy important?

Proverbs 3:3, 4

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you;
Bind them around your neck,
Write them on the tablet of your heart,
4 *And* so find favor and high esteem
In the sight of God and man.

TRUST

How are we to trust God?

Proverbs 3:5, 6

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And lean not on your own
understanding;
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct[a] your paths.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the LORD and depart from evil.

8 It will be health to your flesh,[a]
And strength[b] to your bones.

9 Honor the LORD with your
possessions,
And with the firstfruits of all your
increase;
10 So your barns will be filled with plenty,
And your vats will overflow with new
wine.

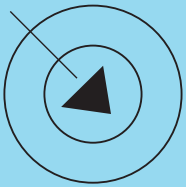
11 My son, do not despise the chastening
of the LORD,
Nor detest His correction;
12 For whom the LORD loves He
corrects,
Just as a father the son *in whom* he
delights.

13 Happy *is* the man *who* finds wisdom,
And the man *who* gains
understanding;
14 For her proceeds *are* better than the
profits of silver,
And her gain than fine gold.
15 She *is* more precious than rubies,
And all the things you may desire
cannot compare with her.
16 Length of days *is* in her right hand,
In her left hand riches and honor.
17 Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths *are* peace.
18 She *is* a tree of life to those who take
hold of her,
And happy *are all* who retain her.

19 The LORD by wisdom founded the
earth;
By understanding He established the
heavens;
20 By His knowledge the depths were
broken up,
And clouds drop down the dew.

21 My son, let them not depart from your
eyes—
Keep sound wisdom and discretion;
22 So they will be life to your soul
And grace to your neck.
23 Then you will walk safely in your way,
And your foot will not stumble.

3:6 [a]Or *make smooth* or *straight* **3:8** [a]Literally *navel*, figurative of the body [b]Literally *drink* or *refreshment*



PROMISE

God promises to direct your paths.

Trust in the LORD *with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths* (Prov. 3:5, 6).

If you trust in the Lord with all your heart—not just saying you believe in Him, but really knowing deep down that God is in control and will always take care of you—then He promises to lead you to the right path. In other words, He will show you what you are supposed to do with your life, what turns to make, when to stop, when to go. He promises to give clear directions to people who are seeking and trusting Him. That doesn't mean that people who trust the Lord won't have problems; problems are just a fact of life. But it does mean He will be right there with you through whatever life holds. God isn't like a GPS that just spits out directions; He wants to be personally involved in your life. He wants to walk right beside you and guide you in your choices. The journey through life can be really confusing and sometimes very difficult. But if you will simply trust God and allow Him to direct you, He will make the journey more enjoyable and lead you directly to the very best future.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 37:5; John 16:13; 2 Corinthians 2:14

24 When you lie down, you will not be
afraid;
Yes, you will lie down and your sleep
will be sweet.
25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror,
Nor of trouble from the wicked when
it comes;
26 For the LORD will be your confidence,
And will keep your foot from being
caught.

27 Do not withhold good from those to
whom it is due,
When it is in the power of your hand
to do *so.*
28 Do not say to your neighbor,
"Go, and come back,
And tomorrow I will give *it,*"
When you have it with you.
29 Do not devise evil against your
neighbor,
For he dwells by you for safety's sake.
30 Do not strive with a man without cause,
If he has done you no harm.

31 Do not envy the oppressor,
And choose none of his ways;
32 For the perverse *person is* an
abomination to the LORD,
But His secret counsel *is* with the
upright.
33 The curse of the LORD *is* on the house
of the wicked,
But He blesses the home of the just.
34 Surely He scorns the scornful,
But gives grace to the humble.
35 The wise shall inherit glory,
But shame shall be the legacy of
fools.

SECURITY IN WISDOM

4 Hear, *my* children, the instruction
of a father,
And give attention to know
understanding;
2 For I give you good doctrine:
Do not forsake my law.
3 When I was my father's son,
Tender and the only one in the sight
of my mother,
4 He also taught me, and said to me:
"Let your heart retain my words;
Keep my commands, and live.
5 Get wisdom! Get understanding!
Do not forget, nor turn away from the
words of my mouth.
6 Do not forsake her, and she will
preserve you;
Love her, and she will keep you.
7 Wisdom *is* the principal thing;
Therefore get wisdom.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PROVERBS 4:18

Shine On A match is struck inside the heart of each believer at the very moment they decide to trust in Jesus Christ as the One who delivers them from sin. For some, the flame burns dimly for a while. But for others, it's the match that sets the forest on fire.

As you begin to learn more about the Lord—especially about His forgiveness and grace—the flame begins to burn brighter. At some point you decide to go all out and live what you believe, giving forgiveness and grace to others. The flame burns brighter still.

However bright your flame is now, continue to grow in knowledge and in truth. You will begin to understand even more deeply why God's grace is so amazing. Bit by bit, you will begin to look more like Jesus—the qualities He has will begin to show up in your own life. That can actually become a great goal for you: each day, decide to try to be more like Jesus than you were yesterday. Before you know it, the fire of faith inside you will become a blaze, and others will be able to see just how wonderful our Lord is by looking at your life. (See also: Judg. 5:31; Dan. 12:3; Luke 11:36.)

Words to Live By

Shines: The word translated as "shines" in Proverbs 4:18 is the Hebrew word *owr* (ore). This word carries with it the idea of setting something on fire. In a sense, that is what happens when we become Christians. Just like we might say an athlete in top form is "on fire," we can be in top form for the Lord and be "on fire" for Him.

And in all your getting, get
understanding.
8 Exalt her, and she will promote you;
She will bring you honor, when you
embrace her.
9 She will place on your head an
ornament of grace;
A crown of glory she will deliver to
you."

10 Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,
And the years of your life will be
many.
11 I have taught you in the way of
wisdom;
I have led you in right paths.
12 When you walk, your steps will not be
hindered,
And when you run, you will not
stumble.
13 Take firm hold of instruction, do not
let go;
Keep her, for she *is* your life.

14 Do not enter the path of the wicked,
And do not walk in the way of evil.
15 Avoid it, do not travel on it;
Turn away from it and pass on.

INSTRUCTION
Why is instruction important?
Proverbs 4:13

16 For they do not sleep unless they have
done evil;
And their sleep is taken away unless
they make *someone* fall.
17 For they eat the bread of wickedness,
And drink the wine of violence.

18 But the path of the just *is* like the
shining sun,[a]
That shines ever brighter unto the
perfect day.
19 The way of the wicked *is* like darkness;
They do not know what makes them
stumble.

20 My son, give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.
21 Do not let them depart from your
eyes;

4:18 [a]Literally *light*



WORLD APP

Entertainment / Proverbs 4:23

When the Bible talks about the "heart," it is usually referring to the very core of who you are: your mind, emotions, and will. Proverbs 4:23 says you should "keep your heart with all diligence." This means you should guard and protect your mind, keep your emotions from being damaged, and let nothing interfere with your ability to make right choices.

Unfortunately, many forms of entertainment can damage us at our very core. Some are obviously wrong: viewing pornography, having wild parties, doing drugs. It doesn't take a genius to realize these things are against God's will. But what about violent computer games; are those wrong? Is it harmful to watch R-rated movies? Is it wrong to listen to sexually explicit music? Can just hearing or seeing sinful behavior (either real or virtual) cause damage to your "heart"? After all, just because you watch or listen to sin-filled things, that doesn't mean you're going to do them. Right?

You may have no intention of ever living out the scenes from an R-rated movie. You may think you could never be as violent as the creatures in computer games. But a strange, inevitable thing happens when you allow yourself to watch or listen to sinful behavior—it starts seeming a bit less bad every time. Soon you'll discover the things that once shocked you seem normal. Bit by bit, your heart is being damaged. And one day, your mind accepts what it once understood to be wrong. What once offended you may now excite your emotions. When those things happen, your ability to make right choices becomes extremely weak. You may end up making decisions you thought you would never make. Over time, you may just find your behavior matches the sinful images and words you've fed into your heart.

The best way to avoid harmful forms of entertainment is to ask yourself if you would find it as enjoyable and harmless if Jesus were sitting beside you. If Jesus wouldn't like it, you shouldn't either.

Keep them in the midst of your heart;
22 For they *are* life to those who find
them,
And health to all their flesh.
23 Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it *spring* the issues of life.
24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth,
And put perverse lips far from you.

GOSSIP
How should we treat gossip?
Proverbs 4:24

25 Let your eyes look straight ahead,
And your eyelids look right before you.
26 Ponder the path of your feet,
And let all your ways be established.
27 Do not turn to the right or the left;
Remove your foot from evil.

THE PERIL OF ADULTERY

5 My son, pay attention to my
wisdom;
Lend your ear to my
understanding,
2 That you may preserve discretion,
And your lips may keep knowledge.
3 For the lips of an immoral woman drip
honey,
And her mouth *is* smoother than oil;
4 But in the end she is bitter as
wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down to death,
Her steps lay hold of hell.[a]
6 Lest you ponder *her* path of life—
Her ways are unstable;
You do not know *them.*

7 Therefore hear me now, *my* children,
And do not depart from the words of
my mouth.
8 Remove your way far from her,
And do not go near the door of her
house,
9 Lest you give your honor to others,
And your years to the cruel *one;*
10 Lest aliens be filled with your wealth,
And your labors *go* to the house of a
foreigner;
11 And you mourn at last,
When your flesh and your body are
consumed,
12 And say:
"How I have hated instruction,
And my heart despised correction!
13 I have not obeyed the voice of my
teachers,
Nor inclined my ear to those who
instructed me!
14 I was on the verge of total ruin,
In the midst of the assembly and
congregation."

15 Drink water from your own cistern,
And running water from your own
well.
16 Should your fountains be dispersed
abroad,
Streams of water in the streets?
17 Let them be only your own,
And not for strangers with you.
18 Let your fountain be blessed,
And rejoice with the wife of your
youth.
19 *As a* loving deer and a graceful doe,
Let her breasts satisfy you at all
times;
And always be enraptured with her
love.
20 For why should you, my son, be
enraptured by an immoral
woman,
And be embraced in the arms of a
seductress?

21 For the ways of man *are* before the
eyes of the LORD,
And He ponders all his paths.
22 His own iniquities entrap the wicked
man,
And he is caught in the cords of his
sin.
23 He shall die for lack of instruction,
And in the greatness of his folly he
shall go astray.

DANGEROUS PROMISES

6 My son, if you become surety for
your friend,
If you have shaken hands in pledge
for a stranger,
2 You are snared by the words of your
mouth;
You are taken by the words of your
mouth.

5:5 [a]Or *Sheol*

3 So do this, my son, and deliver
yourself;
For you have come into the hand of
your friend:
Go and humble yourself;
Plead with your friend.
4 Give no sleep to your eyes,
Nor slumber to your eyelids.
5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the
hand *of the hunter,*
And like a bird from the hand of the
fowler.[a]

THE FOLLY OF INDOLENCE

6 Go to the ant, you sluggard!
Consider her ways and be wise,
7 Which, having no captain,
Overseer or ruler,
8 Provides her supplies in the summer,
And gathers her food in the harvest.
9 How long will you slumber,
O sluggard?
When will you rise from your sleep?
10 A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep—
11 So shall your poverty come on you like
a prowler,
And your need like an armed man.

THE WICKED MAN

12 A worthless person, a wicked man,
Walks with a perverse mouth;
13 He winks with his eyes,
He shuffles his feet,
He points with his fingers;
14 Perversity *is* in his heart,
He devises evil continually,
He sows discord.
15 Therefore his calamity shall come
suddenly;
Suddenly he shall be broken without
remedy.

MURDER
How does the Lord feel about murder?
Proverbs 6:16, 17

16 These six *things* the LORD hates,
Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him:
17 A proud look,
A lying tongue,
Hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness *who* speaks lies,
And one who sows discord among
brethren.

BEWARE OF ADULTERY

20 My son, keep your father's command,
And do not forsake the law of your
mother.
21 Bind them continually upon your
heart;
Tie them around your neck.
22 When you roam, they[a] will lead you;
When you sleep, they will keep you;
And *when* you awake, they will speak
with you.
23 For the commandment *is* a lamp,
And the law a light;
Reproofs of instruction *are* the way
of life,

INSTRUCTION
Why should we listen to instruction?
Proverbs 6:20–23

24 To keep you from the evil woman,
From the flattering tongue of a
seductress.
25 Do not lust after her beauty in your
heart,
Nor let her allure you with her eyelids.
26 For by means of a harlot
A man is reduced to a crust of bread;
And an adulteress[a] will prey upon his
precious life.
27 Can a man take fire to his bosom,
And his clothes not be burned?
28 Can one walk on hot coals,
And his feet not be seared?
29 So *is* he who goes in to his neighbor's
wife;
Whoever touches her shall not be
innocent.

30 *People* do not despise a thief
If he steals to satisfy himself when he
is starving.

6:5 [a]That is, one who catches birds in a trap or snare **6:22** [a]Literally *it* **6:26** [a]Literally *a man's wife,* that is, of another

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PROVERBS 6:20

All About Respect In the military, new recruits are taught that they must respect their commanders at all times and without question. Although recruits may disagree with their leaders' decisions or their lifestyles, respect is still required just because of their position as leaders. In much the same way, God calls you to respect your parents. They are in the position to lead your family and to train you. Even when you disagree with your parents, you are called to respect them just because they are your mom and dad—they have a God-given place of authority. Respect means that you obey their instruction—let it guide you and protect you. God influences your life directly through the leadership of your parents. It's the way He set things in order. It's the design that works best. You glorify God when you respect your parents. (See also: Matt. 15:4; Eph. 6:1–3.)

Words to Live By

Forsake: The word translated as "forsake" in Proverbs 6:20 is *natash* (naw-tash'). It carries the idea of rejecting or abandoning. Sometimes we think our parents can't possibly know that much more than we do, and we're tempted to do the opposite of whatever they tell us, just to prove it. But that's not an attitude that honors God. When we respect our parents, we don't reject their rules or abandon the truth they teach us. Instead, we accept their authority as another way to glorify God.

31 Yet *when* he is found, he must restore
sevenfold;
He may have to give up all the
substance of his house.
32 Whoever commits adultery with a
woman lacks understanding;
He *who* does so destroys his own soul.
33 Wounds and dishonor he will get,
And his reproach will not be wiped
away.
34 For jealousy *is* a husband's fury;
Therefore he will not spare in the day
of vengeance.
35 He will accept no recompense,
Nor will he be appeased though you
give many gifts.

7 My son, keep my words,
And treasure my commands within
you.
2 Keep my commands and live,
And my law as the apple of your eye.
3 Bind them on your fingers;
Write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 Say to wisdom, "You *are* my sister,"
And call understanding *your* nearest
kin,
5 That they may keep you from the
immoral woman,
From the seductress *who* flatters with
her words.

THE CRAFTY HARLOT

6 For at the window of my house
I looked through my lattice,
7 And saw among the simple,
I perceived among the youths,
A young man devoid of understanding,
8 Passing along the street near her
corner;
And he took the path to her house
9 In the twilight, in the evening,
In the black and dark night.

10 And there a woman met him,
With the attire of a harlot, and a crafty
heart.
11 She *was* loud and rebellious,
Her feet would not stay at home.
12 At times *she was* outside, at times in
the open square,
Lurking at every corner.
13 So she caught him and kissed him;
With an impudent face she said to
him:
14 "*I have* peace offerings with me;
Today I have paid my vows.

Proverbs 7:14

According to God's law, after the priest had taken his portion of a peace offering, the person who offered the sacrifice was given the rest of the meat to take home. The only stipulation was that it all had to be eaten within two days. Since meat wasn't served very often in ancient times, these post-sacrifice meals usually turned into festive events—celebrations of God's forgiveness.

15 So I came out to meet you,
Diligently to seek your face,
And I have found you.
16 I have spread my bed with tapestry,
Colored coverings of Egyptian linen.
17 I have perfumed my bed
With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
18 Come, let us take our fill of love until morning;
Let us delight ourselves with love.
19 For my husband *is* not at home;
He has gone on a long journey;
20 He has taken a bag of money with him,
And will come home on the appointed day."

21 With her enticing speech she caused him to yield,
With her flattering lips she seduced him.
22 Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter,
Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks,[a]
23 Till an arrow struck his liver.
As a bird hastens to the snare,
He did not know it *would cost* his life.

24 Now therefore, listen to me, *my* children;
Pay attention to the words of my mouth:
25 Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways,
Do not stray into her paths;
26 For she has cast down many wounded,
And all who were slain by her were strong *men.*
27 Her house *is* the way to hell,[a]
Descending to the chambers of death.

THE EXCELLENCE OF WISDOM

8 Does not wisdom cry out,
And understanding lift up her voice?
2 She takes her stand on the top of the high hill,
Beside the way, where the paths meet.
3 She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city,
At the entrance of the doors:
4 "To you, O men, I call,
And my voice *is* to the sons of men.
5 O you simple ones, understand prudence,
And you fools, be of an understanding heart.
6 Listen, for I will speak of excellent things,
And from the opening of my lips *will come* right things;
7 For my mouth will speak truth;
Wickedness *is* an abomination to my lips.
8 All the words of my mouth *are* with righteousness;
Nothing crooked or perverse *is* in them.
9 They *are* all plain to him who understands,
And right to those who find knowledge.
10 Receive my instruction, and not silver,
And knowledge rather than choice gold;
11 For wisdom *is* better than rubies,
And all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.

WISDOM
What comes with wisdom?
Proverbs 8:12–14

12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,
And find out knowledge *and* discretion.
13 The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil;
Pride and arrogance and the evil way
And the perverse mouth I hate.

7:22 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *as a dog to bonds;* Vulgate reads *as a lamb . . . to bonds.* **7:27** [a]Or *Sheol*

14 Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom;
I *am* understanding, I have strength.
15 By me kings reign,
And rulers decree justice.
16 By me princes rule, and nobles,
All the judges of the earth.[a]
17 I love those who love me,
And those who seek me diligently will find me.
18 Riches and honor *are* with me,
Enduring riches and righteousness.
19 My fruit *is* better than gold, yes, than fine gold,
And my revenue than choice silver.
20 I traverse the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of justice,
21 That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth,
That I may fill their treasuries.

22 "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.
23 I have been established from everlasting,
From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.
24 When *there were* no depths I was brought forth,
When *there were* no fountains abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills, I was brought forth;
26 While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields,
Or the primal dust of the world.
27 When He prepared the heavens, I *was* there,
When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,
28 When He established the clouds above,
When He strengthened the fountains of the deep,
29 When He assigned to the sea its limit,
So that the waters would not transgress His command,
When He marked out the foundations of the earth,
30 Then I was beside Him *as* a master craftsman;[a]
And I was daily *His* delight,
Rejoicing always before Him,
31 Rejoicing in His inhabited world,
And my delight *was* with the sons of men.

32 "Now therefore, listen to me, *my* children,
For blessed *are those who* keep my ways.
33 Hear instruction and be wise,
And do not disdain *it.*
34 Blessed is the man who listens to me,
Watching daily at my gates,
Waiting at the posts of my doors.
35 For whoever finds me finds life,
And obtains favor from the LORD;
36 But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul;
All those who hate me love death."

Proverbs 9:1

Seven was a very important number to the ancient Israelites, who believed the numeral represented holiness or perfection. The number's history can be traced all the way back to Creation, when God worked six days and rested on the seventh. The number seven pops up throughout the Bible in dreams, visions, and rituals.

THE WAY OF WISDOM

9 Wisdom has built her house,
She has hewn out her seven pillars;
2 She has slaughtered her meat,
She has mixed her wine,
She has also furnished her table.
3 She has sent out her maidens,
She cries out from the highest places of the city,
4 "Whoever *is* simple, let him turn in here!"
As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him,
5 "Come, eat of my bread
And drink of the wine I have mixed.

8:16 [a]Masoretic Text, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *righteousness;* Septuagint, Bomberg, and some manuscripts and editions read *earth.* **8:30** [a]A Jewish tradition reads *one brought up.*

MAKING IT REAL // PROVERBS 9:10

The Beginning of Wisdom Have you ever been in a situation in which your back was against the wall and you had no clue what to do next? Have you ever needed to make an important decision about your life, but the problem seemed too big for you? Those are the times you need wisdom. Those are the times when seeking God and His perspective as you figure out what to do is the best idea—that's wisdom. You know you need it, but how do you get it?

Proverbs 9:10 says that the beginning of wisdom is "the fear of the Lord." In other words, wisdom starts with respect for God. The more you learn to respect and obey the Lord, the more wisdom you'll gain. Remember that respect and obedience are two separate actions. To respect the Lord is to know that He knows best and to care most about His truth. It is to consult Him in all situations in your life, even when you're in a tough spot. Obedience is a step beyond respect. To obey the Lord is to act on what He's told you.

The verse goes on to say that to have understanding, you need "knowledge of the Holy One." Knowing God personally is much deeper than just knowing things about God. Knowing Him won't happen overnight, and no one on earth will ever know Him completely; but as you spend time with Him, you'll eventually begin to know Him more and more personally. He will give you wisdom. Just respect Him, obey Him, and know Him. (See also: Dan. 2:21; Eph. 1:17; James 3:17.)

Words to Live By

Beginning: The word translated as "beginning" in Proverbs 9:10 is the Hebrew word *techillah* (tekh-il-law'). It carries the idea of the first time, the very beginning. To truly become wise, we first need to recognize how holy, awesome, powerful, and loving God is. We can learn lots of facts and figures and gather all kinds of information. But we won't attain true wisdom until we first begin with respecting and obeying God.

6 Forsake foolishness and live,
And go in the way of understanding.

7 "He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself,
And he who rebukes a wicked *man only* harms himself.
8 Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you;
Rebuke a wise *man,* and he will love you.
9 Give *instruction* to a wise *man,* and he will be still wiser;
Teach a just *man,* and he will increase in learning.

10 "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding.
11 For by me your days will be multiplied,
And years of life will be added to you.
12 If you are wise, you are wise for yourself,
And *if* you scoff, you will bear *it* alone."

THE WAY OF FOLLY

13 A foolish woman is clamorous;
She is simple, and knows nothing.
14 For she sits at the door of her house,
On a seat *by* the highest places of the city,
15 To call to those who pass by,
Who go straight on their way:
16 "Whoever *is* simple, let him turn in here";
And *as for* him who lacks understanding, she says to him,
17 "Stolen water is sweet,
And bread *eaten* in secret is pleasant."
18 But he does not know that the dead *are* there,
That her guests *are* in the depths of hell.[a]

9:18 [a]Or *Sheol*

WISE SAYINGS OF SOLOMON

10 The proverbs of Solomon:

A wise son makes a glad father,
But a foolish son *is* the grief of his mother.

2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing,
But righteousness delivers from death.
3 The LORD will not allow the righteous soul to famish,
But He casts away the desire of the wicked.

4 He who has a slack hand becomes poor,
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.
5 He who gathers in summer *is* a wise son;
He who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who causes shame.

6 Blessings *are* on the head of the righteous,
But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.
7 The memory of the righteous *is* blessed,
But the name of the wicked will rot.

8 The wise in heart will receive commands,
But a prating fool will fall.
9 He who walks with integrity walks securely,
But he who perverts his ways will become known.

10 He who winks with the eye causes trouble,
But a prating fool will fall.

11 The mouth of the righteous *is* a well of life,
But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.

12 Hatred stirs up strife,
But love covers all sins.

13 Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding,
But a rod *is* for the back of him who is devoid of understanding.

14 Wise *people* store up knowledge,
But the mouth of the foolish *is* near destruction.

15 The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city;
The destruction of the poor *is* their poverty.

16 The labor of the righteous *leads* to life,
The wages of the wicked to sin.

17 He who keeps instruction *is in* the way of life,
But he who refuses correction goes astray.

18 Whoever hides hatred *has* lying lips,
And whoever spreads slander *is* a fool.

19 In the multitude of words sin is not lacking,
But he who restrains his lips *is* wise.
20 The tongue of the righteous *is* choice silver;
The heart of the wicked *is worth* little.
21 The lips of the righteous feed many,
But fools die for lack of wisdom.[a]

22 The blessing of the LORD makes *one* rich,
And He adds no sorrow with it.

23 To do evil *is* like sport to a fool,
But a man of understanding has wisdom.

FOLLOWING GOD
What's the hope of a righteous person?
Proverbs 10:24, 25

24 The fear of the wicked will come upon him,
And the desire of the righteous will be granted.
25 When the whirlwind passes by, the wicked *is* no *more,*

10:21 [a] Literally *heart*

But the righteous *has* an everlasting
foundation.

26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to
the eyes,
So *is* the lazy *man* to those who send
him.

27 The fear of the LORD prolongs days,
But the years of the wicked will be
shortened.
28 The hope of the righteous *will be*
gladness,
But the expectation of the wicked will
perish.
29 The way of the LORD *is* strength for the
upright,
But destruction *will come* to the
workers of iniquity.

30 The righteous will never be removed,
But the wicked will not inhabit the
earth.
31 The mouth of the righteous brings
forth wisdom,
But the perverse tongue will be cut
out.
32 The lips of the righteous know what is
acceptable,
But the mouth of the wicked *what is*
perverse.

11 Dishonest scales *are* an
abomination to the LORD,
But a just weight *is* His delight.

2 When pride comes, then comes
shame;
But with the humble *is* wisdom.

3 The integrity of the upright will guide
them,
But the perversity of the unfaithful will
destroy them.
4 Riches do not profit in the day of
wrath,
But righteousness delivers from death.
5 The righteousness of the blameless
will direct[a] his way aright,
But the wicked will fall by his own
wickedness.
6 The righteousness of the upright will
deliver them,
But the unfaithful will be caught by
their lust.

7 When a wicked man dies, *his*
expectation will perish,
And the hope of the unjust perishes.

LUST

What will unchecked lust get us?

Proverbs 11:6, 7

8 The righteous is delivered from
trouble,
And it comes to the wicked instead.
9 The hypocrite with *his* mouth destroys
his neighbor,
But through knowledge the righteous
will be delivered.

HYPOCRISY

What effect does the hypocrite have on those around him?

Proverbs 11:9

10 When it goes well with the righteous,
the city rejoices;
And when the wicked perish, *there is*
jubilation.
11 By the blessing of the upright the city
is exalted,
But it is overthrown by the mouth of
the wicked.

12 He who is devoid of wisdom despises
his neighbor,
But a man of understanding holds his
peace.

13 A talebearer reveals secrets,
But he who is of a faithful spirit
conceals a matter.

14 Where *there is* no counsel, the people
fall;
But in the multitude of counselors
there is safety.

15 He who is surety for a stranger will
suffer,
But one who hates being surety is
secure.

11:5 [a]Or *make smooth* or *straight*

MAKING IT REAL // PROVERBS 11:1

No Cheating Cheating is not just about trying to get by without any effort on your part. Cheating deals with personal integrity. A great way to define *integrity* is to think of it as "what you do when no one's looking."

The Lord says that He hates cheating (called "dishonest scales" in Proverbs 11:1). Copying your friend's answer to a test, homework done by someone else, money you secretly "borrowed" from your mom's purse, the work you left undone at your part-time job, the gum you accidentally forgot to pay for but kept anyway—those are all things that the Lord hates—they are all dishonest.

Cheating only brings some small momentary rewards. In the long run, it all catches up to you. God sees the whole thing. Even more, He sees inside your heart and knows all about your selfish motives. The next time you are tempted to cheat your way to a better life, listen to the siren that goes off in your head. It's the Holy Spirit saying, "Don't!" You may have to go without something you want, but the God who sees everything will not overlook your integrity. His rewards are more valuable than anything you can gain by cheating, and what you gain by obeying God will last for eternity. (See also: 1 Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:28.)

Words to Live By

Dishonest: The word translated as "dishonest" in Proverbs 11:1 is the Hebrew word *mirmah* (meer-maw'). It carries with it the idea of being deceitful or ready to betray someone's trust. When we intentionally deceive someone, we are doing something we know is wrong, and it is a good indicator that something is not right in our hearts. But we can come clean with God, confess all our sins (yes, even the very worst ones), and receive forgiveness. Then we can embrace honesty and decide to live lives of integrity, pleasing to God.

16 A gracious woman retains honor,
But ruthless *men* retain riches.
17 The merciful man does good for his own soul,
But *he who is* cruel troubles his own flesh.
18 The wicked *man* does deceptive work,
But he who sows righteousness *will have* a sure reward.
19 As righteousness *leads* to life,
So he who pursues evil *pursues it* to his own death.
20 Those who are of a perverse heart *are* an abomination to the LORD,
But *the* blameless in their ways *are* His delight.
21 *Though they join* forces,[a] the wicked will not go unpunished;
But the posterity of the righteous will be delivered.
22 *As* a ring of gold in a swine's snout,
So is a lovely woman who lacks discretion.

Proverbs 11:22

Pigs were among the least popular animals in ancient Israel. They were considered unclean and were unsuitable for food, according to God's law. Throughout the Bible, pigs are used to symbolize greed, filth, or shame.

23 The desire of the righteous *is* only good,
But the expectation of the wicked *is* wrath.
24 There is *one* who scatters, yet increases more;

11:21 [a] Literally *hand to hand*



LIFE APP

Microblogging / Proverbs 12:13

It has become quite the art form to express your thoughts cleverly and clearly in 140 characters or less. Unfortunately, not everyone has mastered this art form. Anyone can write a short thought and send it out to the world, but what effect do those messages have?

These days, it seems nearly everyone has a blog—a place where they can share their thoughts and work out their feelings while all their subscribers read along. With a blog, you can take the space you need to express yourself. But with microblogging, you have to get your point across quickly. There's no room to explain. You have to be clear and concise . . . and that can prove to be incredibly challenging.

While the brevity of microblogging can often be used to entertain or amuse, it can also be used to wound others. If you use the Internet to settle a personal matter, taking your two-person argument public, what good can come of it? If you use the Internet to share your unsolicited opinion on what other people wear or do or think, what's the point? Proverbs 12:13 says, "The wicked is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, but the righteous will come through trouble." If you take a moment, you can probably think of a friend or acquaintance (or yourself) who has gotten into a bit of trouble with microblogging. While a comment may seem harmless or amusing at the moment, once it gets out to the world, you might realize it could be taken in a different way than you meant it. Not only could it hurt others, but it could also get you in hot water.

But you can also use microblogging to encourage, enlighten, or simply bring a smile to other people. Always consider carefully what you send out for the world to see. Ask yourself if you'd say the same thing out loud, no matter who was listening. Be careful that you never write something that could get you in trouble. Try to find ways to write things that God can use to encourage others.

And there is *one* who withholds more
than is right,
But it *leads* to poverty.
25 The generous soul will be made rich,
And he who waters will also be
watered himself.
26 The people will curse him who
withholds grain,
But blessing *will be* on the head of him
who sells *it.*

27 He who earnestly seeks good finds
favor,
But trouble will come to him who
seeks *evil.*

28 He who trusts in his riches will fall,
But the righteous will flourish like
foliage.

29 He who troubles his own house will
inherit the wind,
And the fool *will be* servant to the wise
of heart.

30 The fruit of the righteous *is a* tree of
life,
And he who wins souls *is* wise.

31 If the righteous will be recompensed
on the earth,
How much more the ungodly and the
sinner.

12 Whoever loves instruction
loves knowledge,
But he who hates correction *is*
stupid.

2 A good *man* obtains favor from the
LORD,
But a man of wicked intentions He will
condemn.

3 A man is not established by wickedness,
But the root of the righteous cannot
be moved.

4 An excellent[a] wife *is* the crown of her
husband,
But she who causes shame *is* like
rottenness in his bones.

5 The thoughts of the righteous *are*
right,
But the counsels of the wicked *are*
deceitful.
6 The words of the wicked *are,* "Lie in
wait for blood,"
But the mouth of the upright will
deliver them.

7 The wicked are overthrown and *are*
no more,
But the house of the righteous will
stand.

8 A man will be commended according
to his wisdom,
But he who is of a perverse heart will
be despised.

9 Better *is the one* who is slighted but
has a servant,
Than he who honors himself but lacks
bread.

10 A righteous *man* regards the life of his
animal,
But the tender mercies of the wicked
are cruel.

11 He who tills his land will be satisfied
with bread,
But he who follows frivolity *is* devoid
of understanding.[a]

12 The wicked covet the catch of evil *men,*
But the root of the righteous yields
fruit.
13 The wicked is ensnared by the
transgression of *his* lips,
But the righteous will come through
trouble.
14 A man will be satisfied with good by
the fruit of *his* mouth,
And the recompense of a man's hands
will be rendered to him.

15 The way of a fool *is* right in his own
eyes,
But he who heeds counsel *is* wise.
16 A fool's wrath is known at once,
But a prudent *man* covers shame.

17 He *who* speaks truth declares
righteousness,
But a false witness, deceit.

12:4 [a]Literally *A wife of valor* **12:11** [a]Literally *heart*



LIFE APP

Blogging / Proverbs 12:18

"There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health" (Prov. 12:18). We know that the words we speak to people can lift them up or tear them down. But sometimes we forget that the written word can wound just as much, or maybe even more, than the spoken word.

Lots of people have blogs these days. There are fashions blogs and sports blogs and ministry blogs and just life-in-general blogs. If you have something to say, thanks to the World Wide Web, you have a ready-made audience. But sometimes the fact that any number of people may read what you write doesn't actually register in your mind. If you're upset or agitated or hurt or angry, your blog may seem like the perfect place to vent. Or it may be that when you've messed up, crossed the line of good taste, and shared a negative opinion about something or someone, your ugly comments resulted in more hits on your blog than ever before. You could be tempted to keep crossing that line to keep getting those hits. But be careful how you use the power of words when your audience could be thousands. Before you realize it, you could find yourself using your blog as a sword—a weapon meant to pierce and wound.

While a juicy, opinionated, hateful blog may get you a lot of hits and comments online, it can cause massive damage to real people in the real world. As a follower of Christ, you should be sharing the gospel with your entire life—including your blog. Instead of using venomous words that pierce like a sword, you can speak with wisdom in a way that encourages or enlightens others. This doesn't mean you can't share your honest opinions or have a sense of humor; of course you should do those things—that's what makes your blog yours. But just like in the rest of your life, make sure the words you speak truly reflect who you are and the God you serve.

MAKING IT REAL // PROVERBS 12:24

Diligence Versus Laziness Forty algebra problems, a paper on the people of Zaire, Spanish vocabulary words—every night another pile of homework . . . all to be done after you get home from your after-school job. On top of it all, you have your chores at home. It may seem like just too much. You may get tired of having so much work to do, but the sacrifice will be worth it in the end. Proverbs 12:24 says that the diligent—those who work hard—become leaders, and the lazy end up working hard anyway, but for someone else. Without hard work, it's difficult to find true success in a career or in a relationship or in any other important part of life.

If you have goals and want to make a difference with your life, then you really need to be diligent. Even when you can't imagine how you will ever use the information you encounter in your piles of homework or the experience you get sweeping the floors or working the drive-through at your job, just press on. Know that each little accomplishment is building your character. You will be stronger, wiser, and more disciplined—all because you were faithful and diligent. (See also: Prov. 24:33, 34; Eccl. 9:10; Gal. 6:4.)

Words to Live By

Diligent: The word translated as "diligent" in Proverbs 12:24 is the Hebrew word *charuwts* (khaw-roots'). It also means "sharp" or "determined." It paints a picture of someone who is always ready for the task at hand, like a knife that is sharpened and ready to be used. It's not about over-committing or feeling like you have to take on every responsibility in the world. Instead, it is about doing your best at the work you are given to do. Being diligent in this way honors God and builds your character so you can become more like Him.

18 There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword,
But the tongue of the wise *promotes* health.
19 The truthful lip shall be established forever,
But a lying tongue *is* but for a moment.
20 Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil,
But counselors of peace have joy.
21 No grave trouble will overtake the righteous,
But the wicked shall be filled with evil.
22 Lying lips *are* an abomination to the LORD,
But those who deal truthfully *are* His delight.

23 A prudent man conceals knowledge,
But the heart of fools proclaims foolishness.

24 The hand of the diligent will rule,
But the lazy *man* will be put to forced labor.

25 Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression,
But a good word makes it glad.

DEPRESSION
How are we to respond to depression?
Proverbs 12:25

26 The righteous should choose his friends carefully,
For the way of the wicked leads them astray.

27 The lazy *man* does not roast what he took in hunting,

But diligence *is* man's precious
possession.

28 In the way of righteousness *is* life,
And in *its* pathway *there is* no death.

13 A wise son *heeds* his father's
instruction,
But a scoffer does not listen to
rebuke.

2 A man shall eat well by the fruit of *his*
mouth,
But the soul of the unfaithful feeds on
violence.
3 He who guards his mouth preserves
his life,
But he who opens wide his lips shall
have destruction.

4 The soul of a lazy *man* desires, and *has*
nothing;
But the soul of the diligent shall be
made rich.

LAZINESS
If diligence brings wealth, what does laziness bring?
Proverbs 13:4

5 A righteous *man* hates lying,
But a wicked *man* is loathsome and
comes to shame.
6 Righteousness guards *him whose* way
is blameless,
But wickedness overthrows the sinner.

7 There is one who makes himself rich,
yet *has* nothing;
And one who makes himself poor, yet
has great riches.

8 The ransom of a man's life *is* his riches,
But the poor does not hear rebuke.

9 The light of the righteous rejoices,
But the lamp of the wicked will be
put out.

10 By pride comes nothing but strife,
But with the well-advised *is* wisdom.

11 Wealth *gained by* dishonesty will be
diminished,
But he who gathers by labor will
increase.

12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
But *when* the desire comes, *it is* a tree
of life.

13 He who despises the word will be
destroyed,
But he who fears the commandment
will be rewarded.
14 The law of the wise *is* a fountain of
life,
To turn *one* away from the snares of
death.

15 Good understanding gains favor,
But the way of the unfaithful *is* hard.
16 Every prudent *man* acts with
knowledge,
But a fool lays open *his* folly.

17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble,
But a faithful ambassador *brings*
health.

18 Poverty and shame *will come* to him
who disdains correction,
But he who regards a rebuke will be
honored.

19 A desire accomplished is sweet to the
soul,
But *it is* an abomination to fools to
depart from evil.

20 He who walks with wise *men* will be
wise,
But the companion of fools will be
destroyed.

21 Evil pursues sinners,
But to the righteous, good shall be
repaid.

22 A good *man* leaves an inheritance to
his children's children,
But the wealth of the sinner is stored
up for the righteous.

23 Much food *is in* the fallow *ground* of
the poor,
And for lack of justice there is waste.[a]

13:23 [a] Literally *what is swept away*

24 He who spares his rod hates his son,
But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.

25 The righteous eats to the satisfying of his soul,
But the stomach of the wicked shall be in want.

14 The wise woman builds her house,
But the foolish pulls it down with her hands.

2 He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD,
But *he who is* perverse in his ways despises Him.

3 In the mouth of a fool *is* a rod of pride,
But the lips of the wise will preserve them.

4 Where no oxen *are,* the trough *is* clean;
But much increase *comes* by the strength of an ox.

5 A faithful witness does not lie,
But a false witness will utter lies.

6 A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not *find it,*
But knowledge *is* easy to him who understands.
7 Go from the presence of a foolish man,
When you do not perceive *in him* the lips of knowledge.
8 The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way,
But the folly of fools *is* deceit.

9 Fools mock at sin,
But among the upright *there is* favor.

10 The heart knows its own bitterness,
And a stranger does not share its joy.

11 The house of the wicked will be overthrown,
But the tent of the upright will flourish.

12 There is a way *that seems* right to a man,
But its end *is* the way of death.

13 Even in laughter the heart may sorrow,
And the end of mirth *may be* grief.

14 The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways,
But a good man *will be satisfied* from above.[a]

15 The simple believes every word,
But the prudent considers well his steps.
16 A wise *man* fears and departs from evil,
But a fool rages and is self-confident.
17 A quick-tempered *man* acts foolishly,
And a man of wicked intentions is hated.
18 The simple inherit folly,
But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
19 The evil will bow before the good,
And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

20 The poor *man* is hated even by his own neighbor,
But the rich *has* many friends.
21 He who despises his neighbor sins;
But he who has mercy on the poor, happy *is* he.

22 Do they not go astray who devise evil?
But mercy and truth *belong* to those who devise good.

23 In all labor there is profit,
But idle chatter[a] *leads* only to poverty.

24 The crown of the wise is their riches,
But the foolishness of fools *is* folly.

25 A true witness delivers souls,
But a deceitful *witness* speaks lies.

26 In the fear of the LORD *there is* strong confidence,
And His children will have a place of refuge.

14:14 [a]Literally *from above himself*
14:23 [a]Literally *talk of the lips*

27 The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life,
To turn *one* away from the snares of death.

28 In a multitude of people *is* a king's honor,
But in the lack of people *is* the downfall of a prince.

29 *He who is* slow to wrath has great understanding,
But *he who is* impulsive[a] exalts folly.

30 A sound heart *is* life to the body,
But envy *is* rottenness to the bones.

31 He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker,
But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy.

MERCY
Who do we honor by being merciful to the needy?
Proverbs 14:31

32 The wicked is banished in his wickedness,
But the righteous has a refuge in his death.

33 Wisdom rests in the heart of him who has understanding,
But *what is* in the heart of fools is made known.

34 Righteousness exalts a nation,
But sin *is* a reproach to *any* people.

35 The king's favor *is* toward a wise servant,
But his wrath *is against* him who causes shame.

15 A soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.
2 The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly,
But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

3 The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place,
Keeping watch on the evil and the good.

4 A wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life,
But perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

5 A fool despises his father's instruction,
But he who receives correction is prudent.

6 *In* the house of the righteous *there is* much treasure,
But in the revenue of the wicked is trouble.

7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge,
But the heart of the fool *does* not *do* so.

8 The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD,
But the prayer of the upright *is* His delight.
9 The way of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD,
But He loves him who follows righteousness.

10 Harsh discipline *is* for him who forsakes the way,
And he who hates correction will die.

11 Hell[a] and Destruction[b] *are* before the LORD;
So how much more the hearts of the sons of men.

12 A scoffer does not love one who corrects him,
Nor will he go to the wise.

13 A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance,
But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

14 The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge,
But the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.

14:29 [a]Literally *short of spirit* **15:11** [a]Or *Sheol* [b]Hebrew *Abaddon*

MAKING IT REAL // PROVERBS 15:22

Just Ask When it comes to making decisions, it doesn't matter how old you are. One of the best things you can do, in addition to praying and studying God's Word, is consult with wise believers and consider their advice when you make your plans. These wise people may include a parent, a trusted adult at church, or a good friend who is also a mature brother or sister in Christ. Take full advantage of the wisdom and guidance they want to share with you.

As you get older, you will be allowed the right to make more and more of your own decisions. The wiser your decisions, the more freedom you will be given. And one day not too far in the future, all the decisions about your life will by yours. But, even when you are completely independent, don't forget to seek wise counsel from trusted friends and mature believers in the family of Christ. (See also: Prov. 1:5; Eph. 6:1–3; 1 Pet. 5:5.)

Words to Live By

Counselors: The word translated as "counselors" in Proverbs 15:22 is the Hebrew word *yaats* (yaw-ats'). It carries with it the idea of advising, consulting, or guiding. God has placed wise Christian people in your life who can help you make wise decisions. It's as if they have already traveled along roads that are unfamiliar to you and they know exactly what to expect and where those roads lead. You wouldn't refuse to listen to your GPS to find the way to get where you're going. So why not check in with the ones who know the right roads to travel through life?

15 All the days of the afflicted *are* evil,
But he who is of a merry heart *has* a continual feast.

16 Better *is* a little with the fear of the LORD,
Than great treasure with trouble.
17 Better *is* a dinner of herbs[a] where love is,
Than a fatted calf with hatred.

18 A wrathful man stirs up strife,
But *he who is* slow to anger allays contention.

19 The way of the lazy *man is* like a hedge of thorns,
But the way of the upright *is* a highway.

20 A wise son makes a father glad,
But a foolish man despises his mother.

21 Folly *is* joy *to him who is* destitute of discernment,
But a man of understanding walks uprightly.

22 Without counsel, plans go awry,
But in the multitude of counselors they are established.

23 A man has joy by the answer of his mouth,
And a word *spoken* in due season, how good *it is!*

24 The way of life *winds* upward for the wise,
That he may turn away from hell[a] below.

25 The LORD will destroy the house of the proud,
But He will establish the boundary of the widow.

26 The thoughts of the wicked *are* an abomination to the LORD,
But the words of the pure *are* pleasant.

27 He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house,
But he who hates bribes will live.

15:17 [a]Or *vegetables* **15:24** [a]Or *Sheol*

28 The heart of the righteous studies how
to answer,
But the mouth of the wicked pours
forth evil.

29 The LORD *is* far from the wicked,
But He hears the prayer of the
righteous.

30 The light of the eyes rejoices the heart,
And a good report makes the bones
healthy.[a]

31 The ear that hears the rebukes of life
Will abide among the wise.
32 He who disdains instruction despises
his own soul,
But he who heeds rebuke gets
understanding.
33 The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction
of wisdom,
And before honor *is* humility.

16 The preparations of the heart
belong to man,
But the answer of the tongue *is*
from the LORD.

2 All the ways of a man *are* pure in his
own eyes,
But the LORD weighs the spirits.

3 Commit your works to the LORD,
And your thoughts will be established.

4 The LORD has made all for Himself,
Yes, even the wicked for the day of
doom.

5 Everyone proud in heart *is* an
abomination to the LORD;
Though they join forces,[a] none will go
unpunished.

6 In mercy and truth
Atonement is provided for iniquity;
And by the fear of the LORD *one*
departs from evil.

7 When a man's ways please the LORD,
He makes even his enemies to be at
peace with him.

8 Better *is* a little with righteousness,
Than vast revenues without justice.

9 A man's heart plans his way,
But the LORD directs his steps.

10 Divination *is* on the lips of the king;
His mouth must not transgress in
judgment.
11 Honest weights and scales *are* the
LORD's;
All the weights in the bag *are* His work.
12 *It is* an abomination for kings to
commit wickedness,
For a throne is established by
righteousness.
13 Righteous lips *are* the delight of kings,
And they love him who speaks *what*
is right.
14 As messengers of death *is* the king's
wrath,
But a wise man will appease it.

Proverbs 16:15

Because it's located in a desert region, the land of Israel experiences frequent droughts. Because the ancient Israelites relied on farming for so many of their basic needs, they considered rain a precious gift from God. Long droughts were thought by many to be God's judgment on the sins of the people.

15 In the light of the king's face *is* life,
And his favor *is* like a cloud of the
latter rain.

16 How much better to get wisdom than
gold!
And to get understanding is to be
chosen rather than silver.

17 The highway of the upright *is* to depart
from evil;
He who keeps his way preserves his
soul.

18 Pride *goes* before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.
19 Better *to be* of a humble spirit with the
lowly,
Than to divide the spoil with the
proud.

15:30 [a]Literally *fat* **16:5** [a]Literally *hand to hand*

20 He who heeds the word wisely will
find good,
And whoever trusts in the LORD,
happy *is* he.

21 The wise in heart will be called
prudent,
And sweetness of the lips increases
learning.

22 Understanding *is* a wellspring of life to
him who has it.
But the correction of fools *is* folly.

23 The heart of the wise teaches his
mouth,
And adds learning to his lips.

24 Pleasant words *are like* a honeycomb,
Sweetness to the soul and health to
the bones.

25 There is a way *that seems* right to a
man,
But its end *is* the way of death.

26 The person who labors, labors for
himself,
For his *hungry* mouth drives him *on.*

27 An ungodly man digs up evil,
And *it is* on his lips like a burning fire.
28 A perverse man sows strife,
And a whisperer separates the best of
friends.

GOSSIP
What are some of the negative results of gossip?
Proverbs 16:28

29 A violent man entices his neighbor,
And leads him in a way *that is* not
good.
30 He winks his eye to devise perverse
things;
He purses his lips *and* brings about
evil.

31 The silver-haired head *is* a crown of
glory,
If it is found in the way of
righteousness.

32 *He who is* slow to anger *is* better than
the mighty,
And he who rules his spirit than he
who takes a city.

33 The lot is cast into the lap,
But its every decision *is* from the LORD.

17 Better *is* a dry morsel with
quietness,
Than a house full of feasting[a]
with strife.

2 A wise servant will rule over a son who
causes shame,
And will share an inheritance among
the brothers.

3 The refining pot *is* for silver and the
furnace for gold,
But the LORD tests the hearts.

4 An evildoer gives heed to false lips;
A liar listens eagerly to a spiteful
tongue.

5 He who mocks the poor reproaches
his Maker;
He who is glad at calamity will not go
unpunished.

6 Children's children *are* the crown of
old men,
And the glory of children *is* their father.

7 Excellent speech is not becoming to
a fool,
Much less lying lips to a prince.

8 A present *is* a precious stone in the
eyes of its possessor;
Wherever he turns, he prospers.

ENEMIES
How can we avoid making enemies?
Proverbs 17:9

9 He who covers a transgression seeks
love,
But he who repeats a matter separates
friends.

17:1 [a]Or *sacrificial meals*

MAKING IT REAL // PROVERBS 17:9

Grace If you've ever been betrayed or abandoned or hurt by a friend, you've probably got the emotional scars to prove it. When it comes to dealing with your pain, you have a decision to make. You can choose to look at your scars every day, let them remind you how hurt you are, and keep the pain fresh and always in your mind. You can choose to spend hours plotting revenge. You can tell everyone how badly you were treated. You can hold a grudge. But eventually that grudge will turn to bitterness that will consume you. It's like a disease in your soul that will end up infecting your whole life with negative feelings and hateful thoughts.

But you don't have to choose bitterness. You have another option: a combination of two powerful expressions—grace and forgiveness. Grace means forgiving a friend even when they don't deserve it. Grace is how God has reached out to us. He forgave us when we didn't deserve it, and now we can give that same grace to others. We can forgive them just as God has forgiven us: let it go and forget it. Your words and your actions will show that you have truly forgiven.

So you have a choice to make; there are two ways to deal with someone who has hurt you. The first option keeps you chained to the past. The second one sets you free for the future. Forgiveness frees your heart to love your friend the way God loves you. (See also: Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; 1 John 4:7.)

Words to Live By

Seeks: The word translated as "seeks" in Proverbs 17:9 is the Hebrew word *baqash* (baw-kash'). It means "to search out." *Baqash* is an active word. Healthy relationships don't always come easy, but we can actively seek out the love we need to maintain them. When you choose to give grace and live out forgiveness, you are actively pursuing the love from God that can bless every part of your life, especially your relationships.

10 Rebuke is more effective for a wise
man
Than a hundred blows on a fool.

11 An evil *man* seeks only rebellion;
Therefore a cruel messenger will be
sent against him.

12 Let a man meet a bear robbed of her
cubs,
Rather than a fool in his folly.

13 Whoever rewards evil for good,
Evil will not depart from his house.

14 The beginning of strife *is like* releasing
water;
Therefore stop contention before a
quarrel starts.

15 He who justifies the wicked, and he
who condemns the just,
Both of them alike *are* an abomination
to the LORD.

16 Why *is there* in the hand of a fool the
purchase price of wisdom,
Since *he has* no heart *for it?*

17 A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.

18 A man devoid of understanding
shakes hands in a pledge,
And becomes surety for his friend.

19 He who loves transgression loves strife,
And he who exalts his gate seeks
destruction.

20 He who has a deceitful heart finds no
good,
And he who has a perverse tongue
falls into evil.

21 He who begets a scoffer *does so* to his
sorrow,
And the father of a fool has no joy.

22 A merry heart does good, *like*
medicine,[a]
But a broken spirit dries the bones.

23 A wicked *man* accepts a bribe behind
the back[a]
To pervert the ways of justice.

24 Wisdom *is* in the sight of him who has
understanding,
But the eyes of a fool *are* on the ends of
the earth.

25 A foolish son *is* a grief to his father,
And bitterness to her who bore him.

26 Also, to punish the righteous *is* not
good,
Nor to strike princes for *their*
uprightness.

27 He who has knowledge spares his
words,
And a man of understanding is of a
calm spirit.
28 Even a fool is counted wise when he
holds his peace;
When he shuts his lips, *he is considered*
perceptive.

18 A man who isolates himself
seeks his own desire;
He rages against all wise
judgment.

2 A fool has no delight in
understanding,
But in expressing his own heart.

3 When the wicked comes, contempt
comes also;
And with dishonor *comes* reproach.

4 The words of a man's mouth *are* deep
waters;
The wellspring of wisdom *is* a flowing
brook.

5 *It is* not good to show partiality to the
wicked,
Or to overthrow the righteous in
judgment.

6 A fool's lips enter into contention,
And his mouth calls for blows.
7 A fool's mouth *is* his destruction,
And his lips *are* the snare of his soul.
8 The words of a talebearer *are* like tasty
trifles,[a]
And they go down into the inmost
body.

9 He who is slothful in his work
Is a brother to him who is a great
destroyer.

10 The name of the LORD *is* a strong
tower;
The righteous run to it and are safe.
11 The rich man's wealth *is* his strong
city,
And like a high wall in his own
esteem.

12 Before destruction the heart of a man
is haughty,
And before honor *is* humility.

13 He who answers a matter before he
hears *it,*
It *is* folly and shame to him.

14 The spirit of a man will sustain him in
sickness,
But who can bear a broken spirit?

15 The heart of the prudent acquires
knowledge,
And the ear of the wise seeks
knowledge.

16 A man's gift makes room for him,
And brings him before great men.

17 The first *one* to plead his cause *seems*
right,
Until his neighbor comes and
examines him.

18 Casting lots causes contentions to
cease,
And keeps the mighty apart.

17:22 [a]Or *makes medicine even better*
17:23 [a]Literally *from the bosom* **18:8** [a]A Jewish tradition reads *wounds.*

Proverbs 18:18

Casting lots was a lot like flipping a coin or drawing straws to determine who's going to do something. The only difference was many Israelites believed God influenced the outcome when lots were cast. Therefore, it was His will, and not blind luck, that determined the results.

19 A brother offended *is harder to win*
than a strong city,
And contentions *are* like the bars of a
castle.

20 A man's stomach shall be satisfied
from the fruit of his mouth;
From the produce of his lips he shall
be filled.

21 Death and life *are* in the power of the
tongue,
And those who love it will eat its
fruit.

22 *He who* finds a wife finds a good
thing,
And obtains favor from the LORD.

23 The poor *man* uses entreaties,
But the rich answers roughly.

24 A man *who has* friends must himself
be friendly,[a]
But there is a friend *who* sticks closer
than a brother.

19 Better *is* the poor who walks in
his integrity
Than *one who is* perverse in his
lips, and is a fool.

2 Also it is not good *for* a soul *to be*
without knowledge,
And he sins who hastens with *his* feet.

3 The foolishness of a man twists his
way,
And his heart frets against the LORD.

4 Wealth makes many friends,
But the poor is separated from his
friend.

5 A false witness will not go unpunished,
And *he who* speaks lies will not escape.

6 Many entreat the favor of the nobility,
And every man *is* a friend to one who
gives gifts.
7 All the brothers of the poor hate him;
How much more do his friends go far
from him!
He may pursue *them with* words, *yet*
they abandon *him.*

8 He who gets wisdom loves his own
soul;
He who keeps understanding will find
good.

9 A false witness will not go
unpunished,
And *he who* speaks lies shall perish.

10 Luxury is not fitting for a fool,
Much less for a servant to rule over
princes.

11 The discretion of a man makes him
slow to anger,
And his glory *is* to overlook a
transgression.

12 The king's wrath *is* like the roaring of
a lion,
But his favor *is* like dew on the grass.

13 A foolish son *is* the ruin of his father,
And the contentions of a wife *are* a
continual dripping.

14 Houses and riches *are* an inheritance
from fathers,
But a prudent wife *is* from the LORD.

LAZINESS
If you are lazy, what can you expect?
Proverbs 19:15

15 Laziness casts *one* into a deep sleep,
And an idle person will suffer hunger.

18:24 [a]Following Greek manuscripts, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *may come to ruin.*



LIFE APP

Free Time / Proverbs 19:15

It's the weekend! Whooot! Time to do nothing! What a great way to spend a few days off—do absolutely *nothing*! What could possibly be wrong with that?

Everyone needs a bit of time off—some time to just relax and chill. There's nothing wrong with taking a break. The problem comes when the "break" becomes a lifestyle.

Solomon (the wisest man who ever lived and the one who wrote many of the Proverbs) understood how important it is to avoid the temptation to always sit around and never accomplish anything. If that's the lifestyle we choose, we might as well just sleep our lives away.

There are a couple of laws in physics: 1) an object at rest tends to stay at rest; 2) an object in motion tends to stay in motion. Often, we can look at the world God created to learn about our relationship to Him and the world around us. These laws of physics are a good example. If we see life as an adventure to be lived and a journey of discovery about God and our place in His world, we will set ourselves in motion to learn and grow. If we choose to disconnect from life and God's plan for us, we may never move beyond where we are at this moment.

Free time is great and time off can be a much needed time of refreshing and rest. But you weren't made to sit and watch the world go by. You were created with a purpose—something only you can do. Take time off when you need to. Enjoy free time. But don't let it take over. Keep moving, growing, doing, and being and watch as God makes something special of your life.

16 He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul,
But he who is careless[a] of his ways will die.

17 He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD,
And He will pay back what he has given.

18 Chasten your son while there is hope,
And do not set your heart on his destruction.[a]

19 *A man of* great wrath will suffer punishment;
For if you rescue *him,* you will have to do it again.

20 Listen to counsel and receive instruction,
That you may be wise in your latter days.

21 There are many plans in a man's heart,
Nevertheless the LORD's counsel—that will stand.

22 What is desired in a man is kindness,
And a poor man is better than a liar.

23 The fear of the LORD *leads* to life,
And *he who has it* will abide in satisfaction;
He will not be visited with evil.

24 A lazy *man* buries his hand in the bowl,[a]
And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

25 Strike a scoffer, and the simple will become wary;
Rebuke one who has understanding, *and* he will discern knowledge.

26 He who mistreats *his* father *and* chases away *his* mother
Is a son who causes shame and brings reproach.

27 Cease listening to instruction, my son,
And you will stray from the words of knowledge.

28 A disreputable witness scorns justice,
And the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity.

29 Judgments are prepared for scoffers,
And beatings for the backs of fools.

20 Wine *is* a mocker,
Strong drink *is* a brawler,
And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

2 The wrath[a] of a king *is* like the roaring of a lion;
Whoever provokes him to anger sins *against* his own life.

3 *It is* honorable for a man to stop striving,
Since any fool can start a quarrel.

4 The lazy *man* will not plow because of winter;
He will beg during harvest and *have* nothing.

5 Counsel in the heart of man *is like* deep water,
But a man of understanding will draw it out.

6 Most men will proclaim each his own goodness,
But who can find a faithful man?

7 The righteous *man* walks in his integrity;
His children *are* blessed after him.

8 A king who sits on the throne of judgment
Scatters all evil with his eyes.

9 Who can say, "I have made my heart clean,
I am pure from my sin"?

19:16 [a]Literally *despises,* figurative of recklessness or carelessness **19:18** [a]Literally *to put him to death;* a Jewish tradition reads *on his crying.* **19:24** [a]Septuagint and Syriac read *bosom;* Targum and Vulgate read *armpit.* **20:2** [a]Literally *fear* or *terror* which is produced by the king's wrath

10 Diverse weights *and* diverse measures,
They *are* both alike, an abomination to
the LORD.

HYPOCRISY
What does God think of a person with double standards?
Proverbs 20:10

11 Even a child is known by his deeds,
Whether what he does *is* pure and
right.

12 The hearing ear and the seeing eye,
The LORD has made them both.

13 Do not love sleep, lest you come to
poverty;
Open your eyes, *and* you will be
satisfied with bread.

14 "*It is* good for nothing,"[a] cries the buyer;
But when he has gone his way, then
he boasts.

15 There is gold and a multitude of
rubies,
But the lips of knowledge *are* a
precious jewel.

16 Take the garment of one who is surety
for a stranger,
And hold it as a pledge *when it* is for a
seductress.

17 Bread gained by deceit *is* sweet to a
man,
But afterward his mouth will be filled
with gravel.

18 Plans are established by counsel;
By wise counsel wage war.

19 He who goes about *as* a talebearer
reveals secrets;
Therefore do not associate with one
who flatters with his lips.

20 Whoever curses his father or his
mother,
His lamp will be put out in deep
darkness.

21 An inheritance gained hastily at the
beginning
Will not be blessed at the end.

22 Do not say, "I will recompense evil";
Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.

23 Diverse weights *are* an abomination to
the LORD,
And dishonest scales *are* not good.

24 A man's steps *are* of the LORD;
How then can a man understand his
own way?

25 *It is* a snare for a man to devote rashly
something as holy,
And afterward to reconsider *his* vows.

26 A wise king sifts out the wicked,
And brings the threshing wheel over
them.

27 The spirit of a man *is* the lamp of the
LORD,
Searching all the inner depths of his
heart.[a]

28 Mercy and truth preserve the king,
And by lovingkindness he upholds his
throne.

29 The glory of young men *is* their strength,
And the splendor of old men *is* their
gray head.

30 Blows that hurt cleanse away evil,
As *do* stripes the inner depths of the
heart.[a]

21 The king's heart *is* in the hand
of the LORD,
Like the rivers of water;
He turns it wherever He wishes.

2 Every way of a man *is* right in his own
eyes,
But the LORD weighs the hearts.

3 To do righteousness and justice
Is more acceptable to the LORD than
sacrifice.

20:14 [a]Literally *evil, evil* **20:27** [a]Literally *the rooms of the belly* **20:30** [a]Literally *the rooms of the belly*

4 A haughty look, a proud heart,
And the plowing[a] of the wicked *are* sin.

5 The plans of the diligent *lead* surely to plenty,
But *those of* everyone *who is* hasty, surely to poverty.

6 Getting treasures by a lying tongue
Is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death.[a]

7 The violence of the wicked will destroy them,[a]
Because they refuse to do justice.

8 The way of a guilty man *is* perverse;[a]
But *as for* the pure, his work *is* right.

9 Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop,
Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

10 The soul of the wicked desires evil;
His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.

11 When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise;
But when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge.

12 The righteous *God* wisely considers the house of the wicked,
Overthrowing the wicked for *their* wickedness.

13 Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor
Will also cry himself and not be heard.

14 A gift in secret pacifies anger,
And a bribe behind the back,[a] strong wrath.

15 *It is* a joy for the just to do justice,
But destruction *will come* to the workers of iniquity.

16 A man who wanders from the way of understanding
Will rest in the assembly of the dead.

17 He who loves pleasure *will be* a poor man;
He who loves wine and oil will not be rich.

18 The wicked *shall be* a ransom for the righteous,
And the unfaithful for the upright.

19 Better to dwell in the wilderness,
Than with a contentious and angry woman.

20 *There is* desirable treasure,
And oil in the dwelling of the wise,
But a foolish man squanders it.

21 He who follows righteousness and mercy
Finds life, righteousness, and honor.

22 A wise *man* scales the city of the mighty,
And brings down the trusted stronghold.

23 Whoever guards his mouth and tongue
Keeps his soul from troubles.

24 A proud *and* haughty *man*—"Scoffer" *is* his name;
He acts with arrogant pride.

25 The desire of the lazy *man* kills him,
For his hands refuse to labor.
26 He covets greedily all day long,
But the righteous gives and does not spare.

27 The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination;
How much more *when* he brings it with wicked intent!

28 A false witness shall perish,
But the man who hears *him* will speak endlessly.

21:4 [a]Or *lamp* **21:6** [a]Septuagint reads *Pursue vanity on the snares of death;* Vulgate reads *Is vain and foolish, and shall stumble on the snares of death;* Targum reads *They shall be destroyed, and they shall fall who seek death.* **21:7** [a]Literally *drag them away* **21:8** [a]Or *The way of a man is perverse and strange* **21:14** [a]Literally *in the bosom*

29 A wicked man hardens his face,
But *as for* the upright, he establishes[a]
his way.

30 *There is* no wisdom or understanding
Or counsel against the LORD.

31 The horse *is* prepared for the day of
battle,
But deliverance *is* of the LORD.

22 A *good* name is to be chosen
rather than great riches,
Loving favor rather than silver
and gold.

2 The rich and the poor have this in
common,
The LORD *is* the maker of them all.

3 A prudent *man* foresees evil and hides
himself,
But the simple pass on and are
punished.

4 By humility *and* the fear of the LORD
Are riches and honor and life.

HUMILITY
Does God bless a humble person?
Proverbs 22:4

5 Thorns *and* snares *are* in the way of
the perverse;
He who guards his soul will be far
from them.

6 Train up a child in the way he
should go,
And when he is old he will not depart
from it.

7 The rich rules over the poor,
And the borrower *is* servant to the
lender.

8 He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow,
And the rod of his anger will fail.

9 He who has a generous eye will be
blessed,
For he gives of his bread to the poor.

10 Cast out the scoffer, and contention
will leave;
Yes, strife and reproach will cease.

11 He who loves purity of heart
And has grace on his lips,
The king *will be* his friend.

12 The eyes of the LORD preserve
knowledge,
But He overthrows the words of the
faithless.

13 The lazy *man* says, "*There is* a lion
outside!
I shall be slain in the streets!"

14 The mouth of an immoral woman *is* a
deep pit;
He who is abhorred by the LORD will
fall there.

15 Foolishness *is* bound up in the heart
of a child;
The rod of correction will drive it far
from him.

16 He who oppresses the poor to increase
his *riches,*
And he who gives to the rich, *will*
surely *come* to poverty.

SAYINGS OF THE WISE

17 Incline your ear and hear the words of
the wise,
And apply your heart to my
knowledge;
18 For *it is* a pleasant thing if you keep
them within you;
Let them all be fixed upon your lips,
19 So that your trust may be in the LORD;
I have instructed you today, even you.
20 Have I not written to you excellent
things
Of counsels and knowledge,
21 That I may make you know the
certainty of the words of truth,
That you may answer words of truth
To those who send to you?

22 Do not rob the poor because he *is*
poor,
Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate;

21:29 [a]Qere and Septuagint read *understands.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PROVERBS 22:1

A Good Name You are the one who has to live with yourself. No one else lives inside your skin. So, don't ever let anyone else make decisions about your reputation or your character. You will encounter situations wherein someone will try to influence you to do something you know is wrong—they may plead with you, they may promise you the moon, they may charm you or they tell you they love you. In those situations, your gut instinct might be to run. That would be the Holy Spirit speaking to you. Don't miss Him. Do not be deceived! Do not fall into Satan's trap.

Protect your integrity. Muster up all your courage and say, "No!" Then remove yourself from temptation—go home; send (or take) your date home; get a ride home. Whatever it takes, just get away from the pressure to make a bad decision.

To have a good name and to be respected is more valuable than silver and gold. You are building your character when you make difficult decisions that are right and strong. God sees your faithfulness, and He will bless your name. (See also: Prov. 12:3; 15:21; Eph. 6:10–17.)

Words to Live By

To be chosen: The word translated as "to be chosen" in Proverbs 22:1 is the Hebrew word *bachar* (baw-khar'). It means "to select" or "to pick one option over another." In Joshua 24:15, we are given good advice: "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve." Moment by moment, day by day, the choice is yours. Will you choose to serve the Lord?

23 When you sit down to eat with a ruler,
Consider carefully what *is* before you;
2 And put a knife to your throat
If you *are* a man given to appetite.
3 Do not desire his delicacies,
For they *are* deceptive food.

4 Do not overwork to be rich;
Because of your own understanding, cease!
5 Will you set your eyes on that which is not?
For *riches* certainly make themselves wings;
They fly away like an eagle *toward* heaven.

6 Do not eat the bread of a miser,[a]
Nor desire his delicacies;
7 For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he.
"Eat and drink!" he says to you,
But his heart is not with you.

23:23 For the LORD will plead their cause,
And plunder the soul of those who plunder them.

24 Make no friendship with an angry man,
And with a furious man do not go,
25 Lest you learn his ways
And set a snare for your soul.

26 Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge,
One of those who is surety for debts;
27 If you have nothing *with which* to pay,
Why should he take away your bed from under you?

28 Do not remove the ancient landmark
Which your fathers have set.

29 Do you see a man *who* excels in his work?
He will stand before kings;
He will not stand before unknown *men.*

23:6 [a]Literally *one who has an evil eye*

8 The morsel you have eaten, you will
vomit up,
And waste your pleasant words.

9 Do not speak in the hearing of a fool,
For he will despise the wisdom of your
words.

10 Do not remove the ancient landmark,
Nor enter the fields of the fatherless;

Proverbs 23:10

In ancient times, property lines were marked by stones. Since wealth was measured in part by how much land a person owned, moving those stone markers was like stealing land from someone else. Such land grabbing was forbidden by God's law.

11 For their Redeemer *is* mighty;
He will plead their cause against you.

12 Apply your heart to instruction,
And your ears to words of knowledge.

13 Do not withhold correction from a
child,
For *if* you beat him with a rod, he will
not die.
14 You shall beat him with a rod,
And deliver his soul from hell.[a]

15 My son, if your heart is wise,
My heart will rejoice—indeed,
I myself;
16 Yes, my inmost being will rejoice
When your lips speak right things.

17 Do not let your heart envy sinners,
But *be zealous* for the fear of the LORD
all the day;
18 For surely there is a hereafter,
And your hope will not be cut off.

19 Hear, my son, and be wise;
And guide your heart in the way.
20 Do not mix with winebibbers,
Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;
21 For the drunkard and the glutton will
come to poverty,
And drowsiness will clothe *a man* with
rags.

22 Listen to your father who begot you,
And do not despise your mother when
she is old.

23 Buy the truth, and do not sell *it,*
Also wisdom and instruction and
understanding.

24 The father of the righteous will greatly
rejoice,
And he who begets a wise *child* will
delight in him.
25 Let your father and your mother be
glad,
And let her who bore you rejoice.

26 My son, give me your heart,
And let your eyes observe my ways.
27 For a harlot *is* a deep pit,
And a seductress *is* a narrow well.
28 She also lies in wait as *for* a victim,
And increases the unfaithful among
men.

29 Who has woe?
Who has sorrow?
Who has contentions?
Who has complaints?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?
30 Those who linger long at the wine,
Those who go in search of mixed wine.
31 Do not look on the wine when it is red,
When it sparkles in the cup,
When it swirls around smoothly;
32 At the last it bites like a serpent,
And stings like a viper.
33 Your eyes will see strange things,
And your heart will utter perverse
things.
34 Yes, you will be like one who lies down
in the midst of the sea,
Or like one who lies at the top of the
mast, *saying:*
35 "They have struck me, *but* I was not
hurt;
They have beaten me, but I did not
feel *it.*
When shall I awake, that I may seek
another *drink?*"

24 Do not be envious of evil
men,
Nor desire to be with them;

23:14 [a]Or *Sheol*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PROVERBS 23:29–35

Drinking One of the biggest problems with alcohol is that it's so easily abused. Many people don't stop with a glass of wine at dinner; they continue to drink until they are either lightheaded and confused, or drunk and totally disoriented. Either way, their judgment is impaired. They could harm themselves or anyone else in their path.

A number of believers have decided to just stay clear of alcohol. Proverbs says it is something that seems attractive, but eventually it can be as devastating and as painful as a snakebite.

Drinking alcohol may cause you to make decisions that seem fun at the time, but stupid the next morning. In fact, it's entirely possible that you could do something that you'll wind up paying for the rest of your life. In addition to underage drinking being against the law, people may also advise you not to drink because they care that you make wise decisions and that you live a long and healthy life. You'd be smart to take their advice. (See also: Prov. 20:1; 31:4, 5.)

Words to Live By

Woe: The word translated as "woe" in Proverbs 23:29 is the Hebrew word *owy* (o'-ee). It implies a sorrow so deep it makes you cry out or yell. When someone is hurting so badly that their entire being is in pain, they often sob uncontrollably or scream at the world. Poor and sinful life decisions can cause this kind of woe for you; you can hurt yourself and others deeply. Avoid sinful life choices. Don't invite *owy* into your life.

2 For their heart devises violence,
And their lips talk of troublemaking.

3 Through wisdom a house is built,
And by understanding it is established;
4 By knowledge the rooms are filled
With all precious and pleasant riches.

WISDOM
Why is wisdom important?
Proverbs 24:3, 4

5 A wise man *is* strong,
Yes, a man of knowledge increases strength;
6 For by wise counsel you will wage your own war,
And in a multitude of counselors *there is* safety.

7 Wisdom *is* too lofty for a fool;
He does not open his mouth in the gate.

8 He who plots to do evil
Will be called a schemer.

9 The devising of foolishness *is* sin,
And the scoffer *is* an abomination to men.

10 *If* you faint in the day of adversity,
Your strength *is* small.

11 Deliver *those who* are drawn toward death,
And hold back *those* stumbling to the slaughter.
12 If you say, "Surely we did not know this,"
Does not He who weighs the hearts consider *it?*
He who keeps your soul, does He *not* know *it?*
And will He *not* render to *each* man according to his deeds?

13 My son, eat honey because *it is* good,
And the honeycomb *which is* sweet to your taste;
14 So *shall* the knowledge of wisdom *be* to your soul;
If you have found *it,* there is a prospect,
And your hope will not be cut off.

15 Do not lie in wait, O wicked *man,*
against the dwelling of the
righteous;
Do not plunder his resting place;
16 For a righteous *man* may fall seven
times
And rise again,
But the wicked shall fall by calamity.

17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,
And do not let your heart be glad
when he stumbles;
18 Lest the LORD see *it,* and it displease
Him,
And He turn away His wrath from him.

19 Do not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the wicked;
20 For there will be no prospect for the
evil *man;*
The lamp of the wicked will be put out.

21 My son, fear the LORD and the king;
Do not associate with those given to
change;

Proverbs 24:21

The first three kings of Israel were all anointed by a prophet before they were officially crowned. Anointing involved pouring olive oil on the head of the king-to-be. The ritual was important, because it indicated the king had been chosen by God. Questioning the king's authority was like questioning God's authority. When Saul was trying to kill him, David refused to retaliate because King Saul had been anointed by God.

22 For their calamity will rise suddenly,
And who knows the ruin those two
can bring?

FURTHER SAYINGS OF THE WISE

23 These *things* also *belong* to the wise:

It is not good to show partiality in
judgment.
24 He who says to the wicked, "You *are*
righteous,"
Him the people will curse;
Nations will abhor him.

25 But those who rebuke *the wicked* will
have delight,
And a good blessing will come upon
them.

26 He who gives a right answer kisses
the lips.

27 Prepare your outside work,
Make it fit for yourself in the field;
And afterward build your house.

28 Do not be a witness against your
neighbor without cause,
For would you deceive[a] with your lips?
29 Do not say, "I will do to him just as he
has done to me;
I will render to the man according to
his work."

30 I went by the field of the lazy *man,*
And by the vineyard of the man devoid
of understanding;
31 And there it was, all overgrown with
thorns;
Its surface was covered with nettles;
Its stone wall was broken down.
32 When I saw *it,* I considered *it* well;
I looked on *it and* received instruction:
33 A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to rest;
34 So shall your poverty come *like* a
prowler,
And your need like an armed man.

FURTHER WISE SAYINGS OF SOLOMON

25 These also *are* proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied:

2 *It is* the glory of God to conceal a
matter,
But the glory of kings *is* to search out
a matter.

3 *As* the heavens for height and the
earth for depth,
So the heart of kings *is* unsearchable.

4 Take away the dross from silver,
And it will go to the silversmith *for*
jewelry.
5 Take away the wicked from before the
king,

24:28 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *Do not deceive.*

MAKING IT REAL // PROVERBS 25:18, 19, 21, 22

Dealing with Enemies In Proverbs 25 and in many places in the New Testament, the writers give us some wisdom about people who tell lies or treat us badly. The advice is to do exactly the opposite of what those people do. Even in your disappointment and anger, you are supposed to be Christlike. Luke 6:28 says to "bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you." Wow, that's really difficult to do! But Luke goes on to say that by loving those who hurt you, "you will heap coals of fire on his head."

At times when our reputation has been shattered, or our pride has been wounded, or our hearts have been broken, we can be tempted to lash out at others and try to make them pay. But God tells us a better way. He says to love the ones who've hurt us—even help them when they need it. On top of that, He gives us the hardest direction of all: He says we should pray for them.

It's really difficult to do good things for the people who hurt us. But by doing so, we prove the strength of our character and show others a part of God's nature so they can begin to know Him for themselves. Do good to those who hurt you—that's God's way. (See also: Matt.18:21, 22; Luke 6:28; 17:3, 4; Col. 3:13.)

Words to Live By

Enemy: The word translated as "enemy" in Proverbs 25:21 is the Hebrew word *sane* (saw-nay'). It means "to hate" or "to be a foe." It's easy to look at people who hurt us as enemies, but the Bible tells us those people aren't really the ones we should be fighting. Any sinful behavior in this world is caused by our real enemy—Satan and all his evil followers (Eph. 6:12).

And his throne will be established in
righteousness.

6 Do not exalt yourself in the presence
of the king,
And do not stand in the place of the
great;
7 For *it is* better that he say to you,
"Come up here,"
Than that you should be put lower in
the presence of the prince,
Whom your eyes have seen.

8 Do not go hastily to court;
For what will you do in the end,
When your neighbor has put you to
shame?
9 Debate your case with your neighbor,
And do not disclose the secret to
another;
10 Lest he who hears *it* expose your shame,
And your reputation be ruined.

11 A word fitly spoken *is like* apples of gold
In settings of silver.

12 *Like* an earring of gold and an
ornament of fine gold
Is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear.

13 Like the cold of snow in time of harvest
Is a faithful messenger to those who
send him,
For he refreshes the soul of his
masters.

14 Whoever falsely boasts of giving
Is like clouds and wind without rain.

15 By long forbearance a ruler is
persuaded,
And a gentle tongue breaks a bone.

16 Have you found honey?
Eat only as much as you need,
Lest you be filled with it and vomit.

17 Seldom set foot in your neighbor's
house,
Lest he become weary of you and hate
you.

18 A man who bears false witness against
his neighbor
Is like a club, a sword, and a sharp
arrow.

19 Confidence in an unfaithful *man* in
time of trouble
Is like a bad tooth and a foot out of
joint.

20 *Like* one who takes away a garment in
cold weather,
And like vinegar on soda,
Is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him
bread to eat;
And if he is thirsty, give him water to
drink;
22 For *so* you will heap coals of fire on
his head,
And the LORD will reward you.

23 The north wind brings forth rain,
And a backbiting tongue an angry
countenance.

24 *It is* better to dwell in a corner of a
housetop,
Than in a house shared with a
contentious woman.

25 *As* cold water to a weary soul,
So *is* good news from a far country.

26 A righteous *man* who falters before
the wicked
Is like a murky spring and a polluted
well.

27 *It is* not good to eat much honey;
So to seek one's own glory *is not* glory.

28 Whoever *has* no rule over his own
spirit
Is like a city broken down, without walls.

26 As snow in summer and rain in
harvest,
So honor is not fitting for a fool.

2 Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying
swallow,
So a curse without cause shall not
alight.

3 A whip for the horse,
A bridle for the donkey,
And a rod for the fool's back.
4 Do not answer a fool according to his
folly,
Lest you also be like him.
5 Answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest he be wise in his own eyes.
6 He who sends a message by the hand
of a fool
Cuts off *his own* feet *and* drinks
violence.
7 *Like* the legs of the lame that hang
limp
Is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
8 Like one who binds a stone in a sling
Is he who gives honor to a fool.
9 *Like* a thorn *that* goes into the hand of
a drunkard
Is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
10 The great *God* who formed everything
Gives the fool *his* hire and the
transgressor *his* wages.[a]
11 As a dog returns to his own vomit,
So a fool repeats his folly.
12 Do you see a man wise in his own
eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for
him.

13 The lazy *man* says, "*There is* a lion in
the road!
A fierce lion *is* in the streets!"
14 *As* a door turns on its hinges,
So *does* the lazy *man* on his bed.
15 The lazy *man* buries his hand in the
bowl;[a]
It wearies him to bring it back to his
mouth.
16 The lazy *man is* wiser in his own eyes
Than seven men who can answer
sensibly.

17 He who passes by *and* meddles in a
quarrel not his own
Is like one who takes a dog by the ears.

18 Like a madman who throws
firebrands, arrows, and death,
19 *Is* the man *who* deceives his neighbor,
And says, "I was only joking!"

26:10 [a]The Hebrew is difficult; ancient and modern translators differ greatly.
26:15 [a]Compare 19:24

20 Where *there is* no wood, the fire goes
out;
And where *there is* no talebearer, strife
ceases.

GOSSIP
What is one benefit gained from not gossiping?
Proverbs 26:20

21 *As* charcoal *is* to burning coals, and
wood to fire,
So *is* a contentious man to kindle
strife.
22 The words of a talebearer *are* like tasty
trifles,
And they go down into the inmost
body.

23 Fervent lips with a wicked heart
Are like earthenware covered with
silver dross.

24 He who hates, disguises *it* with his lips,
And lays up deceit within himself;
25 When he speaks kindly, do not believe
him,
For *there are* seven abominations in
his heart;
26 *Though his* hatred is covered by
deceit,
His wickedness will be revealed
before the assembly.

27 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it,
And he who rolls a stone will have it
roll back on him.

28 A lying tongue hates *those who are*
crushed by it,
And a flattering mouth works ruin.

27 Do not boast about tomorrow,
For you do not know what a
day may bring forth.

2 Let another man praise you, and not
your own mouth;
A stranger, and not your own lips.

3 A stone *is* heavy and sand *is* weighty,
But a fool's wrath *is* heavier than both
of them.

4 Wrath *is* cruel and anger a torrent,
But who *is* able to stand before
jealousy?

5 Open rebuke *is* better
Than love carefully concealed.

6 Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend,
But the kisses of an enemy *are*
deceitful.

7 A satisfied soul loathes the
honeycomb,
But to a hungry soul every bitter thing
is sweet.

8 Like a bird that wanders from its
nest
Is a man who wanders from his
place.

9 Ointment and perfume delight the
heart,
And the sweetness of a man's friend
gives delight by hearty counsel.

10 Do not forsake your own friend or
your father's friend,
Nor go to your brother's house in the
day of your calamity;
Better *is* a neighbor nearby than a
brother far away.

11 My son, be wise, and make my heart
glad,
That I may answer him who
reproaches me.

12 A prudent *man* foresees evil *and* hides
himself;
The simple pass on *and* are punished.

13 Take the garment of him who is surety
for a stranger,
And hold it in pledge *when* he is surety
for a seductress.

14 He who blesses his friend with a loud
voice, rising early in the
morning,
It will be counted a curse to him.

15 A continual dripping on a very rainy
day
And a contentious woman are alike;

16 Whoever restrains her restrains the
wind,
And grasps oil with his right hand.

17 *As* iron sharpens iron,
So a man sharpens the countenance
of his friend.

18 Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its
fruit;
So he who waits on his master will be
honored.

19 As in water face *reflects* face,
So a man's heart *reveals* the man.

20 Hell[a] and Destruction[b] are never full;
So the eyes of man are never satisfied.

21 The refining pot *is* for silver and the
furnace for gold,
And a man *is valued* by what others
say of him.

22 Though you grind a fool in a mortar
with a pestle along with crushed
grain,
Yet his foolishness will not depart from
him.

23 Be diligent to know the state of your
flocks,
And attend to your herds;
24 For riches *are* not forever,
Nor does a crown *endure* to all
generations.
25 *When* the hay is removed, and the
tender grass shows itself,
And the herbs of the mountains are
gathered in,
26 The lambs *will provide* your clothing,
And the goats the price of a field;
27 *You shall have* enough goats' milk for
your food,
For the food of your household,
And the nourishment of your
maidservants.

28 The wicked flee when no one
pursues,
But the righteous are bold as
a lion.

2 Because of the transgression of a land,
many *are* its princes;
But by a man of understanding *and*
knowledge
Right will be prolonged.

3 A poor man who oppresses the poor
Is like a driving rain which leaves no
food.

4 Those who forsake the law praise the
wicked,
But such as keep the law contend with
them.

5 Evil men do not understand justice,
But those who seek the LORD
understand all.

6 Better *is* the poor who walks in his
integrity
Than one perverse *in his* ways, though
he *be* rich.

7 Whoever keeps the law *is* a discerning
son,
But a companion of gluttons shames
his father.

8 One who increases his possessions by
usury and extortion
Gathers it for him who will pity the
poor.

Proverbs 28:8

God's law prohibited people from charging interest on loans made to poor people. Borrowers could not be forced to give up their coats as collateral for loans. Lenders were not allowed to use force to collect payment. The way God saw it, every person in the community was responsible for taking care of the poor, the widowed, the orphaned, and the disabled members of society.

9 One who turns away his ear from
hearing the law,
Even his prayer *is* an abomination.

10 Whoever causes the upright to go
astray in an evil way,
He himself will fall into his own pit;
But the blameless will inherit good.

27:20 [a]Or *Sheol* [b]Hebrew *Abaddon*

11 The rich man *is* wise in his own eyes,
But the poor who has understanding searches him out.

12 When the righteous rejoice, *there is* great glory;
But when the wicked arise, men hide themselves.

13 He who covers his sins will not prosper,
But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.

14 Happy *is* the man who is always reverent,
But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

15 *Like* a roaring lion and a charging bear
Is a wicked ruler over poor people.

Proverbs 28:15

Lions and bears were serious problems in ancient Israel. Lions often hid in the tall grass beside the Jordan River or in the surrounding forests and attacked unsuspecting people. The Asian black bears in the area were a threat not only to humans, but also to livestock and even crops.

16 A ruler who lacks understanding *is* a great oppressor,
But he who hates covetousness will prolong *his* days.

17 A man burdened with bloodshed will flee into a pit;
Let no one help him.

18 Whoever walks blamelessly will be saved,
But *he who is* perverse *in his* ways will suddenly fall.

19 He who tills his land will have plenty of bread,
But he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough!

20 A faithful man will abound with blessings,
But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.

21 To show partiality *is* not good,
Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.

22 A man with an evil eye hastens after riches,
And does not consider that poverty will come upon him.

23 He who rebukes a man will find more favor afterward
Than he who flatters with the tongue.

24 Whoever robs his father or his mother,
And says, "*It is* no transgression,"
The same *is* companion to a destroyer.

25 He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife,
But he who trusts in the LORD will be prospered.

26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool,
But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.

TRUST
How does the Lord bless those who trust Him?
Proverbs 28:25, 26

27 He who gives to the poor will not lack,
But he who hides his eyes will have many curses.

28 When the wicked arise, men hide themselves;
But when they perish, the righteous increase.

29 He who is often rebuked, *and* hardens *his* neck,
Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice;
But when a wicked *man* rules, the people groan.

3 Whoever loves wisdom makes his
father rejoice,
But a companion of harlots wastes *his*
wealth.

4 The king establishes the land by
justice,
But he who receives bribes
overthrows it.

5 A man who flatters his neighbor
Spreads a net for his feet.

6 By transgression an evil man is
snared,
But the righteous sings and rejoices.

7 The righteous considers the cause of
the poor,
But the wicked does not understand
such knowledge.

8 Scoffers set a city aflame,
But wise *men* turn away wrath.

9 *If* a wise man contends with a foolish
man,
Whether *the fool* rages or laughs, *there*
is no peace.

10 The bloodthirsty hate the blameless,
But the upright seek his well-being.[a]

11 A fool vents all his feelings,[a]
But a wise *man* holds them back.

12 If a ruler pays attention to lies,
All his servants *become* wicked.

13 The poor *man* and the oppressor have
this in common:
The LORD gives light to the eyes of
both.

14 The king who judges the poor with
truth,
His throne will be established forever.

15 The rod and rebuke give wisdom,
But a child left *to himself* brings shame
to his mother.

16 When the wicked are multiplied,
transgression increases;
But the righteous will see their fall.

17 Correct your son, and he will give you
rest;
Yes, he will give delight to your soul.

18 Where *there is* no revelation,[a] the
people cast off restraint;
But happy *is* he who keeps the law.

19 A servant will not be corrected by
mere words;
For though he understands, he will not
respond.

20 Do you see a man hasty in his words?
There is more hope for a fool than for
him.

21 He who pampers his servant from
childhood
Will have him as a son in the end.

22 An angry man stirs up strife,
And a furious man abounds in
transgression.

23 A man's pride will bring him low,
But the humble in spirit will retain
honor.

PRIDE
What is the result of pride?
Proverbs 29:23

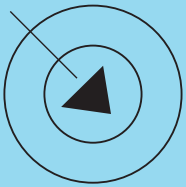
24 Whoever is a partner with a thief
hates his own life;
He swears to tell the truth,[a] but reveals
nothing.

25 The fear of man brings a snare,
But whoever trusts in the LORD shall
be safe.

26 Many seek the ruler's favor,
But justice for man *comes* from the
LORD.

27 An unjust man *is* an abomination to
the righteous,
And *he who is* upright in the way *is* an
abomination to the wicked.

29:10 [a]Literally *soul* **29:11** [a]Literally *spirit*
29:18 [a]Or *prophetic vision* **29:24** [a]Literally
hears the adjuration



PROMISE

God promises that everything He says is true.

Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him (Prov. 30:5).

Have you ever told "a little white lie"? You know, what you said was not quite true, but it didn't hurt anybody and it got you out of a tight spot. Or maybe your skill is telling your mom something that is *technically* true, but when you've finished explaining, what she thinks happened and what really happened are two different things. That's the way human beings are—they shade the truth this way and that, turning what's black and white into shades of gray.

But God isn't like that. There is no gray in what He says; He doesn't give us some variation of the truth or try to mislead us with technicalities. And God isn't just honest; everything He says is pure and true and *always* right. Although people can make statements they believe to be true and still be completely wrong, God doesn't make mistakes. His Word is completely dependable and true.

His Word is so reliable you can use it for a shield. That's what Jesus did when Satan tempted Him (Matt. 4:1–11). He used God's words to protect His heart. It's good to know that there are no cracks in the shield. We can base our entire lives on God's truth—anything God says.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Numbers 23:19; Proverbs 12:19; Matthew 4:1–11

THE WISDOM OF AGUR

30 The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, *his* utterance. This man declared to Ithiel—to Ithiel and Ucal:

2 Surely I *am* more stupid than *any* man,
And do not have the understanding of a man.
3 I neither learned wisdom
Nor have knowledge of the Holy One.

4 Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?
Who has gathered the wind in His fists?
Who has bound the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What *is* His name, and what *is* His Son's name,
If you know?

5 Every word of God *is* pure;
He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

6 Do not add to His words,
Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

7 Two *things* I request of You
(Deprive me not before I die):
8 Remove falsehood and lies far from me;
Give me neither poverty nor riches—
Feed me with the food allotted to me;
9 Lest I be full and deny *You,*
And say, "Who *is* the LORD?"
Or lest I be poor and steal,
And profane the name of my God.

10 Do not malign a servant to his master,
Lest he curse you, and you be found guilty.

11 *There is* a generation *that* curses its father,
And does not bless its mother.
12 *There is* a generation *that is* pure in its own eyes,
Yet is not washed from its filthiness.
13 *There is* a generation—oh, how lofty are their eyes!
And their eyelids are lifted up.

14 *There is* a generation whose teeth *are*
like swords,
And whose fangs *are like* knives,
To devour the poor from off the earth,
And the needy from *among* men.

15 The leech has two daughters—
Give *and* Give!

There are three *things that* are never
satisfied,
Four never say, "Enough!":
16 The grave,[a]
The barren womb,
The earth *that* is not satisfied with
water—
And the fire never says, "Enough!"

17 The eye *that* mocks *his* father,
And scorns obedience to *his* mother,
The ravens of the valley will pick it out,
And the young eagles will eat it.

18 There are three *things which* are too
wonderful for me,
Yes, four *which* I do not understand:
19 The way of an eagle in the air,
The way of a serpent on a rock,
The way of a ship in the midst of the
sea,
And the way of a man with a virgin.

20 This *is* the way of an adulterous
woman:
She eats and wipes her mouth,
And says, "I have done no wickedness."

21 For three *things* the earth is perturbed,
Yes, for four it cannot bear up:
22 For a servant when he reigns,
A fool when he is filled with food,
23 A hateful *woman* when she is married,
And a maidservant who succeeds her
mistress.

24 There are four *things which* are little on
the earth,
But they *are* exceedingly wise:
25 The ants *are* a people not strong,
Yet they prepare their food in the
summer;
26 The rock badgers[a] are a feeble folk,
Yet they make their homes in the crags;
27 The locusts have no king,
Yet they all advance in ranks;
28 The spider[a] skillfully grasps with its
hands,
And it is in kings' palaces.

29 There are three *things which* are
majestic in pace,
Yes, four *which* are stately in walk:
30 A lion, *which is* mighty among beasts
And does not turn away from any;
31 A greyhound,[a]
A male goat also,
And a king *whose* troops *are* with
him.[b]

32 If you have been foolish in exalting
yourself,
Or if you have devised evil, *put your*
hand on *your* mouth.
33 For *as* the churning of milk produces
butter,
And wringing the nose produces
blood,
So the forcing of wrath produces strife.

THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL'S MOTHER

31 The words of King Lemuel, the utterance which his mother taught him:

2 What, my son?
And what, son of my womb?
And what, son of my vows?
3 Do not give your strength to women,
Nor your ways to that which destroys
kings.

4 *It is* not for kings, O Lemuel,
It is not for kings to drink wine,
Nor for princes intoxicating drink;
5 Lest they drink and forget the law,
And pervert the justice of all the
afflicted.
6 Give strong drink to him who is
perishing,
And wine to those who are bitter of
heart.
7 Let him drink and forget his
poverty,
And remember his misery no more.

30:16 [a]Or *Sheol* **30:26** [a]Or *hyraxes* **30:28** [a]Or *lizard* **30:31** [a]Exact identity unknown [b]A Jewish tradition reads *a king against whom there is no uprising.*

8 Open your mouth for the speechless,
In the cause of all *who are* appointed to die.[a]
9 Open your mouth, judge righteously,
And plead the cause of the poor and needy.

RESPECT
Is respect easily gained?
Proverbs 31:10, 11, 18–23, 28

THE VIRTUOUS WIFE

10 Who[a] can find a virtuous[b] wife?
For her worth *is* far above rubies.
11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her;
So he will have no lack of gain.
12 She does him good and not evil
All the days of her life.
13 She seeks wool and flax,
And willingly works with her hands.
14 She is like the merchant ships,
She brings her food from afar.
15 She also rises while it is yet night,
And provides food for her household,
And a portion for her maidservants.
16 She considers a field and buys it;
From her profits she plants a vineyard.
17 She girds herself with strength,
And strengthens her arms.
18 She perceives that her merchandise *is* good,
And her lamp does not go out by night.
19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff,
And her hand holds the spindle.
20 She extends her hand to the poor,
Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.
21 She is not afraid of snow for her household,
For all her household *is* clothed with scarlet.
22 She makes tapestry for herself;
Her clothing *is* fine linen and purple.
23 Her husband is known in the gates,
When he sits among the elders of the land.
24 She makes linen garments and sells *them,*
And supplies sashes for the merchants.
25 Strength and honor *are* her clothing;
She shall rejoice in time to come.
26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,
And on her tongue *is* the law of kindness.
27 She watches over the ways of her household,
And does not eat the bread of idleness.
28 Her children rise up and call her blessed;
Her husband *also,* and he praises her:
29 "Many daughters have done well,
But you excel them all."
30 Charm *is* deceitful and beauty *is* passing,
But a woman *who* fears the LORD, she shall be praised.
31 Give her of the fruit of her hands,
And let her own works praise her in the gates.

31:8 [a]Literally *sons of passing away*
31:10 [a]Verses 10 through 31 are an alphabetic acrostic in Hebrew (compare Psalm 119). [b]Literally *a wife of valor,* in the sense of all forms of excellence

Ecclesiastes

DATE OF WRITING: 935 B.C.
AUTHOR: KING SOLOMON
THEME: DISCOVERING REAL VALUE IN LIFE
PURPOSE: APART FROM GOD, LIFE CAN HAVE NO REAL MEANING.

OUTLINE

1:1—2:26 .....The Search for Meaning in Life
3:1–8 .....Everything Has Its Time
3:9—6:12 .....Life Isn't Always Fair, So Live Wisely
7:1—8:17 .....Practical Wisdom
9:1—11:6 .....No One Knows What the Future Will Bring
11:7—12:14 .....Respect and Obey God

KEY VERSE:

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

THEN /// When King Solomon was a young man, God came to him in a dream. God told Solomon He would give him whatever he asked. Solomon didn't ask for things; he didn't request fame or power. Solomon asked God for wisdom. God honored Solomon's request and also showered him with everything the world had to offer.

So King Solomon *literally* had it all—all the money you could imagine, the absolute power of being king, wives and wannabe-wives at every turn, prestige—all the riches of his world were his for the taking. The Bible says he had so much silver that it was as common as stones. He was surrounded by gold. He lived like a superstar in an extravagant, beautiful palace. Solomon had unlimited fame and unlimited resources. He could do anything he chose and he chose to try everything—every form of entertainment, amusement, and recreation. He lived a life in which his every desire was met. Sounds like a dream life, right?

But Solomon discovered having everything in the world and doing whatever he wanted whenever he chose didn't make him happy—it just wasn't enough. Toward the end of his life, he wrote Ecclesiastes as a legacy to the generations that would come after him. He wanted them to understand that, without God, none of it matters.

NOW /// Some people think Ecclesiastes is a little depressing. After all, many of us spend our lives wanting and trying to get all the things King Solomon had. It's not much fun to think that everything we dream about won't really bring us happiness.

But just as King Solomon discovered, when we keep our lives in the right perspective and choose to put God before everything else, we can know more happiness than this world could ever offer. No amount of money, no amount of fame or power can truly give us a reason to live. Only with God do our lives have purpose and meaning. Without Him, "all is vanity" (Eccl. 1:2).

REALITY CHECK /// Many of us look at celebrities today like Solomon's people must have looked at him. We assume that because the rich and famous seem to have everything they must be happy. Often, we believe if we had everything a celebrity has we would be happy. Ecclesiastes tells us otherwise.

Ecclesiastes is like sitting down and having a heart-to-heart with a superstar; it's like a letter from Solomon telling us all what is really important in life. We might expect that Solomon would say, "Come on! Get all the money, fame, and fortune you can! You'll love it!" Instead, Solomon wants us to realize that if we are not connected to God, if He's not the source of our joy, we won't find real, lasting happiness in this world.

THE VANITY OF LIFE

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2 "Vanity[a] of vanities," says the Preacher;
"Vanity of vanities, all *is* vanity."

3 What profit has a man from all his labor
In which he toils under the sun?
4 *One* generation passes away, and *another* generation comes;
But the earth abides forever.
5 The sun also rises, and the sun goes down,
And hastens to the place where it arose.
6 The wind goes toward the south,
And turns around to the north;
The wind whirls about continually,
And comes again on its circuit.
7 All the rivers run into the sea,
Yet the sea *is* not full;
To the place from which the rivers come,
There they return again.
8 All things *are* full of labor;
Man cannot express *it.*

1:2 [a] Or *Absurdity, Frustration, Futility, Nonsense;* and so throughout this book

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ECCLESIASTES 1:8

Satisfaction Many people spend all their lives trying to be satisfied. They try to find fulfillment in life with cars, clothes, tattoos, body piercing, drugs—whatever they think may make them look like somebody special and finally feel complete and satisfied.

Solomon says in Ecclesiastes that nothing on this earth will ever really fulfill you or fill up that hole inside that makes you keep trying to find happiness in things. A new cell phone may fill you up for a few days, but you'll feel empty again when the newness wears off. Even the coolest stuff brings only momentary pleasure.

Apart from Jesus you will never really enjoy your time on earth or the things you've been given. It's all meaningless without the Savior. Without Jesus, nothing matters and there is no purpose in life. But in Jesus you can find ultimate meaning, purpose, fulfillment, and satisfaction. So when your heart is aching, your life seems empty, and you feel lost, go to Jesus to be filled up and satisfied. He will not disappoint you. (See also: 1 Cor. 15:58; Phil. 3:7, 12–14.)

Words to Live By

Satisfied: The word translated as "satisfied" in Ecclesiastes 1:8 is the Hebrew word *saba* (saw-bah'). It means "to have enough" or "to be full." When you have eaten a good meal, your stomach is full, and you feel satisfied. But the rest of life isn't so easy. We could search for years and never be satisfied until we come to Christ. Only in Him do we truly feel satisfied, full of purpose and life.

The eye is not satisfied with seeing,
Nor the ear filled with hearing.

9 That which has been *is* what will be,
That which *is* done is what will be done,
And *there is* nothing new under the sun.
10 Is there anything of which it may be said,
"See, this *is* new"?
It has already been in ancient times before us.
11 *There is* no remembrance of former *things,*
Nor will there be any remembrance of *things* that are to come
By *those* who will come after.

THE GRIEF OF WISDOM

12 I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised. 14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

15 *What is* crooked cannot be made straight,
And what is lacking cannot be numbered.

16 I communed with my heart, saying, "Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom than all who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge." 17 And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is grasping for the wind.

18 For in much wisdom *is* much grief,
And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

THE VANITY OF PLEASURE

2 I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure"; but surely, this also *was* vanity. 2 I said of laughter—"Madness!"; and of mirth, "What does it accomplish?" 3 I searched in my heart *how* to gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly,

till I might see what *was* good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives.

4I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. 5I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them. 6I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. 7I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. 8I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, *and* musical instruments[a] of all kinds.

Ecclesiastes 2:4, 5

Times were good in Israel when Solomon was king. In fact, the nation's economy was so strong that Solomon began importing rare and exotic items such as ivory, apes, and peacocks. His vast orchards may have produced such fruits as pomegranates, mulberries, apricots, figs, and apples, as well as almonds and sycamores.

9So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

10Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them.
I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure,
For my heart rejoiced in all my labor;
And this was my reward from all my labor.
11Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done
And on the labor in which I had toiled;
And indeed all *was* vanity and grasping for the wind.
There was no profit under the sun.

THE END OF THE WISE AND THE FOOL

12Then I turned myself to consider wisdom and madness and folly;
For what *can* the man *do* who succeeds the king?—
Only what he has already done.
13Then I saw that wisdom excels folly
As light excels darkness.
14The wise man's eyes *are* in his head,
But the fool walks in darkness.
Yet I myself perceived
That the same event happens to them all.

15So I said in my heart,
"As it happens to the fool,
It also happens to me,
And why was I then more wise?"
Then I said in my heart,
"This also *is* vanity."
16For *there is* no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever,
Since all that now *is* will be forgotten in the days to come.
And how does a wise *man* die?
As the fool!

17Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun *was* distressing to me, for all *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

18Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. 19And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also *is* vanity. 20Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. 21For there is a man whose labor *is* with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also *is* vanity and a great evil. 22For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? 23For all his days *are* sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.

24Nothing *is* better for a man *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. 25For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more

2:8 [a]Exact meaning unknown

than I?[a] 26For *God* gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who *is* good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to *him who is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

EVERYTHING HAS ITS TIME

3 To everything *there is* a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven:

2A time to be born,
And a time to die;
A time to plant,
And a time to pluck *what is* planted;
3A time to kill,
And a time to heal;
A time to break down,
And a time to build up;
4A time to weep,
And a time to laugh;
A time to mourn,
And a time to dance;
5A time to cast away stones,
And a time to gather stones;
A time to embrace,
And a time to refrain from embracing;
6A time to gain,
And a time to lose;
A time to keep,
And a time to throw away;
7A time to tear,
And a time to sew;
A time to keep silence,
And a time to speak;
8A time to love,
And a time to hate;
A time of war,
And a time of peace.

THE GOD-GIVEN TASK

9What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? 10I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. 11He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

12I know that nothing *is* better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, 13and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it *is* the gift of God.

14I know that whatever God does,
It shall be forever.
Nothing can be added to it,
And nothing taken from it.
God does *it,* that men should fear before Him.
15That which is has already been,
And what is to be has already been;
And God requires an account of what is past.

INJUSTICE SEEMS TO PREVAIL

16Moreover I saw under the sun:

In the place of judgment,
Wickedness *was* there;
And *in* the place of righteousness,
Iniquity *was* there.

17I said in my heart,

"God shall judge the righteous and the wicked,
For *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work."

18I said in my heart, "Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are *like* animals." 19For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all *is* vanity. 20All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. 21Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?[a] 22So I perceived that nothing *is* better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that *is* his heritage. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?

2:25 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Syriac read *without Him.* **3:21** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *Who knows whether the spirit . . . goes upward, and whether . . . goes downward to the earth?*



LIFE APP

Seasons of Life / Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

We learn in Ecclesiastes 3:1–8, that there is a time for everything in life, from the time we're born until the time we die, from weeping and laughing, to keeping and throwing away, to loving and hating. This is an interesting life we get to lead with all kinds of experiences. And God has a purpose for all the seasons of our lives.

When you're a child, you're pretty much dependent on your family for everything—food, clothes, diapers. But as you get older, you learn more about life and how to function. And as you gain greater abilities and freedoms, you also take on more responsibilities. Life is just not going to look the same when you're 8 months old, 8 years old, and 18 years old. You will go through many stages in your life, and it may not always be easy. Junior high can be a bit intimidating for the kids who are just leaving primary school. There is a distinct fear that junior high students everywhere have felt when confronted with their first day of high school. Some people run toward the new opportunity, and some take a slower approach. But we all go through the stages.

If you've always lived at home with your family, the first time you get ready to move away from home for college or career could be just as scary as it is exciting. When you start a new job surrounded by all new people, you may wish you were back home playing ball in the back yard. But God has a purpose for every stage of your life, and every experience you have. He is constantly active in His plan for you through every stage of your life. The passing of time is natural and happens for us all. While new experiences can be overwhelming, you can know that God is in control. "To everything there is a season. A time for every purpose under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1).



WORLD APP

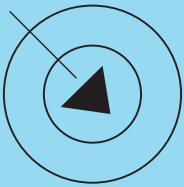
Justice / Ecclesiastes 3:16, 17

With liberty and justice for all. These words from our Pledge of Allegiance paint a beautiful picture. Wouldn't it be wonderful to live in a place where every individual experienced true liberty and no one suffered from injustice? A place where every court verdict turned out exactly right and no one was ever wrongfully accused? A place where right was recognized and done by everyone?

That is obviously not the place where we live now. Our world seems very similar to the world described in Ecclesiastes 3:16: "In the place of judgment, wickedness was there; and in the place of righteousness, iniquity was there." The writer of Ecclesiastes describes a world where wickedness is found everywhere justice is supposed to be. Does this remind you of our environment? Even in our court systems, as fair as they try to be, justice is not always served. Many people throughout our world experience injustice every day. But there is hope. The writer of Ecclesiastes saw this as well: "I said in my heart, 'God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work' " (Eccl. 3:17).

Just like the writer of Ecclesiastes, we can look forward to the day when God will set everything right. The prophet Amos anticipated great justice as well: "But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream" (Amos 5:24). Expressing the heart's cry of so many of us, he cried out for the day when justice and righteousness would come crashing down like powerful, cleansing water.

Until that day comes, we can each do our part to bring about justice here and now. Zechariah 8:16, 17 tell us how: "These are the things you shall do: speak each man the truth to his neighbor; give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace; let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; and do not love a false oath." As we seek global justice, let each of us begin by personally practicing justice and righteousness toward others every day.



PROMISE

God promises to make everything happen at the perfect time.

[God] has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end (Eccl. 3:11).

Imagine you're walking down the hall at school thinking about how you're going to spend the ten bucks in your wallet, and a guy you owe three bucks comes around the corner. Or consider the timing when you're really tempted to cheat on a test, but the smart girl who sits next to you is absent that day. And how about times when you're thinking about someone who really needs cheering up, and they show up right about that time?

Coincidences? If you've been hanging out with God for very long, you probably don't think so. He has a way of bringing even these little things together at the right time. It's one of the ways He reminds us that He's got everything under control.

That's His way with the big things in life, too. In Ecclesiastes 3:1–8, there is a well-known list of things that happen in nearly every life; some of them sound awful. But the list is in the Bible to help us understand that everything God allows in your life—even sadness—has a purpose, and He has worked out the timing perfectly. He can do that because He knows you better than you know yourself. And He knows everything your future holds. Even when things happen that seem totally lousy at the time, trust that God knows something you don't and He'll always bring you the best at the perfect time.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 8:28

4 Then I returned and considered all
the oppression that is done under
the sun:

And look! The tears of the oppressed,
But they have no comforter—
On the side of their oppressors *there*
is power,
But they have no comforter.
2 Therefore I praised the dead who were
already dead,
More than the living who are still alive.
3 Yet, better than both *is he* who has
never existed,
Who has not seen the evil work that is
done under the sun.

THE VANITY OF SELFISH TOIL

4 Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

5 The fool folds his hands
And consumes his own flesh.

6 Better a handful *with* quietness
Than both hands full, *together with* toil
and grasping for the wind.

7 Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun:

Ecclesiastes 4:8

In ancient times, true success was measured by the size of a person's family. The more kids a person had, the more successful—and favored by God—he was thought to be. Women who were unable to bear children were thought to be cursed by God.

8 There is one alone, without
companion:
He has neither son nor brother.
Yet *there is* no end to all his labors,
Nor is his eye satisfied with riches.
But he never asks,
"For whom do I toil and deprive myself
of good?"



LIFE APP

Accountability / Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

None of us like to admit being wrong or committing sins, but we all do. And if you aren't answerable to anyone, it's a lot easier to sweep your sins and mess-ups under the rug. It's easy to fool yourself into believing that you didn't really do anything all that bad; you can probably rationalize a lot of your faulty behavior. But self-deception and rationalization will not help you grow stronger in your ability to face and defeat temptation. If you don't admit and confess your sins, it's very likely you will keep committing the same sins over and over. That's not a life that honors God.

We need people in our lives to be answerable to; we also need people who remind us of our accountability to God. If we are accountable to someone, it doesn't mean they're better than us, and if someone is answerable to us, it doesn't make us somehow better than them. Rather, as brothers and sisters in Christ, we are to remind each other that we are all accountable to God for everything we do and say. When there's someone helping you watch out for temptations and deceptions, it can be a lot easier to spot them and resist them. We're simply stronger together than we are apart. Solomon tells us the same thing in Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 as he discusses the value of friendship. For instance, if one friend falls "one will lift up his companion" (Eccl. 4:10), and "though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccl. 4:12).

When you walk through life with strong Christian friends, you can help one another through all situations. If one of you falls to sin, the others can come to the rescue. And each of you will be stronger the next time temptation beckons because you will have learned together as you all journey with Christ. Accountability within Christian friendship is a valuable gift from God, not to be used as a weapon of judgment or shame, but as an effective means to help and encourage one another throughout all the highs and lows of life.

This also *is* vanity and a grave
misfortune.

THE VALUE OF A FRIEND

9 Two *are* better than one,
Because they have a good reward for
their labor.
10 For if they fall, one will lift up his
companion.
But woe to him *who is* alone when he
falls,
For *he has* no one to help him up.
11 Again, if two lie down together, they
will keep warm;
But how can one be warm *alone?*
12 Though one may be overpowered by
another, two can withstand him.
And a threefold cord is not quickly
broken.

POPULARITY PASSES AWAY

13 Better a poor and wise youth
Than an old and foolish king who will
be admonished no more.
14 For he comes out of prison to be
king,
Although he was born poor in his
kingdom.
15 I saw all the living who walk under
the sun;
They were with the second youth who
stands in his place.
16 *There was* no end of all the people over
whom he was made king;
Yet those who come afterward will not
rejoice in him.
Surely this also *is* vanity and grasping
for the wind.

FEAR GOD, KEEP YOUR VOWS

5 Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.

2 Do not be rash with your mouth,
And let not your heart utter anything
hastily before God.
For God *is* in heaven, and you on
earth;
Therefore let your words be few.
3 For a dream comes through much
activity,
And a fool's voice *is known* by *his* many
words.

4 When you make a vow to God, do not
delay to pay it;
For *He has* no pleasure in fools.
Pay what you have vowed—

Ecclesiastes 5:4
Just as we sometimes do, people in ancient times made all kinds of promises to God about what they would do if He helped them. This verse serves as a reminder that God doesn't take such promises lightly.

5 Better not to vow than to vow and
not pay.

6 Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger *of God* that it *was* an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse[a] and destroy the work of your hands? 7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there is* also vanity. But fear God.

THE VANITY OF GAIN AND HONOR

8 If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them.
9 Moreover the profit of the land is for all; *even* the king is served from the field.

10 He who loves silver will not be
satisfied with silver;
Nor he who loves abundance, with
increase.
This also *is* vanity.

11 When goods increase,
They increase who eat them;
So what profit have the owners
Except to see *them* with their eyes?

12 The sleep of a laboring man *is* sweet,
Whether he eats little or much;
But the abundance of the rich will not
permit him to sleep.

5:6 [a] Literally *voice*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ECCLESIASTES 5:6

Watch Your Mouth How many times have you heard, "Don't let your mouth get you in trouble"?

Even having heard that advice, how many times have you let your mouth run out of control? Maybe you went off on your mom and she grounded you for the weekend. Maybe you called your brother a name and he punched you in the nose. Maybe you said something unkind about someone, they heard about it, and now they've sworn to get back at you.

Solomon, the writer of Ecclesiastes, is considered one of the wisest men ever. He knew that once you say something to somebody, you can never take it back. Proverbs 18:21 says that "death and life are in the power of the tongue." It's true. Your words are powerful. They can encourage, inspire, comfort, or explain; or they can hurt, bite, sting, or devastate. Choose your words carefully and make them good. Count to ten before you spout off a bunch of insults you'll later regret. Your words can carry "death" or send out "life"! Which will you choose? (See also: Prov. 10:14; 18:6, 7, 21; Luke 6:45; Eph. 4:29.)

Words to Live By

To sin: The word translated as "to sin" in Ecclesiastes 5:6 is the Hebrew word *chata* (khaw-taw'). It means "to miss the mark" or "to lead astray." When you shoot an arrow, if everything goes right, you hit the mark at the center of the target. But if something happens to disturb your aim, you will miss that mark. In a way, that is how your mouth can get your whole self in trouble. The words you speak can disturb your aim in being a faithful follower of Jesus and cause you to sin. Think about your words before you say them; you cannot get them back.

13 There is a severe evil *which* I have seen
under the sun:
Riches kept for their owner to his hurt.
14 But those riches perish through
misfortune;
When he begets a son, *there is* nothing
in his hand.
15 As he came from his mother's womb,
naked shall he return,
To go as he came;
And he shall take nothing from his
labor
Which he may carry away in his hand.

16 And this also *is* a severe evil—
Just exactly as he came, so shall he go.
And what profit has he who has
labored for the wind?
17 All his days he also eats in darkness,
And *he has* much sorrow and sickness
and anger.

18 Here is what I have seen: *It is* good and fitting *for one* to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it *is* his heritage. 19 As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—this *is* the gift of God. 20 For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps *him* busy with the joy of his heart.

6 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it *is* common among men: 2 A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This *is* vanity, and it *is* an evil affliction.

3 If a man begets a hundred *children* and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say *that* a stillborn child *is* better than he— 4 for it comes in vanity and departs

in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness. 5Though it has not seen the sun or known *anything,* this has more rest than that man, 6even if he lives a thousand years twice—but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place?

7All the labor of man *is* for his mouth,
And yet the soul is not satisfied.
8For what more has the wise *man* than the fool?
What does the poor man have,
Who knows *how* to walk before the living?
9Better *is* the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire.
This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

10Whatever one is, he has been named already,
For it is known that he *is* man;
And he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he.
11Since there are many things that increase vanity,
How *is* man the better?

12For who knows what *is* good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?

THE VALUE OF PRACTICAL WISDOM

7 A good name *is* better than precious ointment,
And the day of death than the day of one's birth;
2Better to go to the house of mourning
Than to go to the house of feasting,
For that *is* the end of all men;
And the living will take *it* to heart.
3Sorrow *is* better than laughter,
For by a sad countenance the heart is made better.
4The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning,
But the heart of fools *is* in the house of mirth.

5*It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise
Than for a man to hear the song of fools.
6For like the crackling of thorns under a pot,
So *is* the laughter of the fool.
This also is vanity.
7Surely oppression destroys a wise *man's* reason,
And a bribe debases the heart.

8The end of a thing *is* better than its beginning;
The patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit.
9Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry,
For anger rests in the bosom of fools.
10Do not say,
"Why were the former days better than these?"
For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

11Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance,
And profitable to those who see the sun.
12For wisdom *is* a defense *as* money *is* a defense,
But the excellence of knowledge *is that* wisdom gives life to those who have it.

13Consider the work of God;
For who can make straight what He has made crooked?
14In the day of prosperity be joyful,
But in the day of adversity consider:
Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other,
So that man can find out nothing *that will come* after him.

15I have seen everything in my days of vanity:

There is a just *man* who perishes in his righteousness,
And there is a wicked *man* who prolongs *life* in his wickedness.

16Do not be overly righteous,
Nor be overly wise:
Why should you destroy yourself?
17Do not be overly wicked,
Nor be foolish:
Why should you die before your time?

LIFE APP

Social Media / Ecclesiastes 7:1a

Something strange happens to people when they post messages online. It seems they forget the whole world can read what they've written and they say things they would never say in person.

A good question to ask yourself before you post anything online is if you would want your words to be published in a Sunday paper. Consider if you would want your status to be reported on the six o'clock news. How would you feel if your pastor put it in the Sunday bulletin? How about the pictures you post? What do they say about you?

All the behavioral choices we make—what we say, how we treat others, our attitudes, even the way we choose to dress—lead others to form opinions about us; we can end up with a good reputation or a horrible one. It all depends on how we appear to others.

The things you post online are seen by many people. And those people know even more people. If you goof up and post a picture online that you shouldn't have or make a comment that sounds vulgar, just think about how many people will see. What will they think of you as a result of your choice? What you post today could be known by your whole school tomorrow. What will it do to your reputation?

A good reputation is priceless. And a poor reputation can take years to change. Before you post anything online, really consider what it says about you. What will others think when they read it? Most importantly, what will Jesus think of your choice?

As Christians, we must always remember that the world is watching us to see what makes us different from anyone else. Go back through your posts over the past few months. What have they told the world about you?

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ECCLESIASTES 7:20

No One Is Perfect A woman was being harassed because of the bad things she had done. People yelled and jeered at her because her sin was so ugly. They were going to stone her to death. But Jesus said, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first" (John 8:7). The angry crowd, one by one, dropped their stones and walked away. When each person looked at his own life, he probably realized that his sin was just as ugly as hers.

As hard as you may try, you aren't sinless. You don't always do the right thing. You're human and you're not perfect. In the pit of sin is where Jesus comes and gently shows you that you can't do it by yourself. You desperately need a Savior. There is no one alive who doesn't. Don't beat yourself up about your sin. Turn to the One who can save you from it. (See also: Ps. 51; John 8:7; Rom. 3:23; Heb. 12:1.)

Words to Live By

Just: The word translated as "just" in Ecclesiastes 7:20 is the Hebrew word *tsaddiyq* (tsad-deek'). It means "righteous." None of us are righteous or just enough to save ourselves or to keep ourselves from committing any sins. But if Christ is our Lord, He brings His righteousness to us and helps us become more and more like Him.

18 *It is* good that you grasp this,
And also not remove your hand from the other;
For he who fears God will escape them all.

19 Wisdom strengthens the wise
More than ten rulers of the city.

20 For *there is* not a just man on earth who does good
And does not sin.

21 Also do not take to heart everything people say,
Lest you hear your servant cursing you.
22 For many times, also, your own heart has known
That even you have cursed others.

23 All this I have proved by wisdom.
I said, "I will be wise";
But it *was* far from me.
24 As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep,
Who can find it out?
25 I applied my heart to know,
To search and seek out wisdom and the reason *of things,*
To know the wickedness of folly,
Even of foolishness *and* madness.
26 And I find more bitter than death
The woman whose heart *is* snares and nets,
Whose hands *are* fetters.
He who pleases God shall escape from her,
But the sinner shall be trapped by her.

27 Here is what I have found," says the Preacher,
"*Adding* one thing to the other to find out the reason,
28 Which my soul still seeks but I cannot find:
One man among a thousand I have found,
But a woman among all these I have not found.
29 Truly, this only I have found:
That God made man upright,
But they have sought out many schemes."

8 Who *is* like a wise *man?*
And who knows the interpretation of a thing?
A man's wisdom makes his face shine,
And the sternness of his face is changed.

Ecclesiastes 7:28

Most women received very little respect in ancient times and were often treated more like possessions than people. Some women were even given as gifts! For example, when two countries signed a treaty, it was customary for the less powerful nation to present women to the leader of the more powerful nation. That's how Solomon, the leader of the very powerful Israelite nation, came to have hundreds of wives and concubines. Many of Solomon's wives came from foreign countries and worshiped foreign gods.

OBEY AUTHORITIES FOR GOD'S SAKE

2 I *say,* "Keep the king's commandment for
the sake of your oath to God. 3 Do not be
hasty to go from his presence. Do not take
your stand for an evil thing, for he does
whatever pleases him."

4 Where the word of a king *is, there is*
power;
And who may say to him, "What are
you doing?"
5 He who keeps his command will
experience nothing harmful;
And a wise man's heart discerns both
time and judgment,
6 Because for every matter there is a
time and judgment,
Though the misery of man increases
greatly.
7 For he does not know what will
happen;
So who can tell him when it will
occur?
8 No one has power over the spirit to
retain the spirit,
And no one has power in the day of
death.
There is no release from that war,
And wickedness will not deliver those
who are given to it.

9 All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: *There is* a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.

DEATH COMES TO ALL

10 Then I saw the wicked buried, who had
come and gone from the place of holiness,
and they were forgotten[a] in the city where
they had so done. This also *is* vanity. 11 Be-
cause the sentence against an evil work is
not executed speedily, therefore the heart
of the sons of men is fully set in them to
do evil. 12 Though a sinner does evil a hun-
dred *times,* and his *days* are prolonged, yet
I surely know that it will be well with those
who fear God, who fear before Him. 13 But
it will not be well with the wicked; nor will
he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow,
because he does not fear before God.

14 There is a vanity which occurs on earth,
that there are just *men* to whom it happens
according to the work of the wicked; again,
there are wicked *men* to whom it happens
according to the work of the righteous. I
said that this also *is* vanity.

15 So I commended enjoyment, because a
man has nothing better under the sun than
to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will re-
main with him in his labor *all* the days of
his life which God gives him under the sun.

16 When I applied my heart to know wis-
dom and to see the business that is done on
earth, even though one sees no sleep day
or night, 17 then I saw all the work of God,
that a man cannot find out the work that
is done under the sun. For though a man
labors to discover *it,* yet he will not find *it;*
moreover, though a wise *man* attempts to
know *it,* he will not be able to find *it.*

9 For I considered all this in my heart,
so that I could declare it all: that the
righteous and the wise and their
works *are* in the hand of God. People know
neither love nor hatred *by* anything *they see*
before them. 2 All things *come* alike to all:

One event *happens* to the righteous
and the wicked;
To the good,[a] the clean, and the
unclean;
To him who sacrifices and him who
does not sacrifice.
As is the good, so *is* the sinner;
He who takes an oath as *he* who fears
an oath.

8:10 [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *praised.* **9:2** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *good and bad.*

3This *is* an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing *happens* to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness *is* in their hearts while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead. 4But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

Ecclesiastes 9:4

In ancient Israel, dogs were wild creatures that traveled in packs, preyed on the weak, ate garbage, and stole food from the villages. Lions, on the other hand, were respected for their size and strength. Although they were a very real danger to the Israelites, they also served as symbols of majesty and courage. Calling someone a dog in ancient Israel was an extremely offensive insult. Calling someone a lion was an extremely high compliment.

5For the living know that they will die;
But the dead know nothing,
And they have no more reward,
For the memory of them is
forgotten.
6Also their love, their hatred, and their
envy have now perished;
Nevermore will they have a share
In anything done under the sun.

7Go, eat your bread with joy,
And drink your wine with a merry
heart;
For God has already accepted your
works.
8Let your garments always be white,
And let your head lack no oil.

9Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that *is* your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.

10Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with your might; for *there is* no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.

11I returned and saw under the sun that—
The race *is* not to the swift,
Nor the battle to the strong,
Nor bread to the wise,
Nor riches to men of understanding,
Nor favor to men of skill;
But time and chance happen to them
all.
12For man also does not know his time:
Like fish taken in a cruel net,
Like birds caught in a snare,
So the sons of men *are* snared in an
evil time,
When it falls suddenly upon them.

WISDOM SUPERIOR TO FOLLY

13This wisdom I have also seen under the sun, and it *seemed* great to me: 14*There was* a little city with few men in it; and a great king came against it, besieged it, and built great snares[a] around it. 15Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that same poor man.

16Then I said:

"Wisdom *is* better than strength.
Nevertheless the poor man's wisdom
is despised,
And his words are not heard.
17Words of the wise, *spoken* quietly,
should be heard
Rather than the shout of a ruler of
fools.
18Wisdom *is* better than weapons of
war;
But one sinner destroys much good."

10 Dead flies putrefy[a] the
perfumer's ointment,
And cause it to give off a foul
odor;
So does a little folly to one respected
for wisdom *and* honor.
2A wise man's heart *is* at his right hand,
But a fool's heart at his left.
3Even when a fool walks along the way,
He lacks wisdom,
And he shows everyone *that* he *is* a
fool.
4If the spirit of the ruler rises against
you,

9:14 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *bulwarks.* **10:1** [a]Targum and Vulgate omit *putrefy.*

Do not leave your post;
For conciliation pacifies great offenses.

5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun,
As an error proceeding from the ruler:
6 Folly is set in great dignity,
While the rich sit in a lowly place.
7 I have seen servants on horses,
While princes walk on the ground like servants.

8 He who digs a pit will fall into it,
And whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent.
9 He who quarries stones may be hurt by them,
And he who splits wood may be endangered by it.
10 If the ax is dull,
And one does not sharpen the edge,
Then he must use more strength;
But wisdom brings success.

11 A serpent may bite when *it is* not charmed;
The babbler is no different.
12 The words of a wise man's mouth *are* gracious,
But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up;
13 The words of his mouth begin with foolishness,
And the end of his talk *is* raving madness.
14 A fool also multiplies words.
No man knows what is to be;
Who can tell him what will be after him?
15 The labor of fools wearies them,
For they do not even know how to go to the city!

16 Woe to you, O land, when your king *is* a child,
And your princes feast in the morning!
17 Blessed *are* you, O land, when your king *is* the son of nobles,
And your princes feast at the proper time—
For strength and not for drunkenness!
18 Because of laziness the building decays,
And through idleness of hands the house leaks.

19 A feast is made for laughter,
And wine makes merry;
But money answers everything.

20 Do not curse the king, even in your thought;
Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom;
For a bird of the air may carry your voice,
And a bird in flight may tell the matter.

THE VALUE OF DILIGENCE

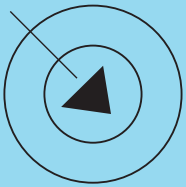
11 Cast your bread upon the waters,
For you will find it after many days.
2 Give a serving to seven, and also to eight,
For you do not know what evil will be on the earth.

3 If the clouds are full of rain,
They empty *themselves* upon the earth;
And if a tree falls to the south or the north,
In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.
4 He who observes the wind will not sow,
And he who regards the clouds will not reap.

5 As you do not know what *is* the way of the wind,[a]
Or how the bones *grow* in the womb of her who is with child,
So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.
6 In the morning sow your seed,
And in the evening do not withhold your hand;
For you do not know which will prosper,
Either this or that,
Or whether both alike *will be* good.

7 Truly the light is sweet,
And *it is* pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun;
8 But if a man lives many years
And rejoices in them all,

11:5 [a] Or *spirit*



PROMISE

God promises to judge all the work we do.

For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil (Eccl. 12:14).

Your mom asks you to take out the trash. You get an attitude, moan and complain, and finally take it out after you're both upset. You casually take some cash from your brother's dresser. You need it; he's got it. You're family. So what? These choices may seem kind of harmless—a bad attitude and "borrowing" some money. But in the first scenario, God sees a kid dishonoring his mom without the slightest idea what it means to do "all things without complaining" (Phil. 2:14). In the second example, rather than seeing someone "borrowing," what God sees is theft—to take what is not yours is stealing. And God will definitely judge everything we think, do, and say.

You may choose to whitewash your life and pretend you're okay—not a lot of sin to deal with, no major infractions. But God sees things as they really are; He doesn't cut us any slack where sin is concerned. Wrong is wrong and right is right and there are no shades in between. Ask God to give you His perspective so you can begin to clean up the stuff you've been pretending isn't so bad. Then you can walk clean before Him.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// 1 Samuel 2:10; Psalms 9:8; 50:6; 2 Timothy 4:8

Yet let him remember the days of
darkness,
For they will be many.
All that is coming *is* vanity.

SEEK GOD IN EARLY LIFE

9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth,
And let your heart cheer you in the
days of your youth;
Walk in the ways of your heart,
And in the sight of your eyes;
But know that for all these
God will bring you into judgment.
10 Therefore remove sorrow from your
heart,
And put away evil from your flesh,
For childhood and youth *are* vanity.

12 Remember now your Creator in
the days of your youth,
Before the difficult days come,
And the years draw near when you
say,
"I have no pleasure in them":
2 While the sun and the light,
The moon and the stars,
Are not darkened,
And the clouds do not return after the
rain;
3 In the day when the keepers of the
house tremble,
And the strong men bow down;
When the grinders cease because they
are few,
And those that look through the
windows grow dim;
4 When the doors are shut in the streets,
And the sound of grinding is low;
When one rises up at the sound of a
bird,
And all the daughters of music are
brought low.
5 Also they are afraid of height,
And of terrors in the way;
When the almond tree blossoms,
The grasshopper is a burden,
And desire fails.
For man goes to his eternal home,
And the mourners go about the
streets.

6 *Remember your Creator* before the
silver cord is loosed,[a]
Or the golden bowl is broken,
Or the pitcher shattered at the
fountain,

12:6 [a]Following Qere and Targum; Kethib reads *removed;* Septuagint and Vulgate read *broken.*

Or the wheel broken at the well.
7 Then the dust will return to the earth
as it was,
And the spirit will return to God who
gave it.

8 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher,
"All *is* vanity."

THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN

9 And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out *and* set in order many proverbs. 10 The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and *what was* written *was* upright—words of truth. 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars[a] are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd. 12 And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books *there is* no end, and much study *is* wearisome to the flesh.

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:

Fear God and keep His
commandments,
For this is man's all.
14 For God will bring every work into
judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil.

12:11 [a]Literally *masters of the assemblies*

Song of Solomon

DATE OF WRITING: 965 B.C.
AUTHOR: ATTRIBUTED TO SOLOMON
THEME: THE QUEST FOR AUTHENTIC LOVE
PURPOSE: THE TRUE MEANING AND JOY OF SEX IS FOUND ONLY IN MARRIAGE.

OUTLINE

1:1–17 .....Love Is Better Than Wine
2:1—3:5 .....Love Makes Everything Beautiful
3:6—5:1 .....The Wedding
5:2—7:13 .....Why Is the One You Love More Special Than Others?
8:1–14 .....If Only You and I . . .

KEY VERSE:

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine (Song of Solomon 6:3).

THEN ///

We can't be sure who wrote the Song of Solomon, but whoever wrote it was definitely in love. The whole book is a love poem about a young man and a young woman who are totally infatuated with one another. They are *crazy* about each other!

Although it may seem strange that a love poem is included in the Bible, we must recognize that God is the One who chose what the Bible contains. This particular love poem contains important messages about love, romance, marriage, and sex. The Song of Solomon gives us a very beautiful picture how love should look.

NOW ///

God created us with a special chemistry that can happen between a man and woman. In the right place and the right time it is exciting and wonderful—and important enough for God to dedicate a whole book of the Bible to it. Romance can be wonderful when you are old enough to truly commit your entire life to someone else; and sex can be a beautiful expression of love when it happens between a married couple.

Sexuality is a powerful force; one that requires a lot of maturity and self-control (even for adults!). It is important to be cautious in this area of life. Sometimes adults can stress caution so much that it can seem like anything that has to do with "the birds and bees" is a bad thing. Those adults have every reason to be cautious. God designed romance and sex to take place between a man and woman who are committed to one another for life. Romance and sex should be an expression of that special lifelong commitment.

It is important to realize the most important word in this book is "love." In 1 John 4:16, we are told "God is love." Love is the very nature of God. He doesn't just want our obedience to rules; He wants us to enter into a love relationship with Him. He wants us to realize the love between a husband and wife is just a pale shadow of the love we can know with Him.

REALITY CHECK ///

In today's society, we hear a lot about inappropriate touch and sexual harassment. Is it any wonder the boundaries are unclear when nearly naked bodies appear in music videos, advertisements, Internet sites, magazines—everywhere? It's difficult to see any movie in which body parts are not displayed in bigger-than-life cinematic "reality."

The characters in the poem we know as the Song of Solomon talk a lot about different parts of the body. They admire each other. This book of the Bible reminds us that God made the human body to be beautiful to our eyes. He made us to want to touch and be touched. But God also gives us the responsibility to give ourselves only to the person who we commit to before God for life, like the bride and bridegroom in this beautiful poem.

SOLOMON'S LOVE FOR A SHULAMITE GIRL

1 The song of songs, which *is* Solomon's.

THE BANQUET

The Shulamite[a]

2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—
For your[b] love *is* better than wine.
3 Because of the fragrance of your good ointments,
Your name *is* ointment poured forth;
Therefore the virgins love you.
4 Draw me away!

The Daughters of Jerusalem

We will run after you.[a]

The Shulamite

The king has brought me into his chambers.

1:2 [a]A young woman from the town of Shulam or Shunem (compare 6:13). The speaker and audience are identified according to the number, gender, and person of the Hebrew words. Occasionally the identity is not certain. [b]Masculine singular, that is, the Beloved
1:4 [a]Masculine singular, that is, the Beloved

The Daughters of Jerusalem

We will be glad and rejoice in you.[b]

We will remember your[c] love more
than wine.

The Shulamite

Rightly do they love you.[d]

5 I *am* dark, but lovely,
O daughters of Jerusalem,
Like the tents of Kedar,
Like the curtains of Solomon.
6 Do not look upon me, because I *am*
dark,
Because the sun has tanned me.
My mother's sons were angry with me;
They made me the keeper of the
vineyards,
But my own vineyard I have not kept.

(To Her Beloved)

7 Tell me, O you whom I love,
Where you feed *your flock*,
Where you make *it* rest at noon.
For why should I be as one who veils
herself[a]
By the flocks of your companions?

The Beloved

8 If you do not know, O fairest among
women,
Follow in the footsteps of the flock,
And feed your little goats
Beside the shepherds' tents.
9 I have compared you, my love,
To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots.
10 Your cheeks are lovely with
ornaments,
Your neck with chains *of gold.*

The Daughters of Jerusalem

11 We will make you[a] ornaments of gold
With studs of silver.

The Shulamite

12 While the king *is* at his table,
My spikenard sends forth its fragrance.
13 A bundle of myrrh *is* my beloved
to me,
That lies all night between my breasts.
14 My beloved *is* to me a cluster of henna
blooms
In the vineyards of En Gedi.

Song of Solomon 1:15

You may be wondering why the author would compare his beloved to a dove. The ancient Israelites appreciated the faithfulness, the beauty, and especially the gentleness of the bird. A dove is one of the few creatures that will not attempt to defend itself when it's attacked. Instead, it will simply call out in distress.

The Beloved

15 Behold, you *are* fair, my love!
Behold, you *are* fair!
You *have* dove's eyes.

The Shulamite

16 Behold, you *are* handsome, my beloved!
Yes, pleasant!
Also our bed *is* green.
17 The beams of our houses *are* cedar,
And our rafters of fir.

Song of Solomon 2:1

"Sharon" refers to a fertile coastal region in Israel known for its beautiful flowers. The rose mentioned in this verse probably wasn't what we know as a rose. Instead, it may have been a mountain tulip, an anemone, or a saffron. Since those flowers grew in abundance in Sharon, the woman was implying that she is nothing special.

2 I *am* the rose of Sharon,
And the lily of the valleys.

The Beloved

2 Like a lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.

The Shulamite

3 Like an apple tree among the trees of
the woods,

1:4 [b]Feminine singular, that is, the Shulamite [c]Masculine singular, that is, the Beloved [d]Masculine singular, that is, the Beloved **1:7** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *wanders.* **1:11** [a]Feminine singular, that is, the Shulamite

So *is* my beloved among the sons.
I sat down in his shade with great delight,
And his fruit *was* sweet to my taste.

The Shulamite to the Daughters of Jerusalem

4 He brought me to the banqueting house,
And his banner over me *was* love.
5 Sustain me with cakes of raisins,
Refresh me with apples,
For I *am* lovesick.

6 His left hand *is* under my head,
And his right hand embraces me.
7 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the does of the field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

THE BELOVED'S REQUEST

The Shulamite

8 The voice of my beloved!
Behold, he comes
Leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills.
9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Behold, he stands behind our wall;
He is looking through the windows,
Gazing through the lattice.

10 My beloved spoke, and said to me:
"Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away.
11 For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over *and* gone.
12 The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of singing has come,
And the voice of the turtledove
Is heard in our land.
13 The fig tree puts forth her green figs,
And the vines *with* the tender grapes
Give a *good* smell.
Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away!

14 "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,
In the secret *places* of the cliff,
Let me see your face,
Let me hear your voice;
For your voice *is* sweet,
And your face *is* lovely."

Her Brothers

15 Catch us the foxes,
The little foxes that spoil the vines,
For our vines *have* tender grapes.

The Shulamite

16 My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his.
He feeds *his flock* among the lilies.

(To Her Beloved)

17 Until the day breaks
And the shadows flee away,
Turn, my beloved,
And be like a gazelle
Or a young stag
Upon the mountains of Bether.[a]

A TROUBLED NIGHT

The Shulamite

3 By night on my bed I sought the one I love;
I sought him, but I did not find him.
2 "I will rise now," *I said,*
"And go about the city;
In the streets and in the squares
I will seek the one I love."
I sought him, but I did not find him.
3 The watchmen who go about the city found me;
I said,
"Have you seen the one I love?"

4 Scarcely had I passed by them,
When I found the one I love.
I held him and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him to the house of my mother,
And into the chamber of her who conceived me.

5 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the does of the field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

THE COMING OF SOLOMON

The Shulamite

6 Who *is* this coming out of the wilderness

2:17 [a] Literally *Separation*

Like pillars of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and
frankincense,
With all the merchant's fragrant
powders?
7Behold, it *is* Solomon's couch,
With sixty valiant men around it,
Of the valiant of Israel.
8They all hold swords,
Being expert in war.
Every man *has* his sword on his thigh
Because of fear in the night.

9Of the wood of Lebanon
Solomon the King
Made himself a palanquin:[a]
10He made its pillars *of* silver,
Its support *of* gold,
Its seat *of* purple,
Its interior paved *with* love
By the daughters of Jerusalem.
11Go forth, O daughters of Zion,
And see King Solomon with the
crown
With which his mother crowned him
On the day of his wedding,
The day of the gladness of his heart.

THE BRIDEGROOM PRAISES THE BRIDE

The Beloved

4 Behold, you *are* fair, my love!
Behold, you *are* fair!
You *have* dove's eyes behind your
veil.
Your hair *is* like a flock of goats,
Going down from Mount Gilead.
2Your teeth *are* like a flock of shorn
sheep
Which have come up from the
washing,
Every one of which bears twins,
And none *is* barren among them.
3Your lips *are* like a strand of scarlet,
And your mouth is lovely.
Your temples behind your veil
Are like a piece of pomegranate.
4Your neck *is* like the tower of David,
Built for an armory,
On which hang a thousand
bucklers,
All shields of mighty men.
5Your two breasts *are* like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle,
Which feed among the lilies.
6Until the day breaks
And the shadows flee away,
I will go my way to the mountain of
myrrh
And to the hill of frankincense.

7You *are* all fair, my love,
And *there is* no spot in you.
8Come with me from Lebanon, *my*
spouse,
With me from Lebanon.
Look from the top of Amana,
From the top of Senir and Hermon,
From the lions' dens,
From the mountains of the leopards.

9You have ravished my heart,
My sister, *my* spouse;
You have ravished my heart
With one *look* of your eyes,
With one link of your necklace.
10How fair is your love,
My sister, *my* spouse!
How much better than wine is your
love,
And the scent of your perfumes
Than all spices!
11Your lips, O *my* spouse,
Drip as the honeycomb;
Honey and milk *are* under your
tongue;
And the fragrance of your garments
Is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

12A garden enclosed
Is my sister, *my* spouse,
A spring shut up,
A fountain sealed.

Song of Solomon 4:12

Some people in the ancient Near East closed their gardens to visitors in order to protect their privacy and preserve their water supply. Because of the frequent droughts in the area, water in Israel was tough to come by.

13Your plants *are* an orchard of
pomegranates
With pleasant fruits,
Fragrant henna with spikenard,

3:9 [a]A portable enclosed chair

14 Spikenard and saffron,
Calamus and cinnamon,
With all trees of frankincense,
Myrrh and aloes,
With all the chief spices—
15 A fountain of gardens,
A well of living waters,
And streams from Lebanon.

The Shulamite

16 Awake, O north *wind,*
And come, O south!
Blow upon my garden,
That its spices may flow out.
Let my beloved come to his garden
And eat its pleasant fruits.

The Beloved

5 I have come to my garden, my sister,
my spouse;
I have gathered my myrrh with my
spice;
I have eaten my honeycomb with my
honey;
I have drunk my wine with my milk.

(To His Friends)

Eat, O friends!
Drink, yes, drink deeply,
O beloved ones!

THE SHULAMITE'S TROUBLED EVENING

The Shulamite

2 I sleep, but my heart is awake;
It is the voice of my beloved!
He knocks, *saying,*
"Open for me, my sister, my love,
My dove, my perfect one;
For my head is covered with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night."

3 I have taken off my robe;
How can I put it on *again?*
I have washed my feet;
How can I defile them?
4 My beloved put his hand
By the latch *of the door,*
And my heart yearned for him.
5 I arose to open for my beloved,
And my hands dripped *with* myrrh,
My fingers with liquid myrrh,
On the handles of the lock.
6 I opened for my beloved,
But my beloved had turned away *and*
was gone.
My heart leaped up when he spoke.
I sought him, but I could not find
him;
I called him, but he gave me no
answer.
7 The watchmen who went about the
city found me.
They struck me, they wounded me;
The keepers of the walls
Took my veil away from me.
8 I charge you, O daughters of
Jerusalem,
If you find my beloved,
That you tell him I *am* lovesick!

The Daughters of Jerusalem

9 What *is* your beloved
More than *another* beloved,
O fairest among women?
What *is* your beloved
More than *another* beloved,
That you so charge us?

The Shulamite

10 My beloved *is* white and ruddy,
Chief among ten thousand.
11 His head *is like* the finest gold;
His locks *are* wavy,
And black as a raven.
12 His eyes *are* like doves
By the rivers of waters,
Washed with milk,
And fitly set.
13 His cheeks *are* like a bed of spices,
Banks of scented herbs.
His lips *are* lilies,
Dripping liquid myrrh.

14 His hands *are* rods of gold
Set with beryl.
His body *is* carved ivory
Inlaid *with* sapphires.
15 His legs *are* pillars of marble
Set on bases of fine gold.
His countenance *is* like Lebanon,
Excellent as the cedars.
16 His mouth *is* most sweet,
Yes, he *is* altogether lovely.
This *is* my beloved,
And this *is* my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem!

The Daughters of Jerusalem

6 Where has your beloved gone,
O fairest among women?
Where has your beloved turned
aside,
That we may seek him with you?

The Shulamite

2 My beloved has gone to his garden,
To the beds of spices,
To feed *his flock* in the gardens,
And to gather lilies.
3 I *am* my beloved's,
And my beloved *is* mine.
He feeds *his flock* among the lilies.

PRAISE OF THE SHULAMITE'S BEAUTY

The Beloved

4 O my love, you *are as* beautiful as
Tirzah,
Lovely as Jerusalem,
Awesome as *an army* with banners!
5 Turn your eyes away from me,
For they have overcome me.
Your hair *is* like a flock of goats
Going down from Gilead.

Song of Solomon 6:5

Gilead, located east of the Jordan River, was known for its lush plant life. The land was an ideal grazing place for sheep, goats, and other livestock. Goats raised in the ancient Near East had long, silky, black hair.

6 Your teeth *are* like a flock of sheep
Which have come up from the
washing;
Every one bears twins,
And none *is* barren among them.
7 Like a piece of pomegranate
Are your temples behind your veil.

8 There are sixty queens
And eighty concubines,
And virgins without number.
9 My dove, my perfect one,
Is the only one,
The only one of her mother,
The favorite of the one who bore her.
The daughters saw her
And called her blessed,
The queens and the concubines,
And they praised her.

10 Who is she who looks forth as the
morning,
Fair as the moon,
Clear as the sun,
Awesome as *an army* with banners?

The Shulamite

11 I went down to the garden of nuts
To see the verdure of the valley,
To see whether the vine had budded
And the pomegranates had bloomed.
12 Before I was even aware,
My soul had made me
As the chariots of my noble people.[a]

The Beloved and His Friends

13 Return, return, O Shulamite;
Return, return, that we may look upon
you!

The Shulamite

What would you see in the
Shulamite—
As it were, the dance of the two
camps?[a]

EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE

The Beloved

7 How beautiful are your feet in
sandals,
O prince's daughter!
The curves of your thighs *are* like
jewels,
The work of the hands of a skillful
workman.
2 Your navel *is* a rounded goblet;
It lacks no blended beverage.
Your waist *is* a heap of wheat
Set about with lilies.
3 Your two breasts *are* like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle.
4 Your neck *is* like an ivory tower,
Your eyes *like* the pools in Heshbon
By the gate of Bath Rabbim.
Your nose *is* like the tower of
Lebanon
Which looks toward Damascus.

6:12 [a]Hebrew *Ammi Nadib* **6:13** [a]Hebrew *Mahanaim*

5 Your head *crowns* you like *Mount*
Carmel,
And the hair of your head *is* like
purple;
A king *is* held captive by *your* tresses.

6 How fair and how pleasant you are,
O love, with your delights!
7 This stature of yours is like a palm tree,
And your breasts *like* its clusters.
8 I said, "I will go up to the palm tree,
I will take hold of its branches."
Let now your breasts be like clusters
of the vine,
The fragrance of your breath like
apples,
9 And the roof of your mouth like the
best wine.

The Shulamite

The wine goes *down* smoothly for my
beloved,
Moving gently the lips of sleepers.[a]
10 I *am* my beloved's,
And his desire *is* toward me.

11 Come, my beloved,
Let us go forth to the field;
Let us lodge in the villages.
12 Let us get up early to the vineyards;
Let us see if the vine has budded,
Whether the grape blossoms are open,
And the pomegranates are in bloom.
There I will give you my love.
13 The mandrakes give off a fragrance,
And at our gates *are* pleasant *fruits,*
All manner, new and old,
Which I have laid up for you, my
beloved.

8 Oh, that you were like my brother,
Who nursed at my mother's breasts!
If I should find you outside,
I would kiss you;
I would not be despised.
2 I would lead you *and* bring you
Into the house of my mother,
She *who* used to instruct me.
I would cause you to drink of spiced
wine,
Of the juice of my pomegranate.

(To the Daughters of Jerusalem)

3 His left hand *is* under my head,
And his right hand embraces me.
4 I charge you, O daughters of
Jerusalem,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

LOVE RENEWED IN LEBANON

A Relative

5 Who *is* this coming up from the
wilderness,
Leaning upon her beloved?

I awakened you under the apple tree.
There your mother brought you forth;
There she *who* bore you brought *you*
forth.

MARRIAGE
How strong is love?
Song of Solomon 8:6, 7

The Shulamite to Her Beloved

6 Set me as a seal upon your heart,
As a seal upon your arm;
For love *is as* strong as death,
Jealousy *as* cruel as the grave;[a]
Its flames *are* flames of fire,
A most vehement flame.[b]

7 Many waters cannot quench love,
Nor can the floods drown it.
If a man would give for love
All the wealth of his house,
It would be utterly despised.

Song of Solomon 8:8

According to ancient tradition, a woman's family was responsible for her welfare until she got married. They believed a woman needed the protection of a family until a husband could be found who would care for her.

The Shulamite's Brothers

8 We have a little sister,
And she has no breasts.
What shall we do for our sister

7:9 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *lips and teeth.* **8:6** [a]Or *Sheol* [b]Literally *A flame of* YAH (a poetic form of *YHWH, the* LORD)

In the day when she is spoken for?
9 If she *is* a wall,
We will build upon her
A battlement of silver;
And if she *is* a door,
We will enclose her
With boards of cedar.

The Shulamite

10 I *am* a wall,
And my breasts like towers;
Then I became in his eyes
As one who found peace.
11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal
Hamon;
He leased the vineyard to keepers;
Everyone was to bring for its fruit
A thousand silver *coins*.

(To Solomon)

12 My own vineyard *is* before me.
You, O Solomon, *may have* a thousand,
And those who tend its fruit two
hundred.

The Beloved

13 You who dwell in the gardens,
The companions listen for your
voice—
Let me hear it!

The Shulamite

14 Make haste, my beloved,
And be like a gazelle
Or a young stag
On the mountains of spices.

Isaiah

DATE OF WRITING: 740–680 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET ISAIAH
THEME: SALVATION
PURPOSE: GOD FIRMLY INTENDS TO BLESS HUMANITY.

OUTLINE

1:1–31. .....Introduction
2:1—5:30 .....Messages About Judah and Israel
6:1—9:7 .....Events from Isaiah's Ministry
9:8—12:6 .....More Messages About Judah and Israel
13:1—23:18 .....God Will Punish Other Nations
24:1—27:13 .....Messages of Hope for the Lord's People Who Are Suffering
28:1—31:9.....The Lord Will Punish His Rebellious People
32:1—35:10 .....The Lord Will Punish Edom and Bless Jerusalem
36:1—39:8.....Assyria, Babylon, King Hezekiah, and Isaiah
40:1—48:22 .....The Lord Will Rescue His People
49:1—53:12 .....The Lord's Servant
54:1—55:13 .....The Lord Will Keep All His Promises
56:1–8 .....All Nations Will Be Part of God's People
56:9—59:21 .....Leaders Unfaithful to God Will Be Punished
60:1—62:12 .....The Future Glory of Jerusalem
63:1—66:24 .....God's Wonderful New Creation

KEY VERSE:

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6).

THEN /// Isaiah was a prophet. He was well educated and a good communicator. He was known for being the most evangelistic of the prophets. That means instead of preaching only to God's people, he invited people to know God.

Imagine Isaiah as a street preacher walking around town. He would have been telling everyone, "STOP SINNING!" That was a common message from the prophets in the Old Testament. But Isaiah's message had a flip side; he also told people, "GOD WILL SAVE YOU." Isaiah talked about salvation more than any other prophet.

Isaiah was convinced that salvation was possible if only people would repent of their sins and put their faith in God's goodness instead of their own. This truth was his passion. Sharing it was his life's mission.

NOW /// Have you ever seen those shock collars for dogs that are used to teach them not to bark or not to cross over an invisible fence (made of electrical currents)? Sometimes it seems like it would be easier to learn not to sin if God used those electronic collars on us. How easy would it be to stop lying if every time you lied you felt an electric current run through your body?

God doesn't give us collars, though. He gives us the Holy Spirit to teach us and guide us. He also gives us people, like Isaiah, who understand that God is holy and we are not. These people remind us that understanding God's holiness should affect how we live our lives.

REALITY CHECK /// What do you think heaven would look like if you could peel back the layers of reality as we know it and see right in? Isaiah got a glimpse of heaven. He saw a throne and a temple. He saw six-winged creatures worshiping God. These creatures sang a song you might recognize. It starts out, "Holy, Holy, Holy." If you go to church a lot, you probably have heard some songs that are based on this vision of Isaiah's.

When Isaiah was faced with God's holiness, he became painfully aware of his own unholiness. When he compared himself with the holy perfection of God, he saw all the sin in himself. The comparison made Isaiah realize he needed to be forgiven and cleaned up.

1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz,
which he saw concerning Judah and
Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

THE WICKEDNESS OF JUDAH

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!
For the LORD has spoken:
"I have nourished and brought up
children,
And they have rebelled against Me;
3 The ox knows its owner
And the donkey its master's crib;
But Israel does not know,
My people do not consider."

4 Alas, sinful nation,
A people laden with iniquity,
A brood of evildoers,
Children who are corrupters!

Isaiah 1:1

Solomon's reign marked the end of Israel as a united country. After Solomon died, the nation split into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. The prophet Isaiah was alive when Israel, the northern kingdom, was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.

They have forsaken the LORD,
They have provoked to anger
The Holy One of Israel,
They have turned away backward.

5 Why should you be stricken again?
You will revolt more and more.
The whole head is sick,
And the whole heart faints.
6 From the sole of the foot even to the head,
There is no soundness in it,
But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores;
They have not been closed or bound up,
Or soothed with ointment.

7 Your country *is* desolate,
Your cities *are* burned with fire;
Strangers devour your land in your presence;
And *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers.
8 So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard,
As a hut in a garden of cucumbers,
As a besieged city.

Isaiah 1:9

Sodom and Gomorrah, which may have been located near the southern end of the Dead Sea, were destroyed by fire and sulfur from heaven. God handed down the death penalty for Sodom and Gomorrah because of their extreme wickedness.

9 Unless the LORD of hosts
Had left to us a very small remnant,
We would have become like Sodom,
We would have been made like Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD,
You rulers of Sodom;
Give ear to the law of our God,
You people of Gomorrah:
11 "To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?"
Says the LORD.
"I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
And the fat of fed cattle.
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
Or of lambs or goats.

12 "When you come to appear before Me,
Who has required this from your hand,
To trample My courts?
13 Bring no more futile sacrifices;
Incense is an abomination to Me.
The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—
I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.
14 Your New Moons and your appointed feasts
My soul hates;
They are a trouble to Me,
I am weary of bearing *them.*
15 When you spread out your hands,
I will hide My eyes from you;
Even though you make many prayers,
I will not hear.
Your hands are full of blood.

SIN

What should we do about sin in our lives?

Isaiah 1:16–18

16 "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;
Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes.
Cease to do evil,
17 Learn to do good;
Seek justice,
Rebuke the oppressor;[a]
Defend the fatherless,
Plead for the widow.

18 "Come now, and let us reason together,"
Says the LORD,
"Though your sins are like scarlet,

1:17 [a]Some ancient versions read *the oppressed.*

MAKING IT REAL // ISAIAH 1:18

Right with God You've got a personal invitation to a private dinner with a King. It's right here in Isaiah 1:18. God invites you to come and reason things out. He's letting you know that He really wants you to talk over your life with Him. It's not that He doesn't already know exactly what's going on—He just wants the pleasure of knowing you care enough about Him to share it.

Specifically, Isaiah 1:18 refers to sin. The Lord invites people to confess their sin to Him and turn their lives around. With God, it's that simple. All you've got to do to get your life headed in the right direction is talk with Him. He'll take it from there. (See also: Ps. 51:9; 62:8.)

Words to Live By

Reason together: The word translated as "reason together" in Isaiah 1:18 is the Hebrew word *yakach* (yaw-kahh'). It means "to decide" or "to be right." In this verse, it is used to describe coming together for a conversation with God. When we come to God confessing our sins and asking His forgiveness, He will always accept us and cleanse us. That's a pretty amazing conversation.

They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool.
19 If you are willing and obedient,
You shall eat the good of the land;
20 But if you refuse and rebel,
You shall be devoured by the sword";
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

THE DEGENERATE CITY

21 How the faithful city has become a harlot!
It was full of justice;
Righteousness lodged in it,
But now murderers.
22 Your silver has become dross,
Your wine mixed with water.
23 Your princes *are* rebellious,
And companions of thieves;
Everyone loves bribes,
And follows after rewards.
They do not defend the fatherless,
Nor does the cause of the widow come before them.

24 Therefore the Lord says,
The LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel,
"Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries,
And take vengeance on My enemies.
25 I will turn My hand against you,
And thoroughly purge away your dross,
And take away all your alloy.
26 I will restore your judges as at the first,
And your counselors as at the beginning.
Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city."

27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice,
And her penitents with righteousness.
28 The destruction of transgressors and of sinners *shall be* together,
And those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.
29 For they[a] shall be ashamed of the terebinth trees
Which you have desired;
And you shall be embarrassed because of the gardens
Which you have chosen.
30 For you shall be as a terebinth whose leaf fades,
And as a garden that has no water.
31 The strong shall be as tinder,
And the work of it as a spark;

1:29 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Targum read *you*.

Both will burn together,
And no one shall quench *them.*

THE FUTURE HOUSE OF GOD

2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days
That the mountain of the LORD's house
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow to it.
3 Many people shall come and say,
"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
4 He shall judge between the nations,
And rebuke many people;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

5 O house of Jacob, come and let us walk
In the light of the LORD.

Isaiah 2:6

The Philistines, who lived along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, had been among the Israelites' most notorious enemies. Over the years, though, the hatred between the two nations cooled and old grudges were forgotten. The Israelites even began to allow their children to marry Philistines, despite the fact that such marriages went against God's law.

6 For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob,
Because they are filled with eastern ways;
They *are* soothsayers like the Philistines,
And they are pleased with the children of foreigners.
7 Their land is also full of silver and gold,
And there is no end to their treasures;
Their land is also full of horses,
And there is no end to their chariots.
8 Their land is also full of idols;
They worship the work of their own hands,
That which their own fingers have made.
9 People bow down,
And each man humbles himself;
Therefore do not forgive them.

10 Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty.
11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled,
The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down,
And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

12 For the day of the LORD of hosts
Shall come upon everything proud and lofty,
Upon everything lifted up—
And it shall be brought low—
13 Upon all the cedars of Lebanon *that are* high and lifted up,
And upon all the oaks of Bashan;
14 Upon all the high mountains,
And upon all the hills *that are* lifted up;
15 Upon every high tower,
And upon every fortified wall;
16 Upon all the ships of Tarshish,
And upon all the beautiful sloops.
17 The loftiness of man shall be bowed down,
And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low;
The LORD alone will be exalted in that day,
18 But the idols He shall utterly abolish.

19 They shall go into the holes of the rocks,
And into the caves of the earth,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty,

When He arises to shake the earth
mightily.

20 In that day a man will cast away his
idols of silver
And his idols of gold,
Which they made, *each* for himself to
worship,
To the moles and bats,
21 To go into the clefts of the rocks,
And into the crags of the rugged rocks,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty,
When He arises to shake the earth
mightily.

22 Sever yourselves from such a man,
Whose breath *is* in his nostrils;
For of what account is he?

JUDGMENT ON JUDAH AND JERUSALEM

3 For behold, the Lord, the LORD of
hosts,
Takes away from Jerusalem and
from Judah
The stock and the store,
The whole supply of bread and the
whole supply of water;
2 The mighty man and the man of war,
The judge and the prophet,
And the diviner and the elder;
3 The captain of fifty and the honorable
man,
The counselor and the skillful artisan,
And the expert enchanter.

4 "I will give children *to be* their
princes,
And babes shall rule over them.
5 The people will be oppressed,
Every one by another and every one by
his neighbor;
The child will be insolent toward the
elder,
And the base toward the honorable."

6 When a man takes hold of his brother
In the house of his father, *saying,*
"You have clothing;
You be our ruler,
And *let* these ruins *be* under your
power,"[a]
7 In that day he will protest, saying,
"I cannot cure *your* ills,
For in my house *is* neither food nor
clothing;
Do not make me a ruler of the people."

8 For Jerusalem stumbled,
And Judah is fallen,
Because their tongue and their doings
Are against the LORD,
To provoke the eyes of His glory.
9 The look on their countenance
witnesses against them,
And they declare their sin as Sodom;
They do not hide *it.*
Woe to their soul!
For they have brought evil upon
themselves.

10 "Say to the righteous that *it shall be* well
with them,
For they shall eat the fruit of their
doings.
11 Woe to the wicked! *It shall be* ill *with
him,*
For the reward of his hands shall be
given him.
12 *As for* My people, children *are* their
oppressors,
And women rule over them.
O My people! Those who lead you
cause *you* to err,
And destroy the way of your paths."

OPPRESSION AND LUXURY CONDEMNED

13 The LORD stands up to plead,
And stands to judge the people.
14 The LORD will enter into judgment
With the elders of His people
And His princes:
"For you have eaten up the vineyard;
The plunder of the poor *is* in your
houses.
15 What do you mean by crushing My
people
And grinding the faces of the poor?"
Says the Lord GOD of hosts.

16 Moreover the LORD says:

"Because the daughters of Zion are
haughty,
And walk with outstretched necks
And wanton eyes,

3:6 [a] Literally *hand*

Walking and mincing *as* they go,
Making a jingling with their feet,
17 Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab
The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion,
And the LORD will uncover their secret parts."

18 In that day the Lord will take away the finery:
The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents;

VANITY
What does God think about vanity?
Isaiah 3:16–18

19 The pendants, the bracelets, and the veils;
20 The headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands;
The perfume boxes, the charms,
21 and the rings;
The nose jewels,
22 the festal apparel, and the mantles;
The outer garments, the purses,
23 and the mirrors;
The fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.

24 And so it shall be:

Instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench;
Instead of a sash, a rope;
Instead of well-set hair, baldness;
Instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth;
And branding instead of beauty.
25 Your men shall fall by the sword,
And your mighty in the war.

26 Her gates shall lament and mourn,
And she *being* desolate shall sit on the ground.

4 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying,
"We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel;
Only let us be called by your name,
To take away our reproach."

THE RENEWAL OF ZION

2 In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious;
And the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and appealing
For those of Israel who have escaped.

3 And it shall come to pass that *he who is* left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy—everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem. 4 When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, 5 then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there *will be* a covering. 6 And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain.

GOD'S DISAPPOINTING VINEYARD

5 Now let me sing to my Well-beloved
A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:

My Well-beloved has a vineyard
On a very fruitful hill.

Isaiah 5:2
Towers were often built in the middle of a vineyard to prevent people from stealing grapes. From the tower, a guard could spot thieves attempting a fruit heist. He could also defend the vineyard from that vantage point with a bow and arrow or a slingshot.

2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones,
And planted it with the choicest vine.
He built a tower in its midst,
And also made a winepress in it;
So He expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes,
But it brought forth wild grapes.

3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,

Judge, please, between Me and My
vineyard.
4What more could have been done to
My vineyard
That I have not done in it?
Why then, when I expected *it* to bring
forth *good* grapes,
Did it bring forth wild grapes?
5And now, please let Me tell you what I
will do to My vineyard:
I will take away its hedge, and it shall
be burned;
And break down its wall, and it shall
be trampled down.
6I will lay it waste;
It shall not be pruned or dug,
But there shall come up briers and
thorns.
I will also command the clouds
That they rain no rain on it."

7For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is*
the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah are His pleasant
plant.
He looked for justice, but behold,
oppression;
For righteousness, but behold, a cry
for help.

IMPENDING JUDGMENT ON EXCESSES

8Woe to those who join house to
house;
They add field to field,
Till *there is* no place
Where they may dwell alone in the
midst of the land!
9In my hearing the LORD of hosts
said,
"Truly, many houses shall be desolate,
Great and beautiful ones, without
inhabitant.

GREED
What's the outcome of being greedy?
Isaiah 5:8, 9

10For ten acres of vineyard shall yield
one bath,
And a homer of seed shall yield one
ephah."

11Woe to those who rise early in the
morning,
That they may follow intoxicating
drink;
Who continue until night, *till* wine
inflames them!
12The harp and the strings,
The tambourine and flute,
And wine are in their feasts;
But they do not regard the work of the
LORD,
Nor consider the operation of His
hands.

13Therefore my people have gone into
captivity,
Because *they have* no knowledge;
Their honorable men *are* famished,
And their multitude dried up with
thirst.
14Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself
And opened its mouth beyond measure;
Their glory and their multitude and
their pomp,
And he who is jubilant, shall descend
into it.
15People shall be brought down,
Each man shall be humbled,
And the eyes of the lofty shall be
humbled.
16But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted
in judgment,
And God who is holy shall be hallowed
in righteousness.
17Then the lambs shall feed in their
pasture,
And in the waste places of the fat ones
strangers shall eat.

18Woe to those who draw iniquity with
cords of vanity,
And sin as if with a cart rope;
19That say, "Let Him make speed *and*
hasten His work,
That we may see *it;*
And let the counsel of the Holy One of
Israel draw near and come,
That we may know *it.*"

20Woe to those who call evil good, and
good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light
for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet
for bitter!

21 Woe to *those who are* wise in their own
eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!

22 Woe to men mighty at drinking
wine,
Woe to men valiant for mixing
intoxicating drink,

DRINKING
Is drunkeness wrong?
Isaiah 5:22

23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe,
And take away justice from the
righteous man!

24 Therefore, as the fire devours the
stubble,
And the flame consumes the chaff,
So their root will be as rottenness,
And their blossom will ascend like
dust;
Because they have rejected the law of
the LORD of hosts,
And despised the word of the Holy
One of Israel.
25 Therefore the anger of the LORD is
aroused against His people;
He has stretched out His hand against
them
And stricken them,
And the hills trembled.
Their carcasses *were* as refuse in the
midst of the streets.

For all this His anger is not turned
away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

26 He will lift up a banner to the nations
from afar,
And will whistle to them from the end
of the earth;
Surely they shall come with speed,
swiftly.
27 No one will be weary or stumble
among them,
No one will slumber or sleep;
Nor will the belt on their loins be
loosed,
Nor the strap of their sandals be
broken;
28 Whose arrows *are* sharp,
And all their bows bent;
Their horses' hooves will seem like
flint,
And their wheels like a whirlwind.
29 Their roaring *will be* like a lion,
They will roar like young lions;
Yes, they will roar
And lay hold of the prey;
They will carry *it* away safely,
And no one will deliver.
30 In that day they will roar against them
Like the roaring of the sea.
And if *one* looks to the land,
Behold, darkness *and* sorrow;
And the light is darkened by the
clouds.

ANGELS
What do some angels look like?
Isaiah 6:2

ISAIAH CALLED TO BE A PROPHET

6 In the year that King Uzziah died,
I saw the Lord sitting on a throne,
high and lifted up, and the train of
His *robe* filled the temple. 2 Above it stood
seraphim; each one had six wings: with
two he covered his face, with two he cov-
ered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And
one cried to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth *is* full of His glory!"

4 And the posts of the door were shaken
by the voice of him who cried out, and the
house was filled with smoke.
5 So I said:

"Woe *is* me, for I am undone!
Because I *am* a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of
unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King,
The LORD of hosts."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me,
having in his hand a live coal *which* he had
taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And
he touched my mouth *with it,* and said:

"Behold, this has touched your lips;
Your iniquity is taken away,
And your sin purged."

8Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

"Whom shall I send,
And who will go for Us?"

Then I said, "Here *am* I! Send me."
9And He said, "Go, and tell this people:

'Keep on hearing, but do not
understand;
Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'

10"Make the heart of this people dull,
And their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And return and be healed."

11Then I said, "Lord, how long?"
And He answered:

"Until the cities are laid waste and
without inhabitant,
The houses are without a man,
The land is utterly desolate,
12The LORD has removed men far away,
And the forsaken places *are* many in
the midst of the land.
13But yet a tenth *will be* in it,
And will return and be for
consuming,
As a terebinth tree or as an oak,
Whose stump *remains* when it is cut
down.
So the holy seed *shall be* its stump."

ISAIAH SENT TO KING AHAZ

7 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to *make* war against it, but could not prevail against it. 2And it was told to the house of David, saying, "Syria's forces are deployed in Ephraim." So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

3Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-Jashub[a] your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field, 4and say to him: 'Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah. 5Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying, 6"Let us go up against Judah and trouble it, and let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves, and set a king over them, the son of Tabel"—7thus says the Lord GOD:

"It shall not stand,
Nor shall it come to pass.
8For the head of Syria *is* Damascus,
And the head of Damascus *is* Rezin.
Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be
broken,
So that it will not *be* a people.
9The head of Ephraim *is* Samaria,
And the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's
son.
If you will not believe,
Surely you shall not be established."'"

THE IMMANUEL PROPHECY

10Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 11"Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above."

12But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!"

JESUS
What did Isaiah prophesy about Jesus' mother?
Isaiah 7:14

13Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? 14Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.[a] 15Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil

7:3 [a]Literally *A Remnant Shall Return*
7:14 [a]Literally *God-With-Us*

and choose the good. 16For before the Child
shall know to refuse the evil and choose
the good, the land that you dread will be
forsaken by both her kings. 17The LORD
will bring the king of Assyria upon you
and your people and your father's house—
days that have not come since the day that
Ephraim departed from Judah."

18And it shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will whistle for the fly
That *is* in the farthest part of the rivers
of Egypt,
And for the bee that *is* in the land of
Assyria.
19They will come, and all of them will rest
In the desolate valleys and in the clefts
of the rocks,
And on all thorns and in all pastures.

20In the same day the Lord will shave
with a hired razor,
With those from beyond the River,[a]
with the king of Assyria,
The head and the hair of the legs,
And will also remove the beard.

Isaiah 7:20

Men in ancient Israel took great pride in their hair. Baldness was considered an embarrassment. For the most part, the only people who shaved were Levites, victims of skin disease, and people in mourning. To be shaved (involuntarily) by someone else was a tremendous insult.

21It shall be in that day
That a man will keep alive a young
cow and two sheep;
22So it shall be, from the abundance of
milk they give,
That he will eat curds;
For curds and honey everyone will eat
who is left in the land.

23It shall happen in that day,
That wherever there could be a
thousand vines
Worth a thousand *shekels* of silver,
It will be for briers and thorns.
24With arrows and bows *men* will come
there,
Because all the land will become
briers and thorns.

25And to any hill which could be dug
with the hoe,
You will not go there for fear of briers
and thorns;
But it will become a range for oxen
And a place for sheep to roam.

ASSYRIA WILL INVADE THE LAND

8 Moreover the LORD said to me, "Take a large scroll, and write on it with a man's pen concerning Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.[a] 2And I will take for Myself faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah."

3Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz; 4for before the child shall have knowledge to cry 'My father' and 'My mother,' the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria."

5The LORD also spoke to me again, saying:

6"Inasmuch as these people refused
The waters of Shiloah that flow softly,
And rejoice in Rezin and in Remaliah's
son;
7Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings
up over them
The waters of the River,[a] strong and
mighty—
The king of Assyria and all his glory;
He will go up over all his channels
And go over all his banks.
8He will pass through Judah,
He will overflow and pass over,
He will reach up to the neck;
And the stretching out of his wings
Will fill the breadth of Your land,
O Immanuel.[a]

9"Be shattered, O you peoples, and be
broken in pieces!
Give ear, all you from far countries.
Gird yourselves, but be broken in
pieces;

7:20 [a]That is, the Euphrates **8:1** [a]Literally *Speed the Spoil, Hasten the Booty* **8:7** [a]That is, the Euphrates **8:8** [a]Literally *God-With-Us*

Gird yourselves, but be broken in
pieces.
[10]Take counsel together, but it will come
to nothing;
Speak the word, but it will not stand,
For God *is* with us."[a]

FEAR GOD, HEED HIS WORD

[11]For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying:

[12]"Do not say, 'A conspiracy,'
Concerning all that this people call a
conspiracy,
Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be
troubled.
[13]The LORD of hosts, Him you shall
hallow;
Let Him *be* your fear,
And *let* Him *be* your dread.
[14]He will be as a sanctuary,
But a stone of stumbling and a rock of
offense
To both the houses of Israel,
As a trap and a snare to the
inhabitants of Jerusalem.
[15]And many among them shall stumble;
They shall fall and be broken,
Be snared and taken."

[16]Bind up the testimony,
Seal the law among my disciples.
[17]And I will wait on the LORD,
Who hides His face from the house of
Jacob;
And I will hope in Him.
[18]Here am I and the children whom the
LORD has given me!
We are for signs and wonders in Israel
From the LORD of hosts,
Who dwells in Mount Zion.

[19]And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? *Should they seek* the dead on behalf of the living? [20]To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.

[21]They will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. [22]Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and *they will be* driven into darkness.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PROMISED SON

9 Nevertheless the gloom *will* not *be*
upon her who *is* distressed,
As when at first He lightly esteemed
The land of Zebulun and the land of
Naphtali,
And afterward more heavily oppressed
her,
By the way of the sea, beyond the
Jordan,
In Galilee of the Gentiles.
[2]The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the
shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined.

[3]You have multiplied the nation
And increased its joy;[a]
They rejoice before You
According to the joy of harvest,
As *men* rejoice when they divide the
spoil.
[4]For You have broken the yoke of his
burden
And the staff of his shoulder,
The rod of his oppressor,
As in the day of Midian.
[5]For every warrior's sandal from the
noisy battle,
And garments rolled in blood,
Will be used for burning *and* fuel of
fire.

[6]For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His
shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
[7]Of the increase of *His* government and
peace
There will be no end,

8:10 [a]Hebrew *Immanuel* **9:3** [a]Following Qere and Targum; Kethib and Vulgate read *not increased joy;* Septuagint reads *Most of the people You brought down in Your joy.*



LIFE APP

Peace / Isaiah 9:6

Peace. We look for it, fight for it, protest to get it, yet we never seem to find it. We sing songs about it; we see its symbol written on walls; and nearly everyone knows the sign language gesture that means "peace." But we never seem to experience it. Wars, worry, and confusion continue all around us and peace remains the elusive dream of our hearts and our world.

But is peace simply the absence of war? Is it just learning to live without worry? Can we find more peace if our world is less confusing? If we manage to find it, can we hold on to it? What exactly is the peace we all crave?

Real peace is so much more than what the world views as peace. Real peace can't come from outside; it must begin inside us. The world will never be perfect. We will always find things to worry about, fight about, and sooner or later, life will let every one of us down. If we are to ever experience peace in our lives, we have to understand what it really is. To understand anything, it's always best to go to the expert. Isaiah 9:6 says that Jesus is the "Prince of Peace." To know true lasting peace, we should see what He has to say about it.

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Real, lasting, total peace comes from Jesus. When we have Him in our hearts, His peace lives inside us. No matter what happens in our world, Jesus will guard our minds from worry and protect our hearts and minds from confusion. But living in peace remains our choice. We can accept the peace Jesus brings or decide to continue living without it. Paul gave some very good advice on the subject, "let the peace of God rule" in your heart (Col. 3:15). When you do, the world can do whatever it wants, but it can't take away your peace.

MAKING IT REAL // ISAIAH 9:6

Real Peace It seems like everyone is looking for a little peace and quiet these days. There's so much happening so fast in your life and in the world. You've got a really busy life—school, sports, church, friends, family. Whatever is going on in your life, it can get pretty hectic trying to figure it all out. But stop. It's time for some peace.

Jesus is the One who gives you peace. He whispers calm into your crazy situations. He gives you a break from the frantic worry that sometimes overwhelms you. When you get into His presence, there is peace. When you take your eyes off of your circumstances long enough to turn them toward Him, you immediately find relief. Remember, Jesus never panics; nothing destroys His peace. No matter how hurried or confused your life may be, take a second to listen to the Prince of Peace. Then you won't panic either. (See also: John 14:27; Acts 10:36; Col. 3:15.)

Words to Live By

Peace: The word translated as "peace" in Isaiah 9:6 is the Hebrew word *shalom* (shaw-lome'). It carries with it the idea of completeness and rest. We are made to have a relationship with God. It is only in a relationship with Him that we can find a sense of being whole and complete. Whatever is going on in our worlds, we can know that we are okay no matter what happens, because we have Christ in our hearts and on our side. He is our *shalom*.

Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

THE PUNISHMENT OF SAMARIA

8 The Lord sent a word against Jacob,
And it has fallen on Israel.
9 All the people will know—
Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria—
Who say in pride and arrogance of heart:
10 "The bricks have fallen down,
But we will rebuild with hewn stones;
The sycamores are cut down,
But we will replace *them* with cedars."
11 Therefore the LORD shall set up
The adversaries of Rezin against him,
And spur his enemies on,
12 The Syrians before and the Philistines behind;
And they shall devour Israel with an open mouth.
For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

13 For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them,
Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts.
14 Therefore the LORD will cut off head and tail from Israel,
Palm branch and bulrush in one day.
15 The elder and honorable, he *is* the head;
The prophet who teaches lies, he *is* the tail.
16 For the leaders of this people cause *them* to err,
And *those who are* led by them are destroyed.
17 Therefore the Lord will have no joy in their young men,
Nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows;
For everyone *is* a hypocrite and an evildoer,
And every mouth speaks folly.

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

18 For wickedness burns as the fire;
It shall devour the briers and thorns,
And kindle in the thickets of the forest;
They shall mount up *like* rising smoke.
19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts
The land is burned up,
And the people shall be as fuel for the fire;
No man shall spare his brother.
20 And he shall snatch on the right hand
And be hungry;
He shall devour on the left hand
And not be satisfied;
Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm.
21 Manasseh *shall devour* Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh;
Together they *shall be* against Judah.

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

10 "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees,
Who write misfortune,
Which they have prescribed
2 To rob the needy of justice,
And to take what is right from the poor of My people,
That widows may be their prey,
And *that* they may rob the fatherless.
3 What will you do in the day of punishment,
And in the desolation *which* will come from afar?
To whom will you flee for help?
And where will you leave your glory?
4 Without Me they shall bow down among the prisoners,
And they shall fall among the slain."

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

ARROGANT ASSYRIA ALSO JUDGED

5 "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger
And the staff in whose hand is My indignation.
6 I will send him against an ungodly nation,
And against the people of My wrath
I will give him charge,
To seize the spoil, to take the prey,
And to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
7 Yet he does not mean so,
Nor does his heart think so;
But *it is* in his heart to destroy,
And cut off not a few nations.
8 For he says,
'*Are* not my princes altogether kings?
9 *Is* not Calno like Carchemish?
Is not Hamath like Arpad?
Is not Samaria like Damascus?
10 As my hand has found the kingdoms of the idols,
Whose carved images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria,
11 As I have done to Samaria and her idols,
Shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her idols?'"

12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, *that He will say,* "I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks."
13 For he says:

"By the strength of my hand I have done *it,*
And by my wisdom, for I am prudent;
Also I have removed the boundaries of the people,
And have robbed their treasuries;
So I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant *man.*
14 My hand has found like a nest the riches of the people,
And as one gathers eggs *that are* left,
I have gathered all the earth;
And there was no one who moved *his* wing,
Nor opened *his* mouth with even a peep."

15 Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it?
Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it?
As if a rod could wield *itself* against those who lift it up,
Or as if a staff could lift up, *as if it were* not wood!

16 Therefore the Lord, the Lord[a] of hosts,
Will send leanness among his fat ones;
And under his glory
He will kindle a burning
Like the burning of a fire.
17 So the Light of Israel will be for a fire,
And his Holy One for a flame;
It will burn and devour
His thorns and his briers in one day.
18 And it will consume the glory of his
forest and of his fruitful field,
Both soul and body;
And they will be as when a sick man
wastes away.
19 Then the rest of the trees of his forest
Will be so few in number
That a child may write them.

THE RETURNING REMNANT OF ISRAEL

20 And it shall come to pass in that day
That the remnant of Israel,
And such as have escaped of the house
of Jacob,
Will never again depend on him who
defeated them,
But will depend on the LORD, the Holy
One of Israel, in truth.
21 The remnant will return, the remnant
of Jacob,
To the Mighty God.
22 For though your people, O Israel, be as
the sand of the sea,
A remnant of them will return;
The destruction decreed shall overflow
with righteousness.
23 For the Lord GOD of hosts
Will make a determined end
In the midst of all the land.

24 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: "O My people, who dwell in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the manner of Egypt. 25 For yet a very little while and the indignation will cease, as will My anger in their destruction." 26 And the LORD of hosts will stir up a scourge for him like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; *as* His rod was on the sea, so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt.

27 It shall come to pass in that day
That his burden will be taken away
from your shoulder,
And his yoke from your neck,
And the yoke will be destroyed
because of the anointing oil.

28 He has come to Aiath,
He has passed Migron;
At Michmash he has attended to his
equipment.
29 They have gone along the ridge,
They have taken up lodging at Geba.
Ramah is afraid,
Gibeah of Saul has fled.
30 Lift up your voice,
O daughter of Gallim!
Cause it to be heard as far as Laish—
O poor Anathoth![a]
31 Madmenah has fled,
The inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge.
32 As yet he will remain at Nob that day;
He will shake his fist at the mount of
the daughter of Zion,
The hill of Jerusalem.

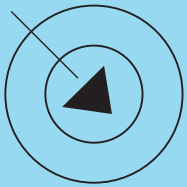
33 Behold, the Lord,
The LORD of hosts,
Will lop off the bough with terror;
Those of high stature *will be* hewn
down,
And the haughty will be humbled.
34 He will cut down the thickets of the
forest with iron,
And Lebanon will fall by the Mighty
One.

THE REIGN OF JESSE'S OFFSPRING

11 There shall come forth a Rod
from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of
his roots.
2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon
Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and
understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear
of the LORD.

3 His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD,
And He shall not judge by the sight of
His eyes,

10:16 [a]Following Bomberg; Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls read *YHWH* (*the LORD*).
10:30 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *Listen to her, O Anathoth.*



PROMISE

God promises to give you understanding, wisdom, and knowledge.

The Spirit of the LORD *shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the* LORD (Is. 11:2).

This verse is talking specifically about a King who would arise from David's family. This King would be Jesus, and He would receive understanding, wisdom, knowledge, and might from the Spirit of the Lord. But does that mean the Spirit won't give those gifts to anyone else? No, of course not. The Spirit of God gives understanding, wisdom, and knowledge to anyone who asks. He is the Source of those things. Read John 14—16 to see what the Holy Spirit's jobs are. You'll see some things that remind you of this verse. When you get in a situation where you need understanding, wisdom, or knowledge beyond your own, ask the Spirit for His help. He'll always be there for you.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Proverbs 2:6; Luke 24:45; John 14—16; Colossians 1:9

Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;
4 But with righteousness He shall judge
the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of
the earth;
He shall strike the earth with the rod
of His mouth,
And with the breath of His lips He shall
slay the wicked.
5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His
loins,
And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the
lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the
young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the
fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze;
Their young ones shall lie down
together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The nursing child shall play by the
cobra's hole,
And the weaned child shall put his
hand in the viper's den.
9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all
My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the
knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea.

10 "And in that day there shall be a Root
of Jesse,
Who shall stand as a banner to the
people;
For the Gentiles shall seek Him,
And His resting place shall be
glorious."

11 It shall come to pass in that day
That the Lord shall set His hand again
the second time
To recover the remnant of His people
who are left,
From Assyria and Egypt,
From Pathros and Cush,
From Elam and Shinar,
From Hamath and the islands of the
sea.

12 He will set up a banner for the nations,
And will assemble the outcasts of
Israel,
And gather together the dispersed of
Judah
From the four corners of the earth.
13 Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart,
And the adversaries of Judah shall be
cut off;
Ephraim shall not envy Judah,
And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.
14 But they shall fly down upon the
shoulder of the Philistines toward
the west;

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ISAIAH 12:6

Help! God has a pretty good track record when it comes to helping His children. He helped the Hebrew people escape from Egypt by dividing the water of the Red Sea (Ex. 14). He helped David kill Goliath with just a slingshot (1 Sam. 17). He helped Peter by sending an angel to lead him out of jail (Acts 12:1–17).

Of course, the list could go on and on. God wants to help His people. He wants to show the world His power through the lives of the people who love Him. Has He helped you lately? He's not waiting for you to get into a life-or-death situation before He helps you. He's waiting for you to ask Him. He wants you to know that you need Him. He wants you to admit that He can do a better job with your life than you can. Remember, His help might come in an unexpected way, but it will always be the best thing that could happen for you. (See also: Ex. 33:14; Josh. 1:9.)

Words to Live By

Great: The word translated as "great" in Isaiah 12:6 is the Hebrew word *gadowl* (gaw-dole'). This word carries the meaning of something that far exceeds the norm; for instance, something exceedingly important, mighty, or numerous. When we recognize how huge and exceedingly mighty and magnificent God is, and then realize that He is present in our lives, how can we not rejoice? How can we not turn to Him first when we need help?

Together they shall plunder the people
of the East;
They shall lay their hand on Edom and
Moab;
And the people of Ammon shall obey
them.
15 The LORD will utterly destroy[a] the
tongue of the Sea of Egypt;
With His mighty wind He will shake
His fist over the River,[b]
And strike it in the seven streams,
And make *men* cross over dry-shod.
16 There will be a highway for the
remnant of His people
Who will be left from Assyria,
As it was for Israel
In the day that he came up from the
land of Egypt.

A HYMN OF PRAISE

12 And in that day you will say:

"O LORD, I will praise You;
Though You were angry
with me,
Your anger is turned away, and You
comfort me.
2 Behold, God *is* my salvation,
I will trust and not be afraid;
'For YAH, the LORD, *is* my strength and
song;
He also has become my salvation.'"[a]

COURAGE
Where can we get courage?
Isaiah 12:2

3 Therefore with joy you will draw water
From the wells of salvation.

4 And in that day you will say:

"Praise the LORD, call upon His name;
Declare His deeds among the peoples,
Make mention that His name is
exalted.
5 Sing to the LORD,
For He has done excellent things;
This *is* known in all the earth.
6 Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of
Zion,

11:15 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *dry up*. [b]That is, the Euphrates **12:2** [a]Exodus 15:2

For great *is* the Holy One of Israel in
your midst!"

PROCLAMATION AGAINST BABYLON

13 The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

2"Lift up a banner on the high mountain,
Raise your voice to them;
Wave your hand, that they may enter
the gates of the nobles.
3I have commanded My sanctified ones;
I have also called My mighty ones for
My anger—
Those who rejoice in My exaltation."

4The noise of a multitude in the
mountains,
Like that of many people!
A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of
nations gathered together!
The LORD of hosts musters
The army for battle.
5They come from a far country,
From the end of heaven—
The LORD and His weapons of
indignation,
To destroy the whole land.

6Wail, for the day of the LORD *is* at
hand!
It will come as destruction from the
Almighty.
7Therefore all hands will be limp,
Every man's heart will melt,
8And they will be afraid.
Pangs and sorrows will take hold of
them;
They will be in pain as a woman in
childbirth;
They will be amazed at one another;
Their faces *will be like* flames.

9Behold, the day of the LORD comes,
Cruel, with both wrath and fierce
anger,
To lay the land desolate;
And He will destroy its sinners from it.
10For the stars of heaven and their
constellations
Will not give their light;
The sun will be darkened in its going
forth,
And the moon will not cause its light
to shine.

11"I will punish the world for *its* evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
I will halt the arrogance of the proud,
And will lay low the haughtiness of the
terrible.
12I will make a mortal more rare than
fine gold,
A man more than the golden wedge
of Ophir.
13Therefore I will shake the heavens,
And the earth will move out of her
place,
In the wrath of the LORD of hosts
And in the day of His fierce anger.
14It shall be as the hunted gazelle,
And as a sheep that no man takes up;
Every man will turn to his own
people,
And everyone will flee to his own land.
15Everyone who is found will be thrust
through,
And everyone who is captured will fall
by the sword.
16Their children also will be dashed to
pieces before their eyes;
Their houses will be plundered
And their wives ravished.

17"Behold, I will stir up the Medes against
them,
Who will not regard silver;
And *as for* gold, they will not delight
in it.
18Also *their* bows will dash the young
men to pieces,

Isaiah 13:19

The city of Babylon was spread over six square miles and was protected by walls eighty-five feet thick. Eight major gates led to the city, each one named for a Babylonian god. The main temple, which was dedicated to Marduk, the god of war, featured a seven-story tower built with nearly sixty million bricks. To top it all off, the royal palace contained the hanging gardens of Babylon—one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

And they will have no pity on the fruit
of the womb;
Their eye will not spare children.
19And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride,
Will be as when God overthrew
Sodom and Gomorrah.
20It will never be inhabited,
Nor will it be settled from generation
to generation;
Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there,
Nor will the shepherds make their
sheepfolds there.
21But wild beasts of the desert will lie
there,
And their houses will be full of owls;
Ostriches will dwell there,
And wild goats will caper there.
22The hyenas will howl in their citadels,
And jackals in their pleasant palaces.
Her time *is* near to come,
And her days will not be prolonged."

MERCY ON JACOB

14 For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. 2Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD; they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors.

FALL OF THE KING OF BABYLON

3It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, 4that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say:

"How the oppressor has ceased,
The golden[a] city ceased!
5The LORD has broken the staff of the
wicked,
The scepter of the rulers;
6He who struck the people in wrath
with a continual stroke,
He who ruled the nations in anger,
Is persecuted *and* no one hinders.
7The whole earth is at rest *and* quiet;
They break forth into singing.
8Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over
you,
And the cedars of Lebanon,
Saying, 'Since you were cut down,
No woodsman has come up against
us.'

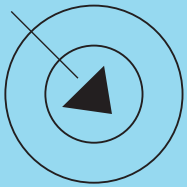
9"Hell from beneath is excited about
you,
To meet *you* at your coming;
It stirs up the dead for you,
All the chief ones of the earth;
It has raised up from their thrones
All the kings of the nations.
10They all shall speak and say to you:
'Have you also become as weak
as we?
Have you become like us?
11Your pomp is brought down to Sheol,
And the sound of your stringed
instruments;
The maggot is spread under you,
And worms cover you.'

THE FALL OF LUCIFER

12"How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer,[a] son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
13For you have said in your heart:
'I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars
of God;
I will also sit on the mount of the
congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;
14I will ascend above the heights of the
clouds,
I will be like the Most High.'
15Yet you shall be brought down to
Sheol,
To the lowest depths of the Pit.

16"Those who see you will gaze at you,
And consider you, *saying:*
'*Is* this the man who made the earth
tremble,
Who shook kingdoms,
17Who made the world as a wilderness
And destroyed its cities,
Who did not open the house of his
prisoners?'

14:4 [a]Or *insolent* **14:12** [a]Literally *Day Star*



PROMISE

God promises that everything will happen as He has planned.

The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, "Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, and as I have purposed, so it shall stand" (Is. 14:24).

Isaiah gave the nation of Israel a message from God. Much of his message had to do with a Person called "the Messiah," who would bring the nation back to God and restore peace. Isaiah's prophecy came true when Jesus came to live on the earth—even though it didn't happen the way most of the Israelites thought it would. Still, God's plan had been written out, through Isaiah and others, so that everyone could watch as it actually happened.

In fact, all through the Bible, God tells you about His plans. Many of His plans have to do with you. You have a God-planned purpose in life, which is to know Him and to love Him like a best friend. He plans for you to become like His perfect Son. He plans for you to find victory over sin and learn to live the abundant life He wants for you. He plans for you to be part of a group of people who love Him and want only God's best. He plans for you to change the world, at least your little corner of it.

What He plans is going to happen. Let Him use you to get the job done.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Isaiah 42:9; 46:10, 11; Ezekiel 12:25; Daniel 4:35

18 "All the kings of the nations,
All of them, sleep in glory,
Everyone in his own house;
19 But you are cast out of your grave
Like an abominable branch,
Like the garment of those who are slain,
Thrust through with a sword,
Who go down to the stones of the pit,
Like a corpse trodden underfoot.
20 You will not be joined with them in burial,
Because you have destroyed your land
And slain your people.
The brood of evildoers shall never be named.
21 Prepare slaughter for his children
Because of the iniquity of their fathers,
Lest they rise up and possess the land,
And fill the face of the world with cities."

BABYLON DESTROYED

22 "For I will rise up against them," says the LORD of hosts,
"And cut off from Babylon the name and remnant,
And offspring and posterity," says the LORD.
23 "I will also make it a possession for the porcupine,
And marshes of muddy water;
I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," says the LORD of hosts.

ASSYRIA DESTROYED

24 The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying,
"Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass,
And as I have purposed, *so* it shall stand:
25 That I will break the Assyrian in My land,
And on My mountains tread him underfoot.
Then his yoke shall be removed from them,
And his burden removed from their shoulders.
26 This *is* the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth,
And this *is* the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.
27 For the LORD of hosts has purposed,
And who will annul *it?*
His hand *is* stretched out,
And who will turn it back?"

PHILISTIA DESTROYED

28 This is the burden which came in the year
that King Ahaz died.

29 "Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia,
Because the rod that struck you is
broken;
For out of the serpent's roots will come
forth a viper,
And its offspring *will be* a fiery flying
serpent.
30 The firstborn of the poor will feed,
And the needy will lie down in safety;
I will kill your roots with famine,
And it will slay your remnant.
31 Wail, O gate! Cry, O city!
All you of Philistia *are* dissolved;
For smoke will come from the north,
And no one *will be* alone in his
appointed times."

32 What will they answer the messengers
of the nation?
That the LORD has founded Zion,
And the poor of His people shall take
refuge in it.

PROCLAMATION AGAINST MOAB

15 The burden against Moab.

Because in the night Ar of Moab
is laid waste
And destroyed,
Because in the night Kir of Moab is
laid waste
And destroyed,
2 He has gone up to the temple[a] and
Dibon,
To the high places to weep.
Moab will wail over Nebo and over
Medeba;
On all their heads *will be* baldness,
And every beard cut off.
3 In their streets they will clothe
themselves with sackcloth;
On the tops of their houses
And in their streets
Everyone will wail, weeping bitterly.
4 Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out,
Their voice shall be heard as far as
Jahaz;
Therefore the armed soldiers[a] of Moab
will cry out;
His life will be burdensome to him.
5 "My heart will cry out for Moab;
His fugitives *shall flee* to Zoar,
Like a three-year-old heifer.[a]
For by the Ascent of Luhith
They will go up with weeping;
For in the way of Horonaim
They will raise up a cry of destruction,
6 For the waters of Nimrim will be
desolate,
For the green grass has withered away;
The grass fails, there is nothing green.
7 Therefore the abundance they have
gained,
And what they have laid up,
They will carry away to the Brook of
the Willows.
8 For the cry has gone all around the
borders of Moab,
Its wailing to Eglaim
And its wailing to Beer Elim.
9 For the waters of Dimon[a] will be full
of blood;
Because I will bring more upon
Dimon,[b]
Lions upon him who escapes from
Moab,
And on the remnant of the land."

MOAB DESTROYED

16 Send the lamb to the ruler of
the land,
From Sela to the wilderness,
To the mount of the daughter of Zion.
2 For it shall be as a wandering bird
thrown out of the nest;
So shall be the daughters of Moab at
the fords of the Arnon.

3 "Take counsel, execute judgment;
Make your shadow like the night in the
middle of the day;
Hide the outcasts,
Do not betray him who escapes.
4 Let My outcasts dwell with you,
O Moab;

15:2 [a]Hebrew *bayith,* literally *house*
15:4 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *loins.*
15:5 [a]Or *The Third Eglath,* an unknown city (compare Jeremiah 48:34) **15:9** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls and Vulgate read *Dibon;* Septuagint reads *Rimon.* [b]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls and Vulgate read *Dibon;* Septuagint reads *Rimon.*

Be a shelter to them from the face of
the spoiler.
For the extortioner is at an end,
Devastation ceases,
The oppressors are consumed out of
the land.
5In mercy the throne will be established;
And One will sit on it in truth, in the
tabernacle of David,
Judging and seeking justice and
hastening righteousness."

6We have heard of the pride of Moab—
He is very proud—
Of his haughtiness and his pride and
his wrath;
But his lies *shall* not *be* so.
7Therefore Moab shall wail for Moab;
Everyone shall wail.
For the foundations of Kir Hareseth
you shall mourn;
Surely *they are* stricken.

8For the fields of Heshbon languish,
And the vine of Sibmah;
The lords of the nations have broken
down its choice plants,
Which have reached to Jazer
And wandered through the wilderness.
Her branches are stretched out,
They are gone over the sea.
9Therefore I will bewail the vine of
Sibmah,
With the weeping of Jazer;
I will drench you with my tears,
O Heshbon and Elealeh;
For battle cries have fallen
Over your summer fruits and your
harvest.

10Gladness is taken away,
And joy from the plentiful field;
In the vineyards there will be no
singing,
Nor will there be shouting;
No treaders will tread out wine in the
presses;
I have made their shouting cease.
11Therefore my heart shall resound like a
harp for Moab,
And my inner being for Kir Heres.

12And it shall come to pass,
When it is seen that Moab is weary on
the high place,
That he will come to his sanctuary to
pray;
But he will not prevail.

13This *is* the word which the LORD has
spoken concerning Moab since that time.
14But now the LORD has spoken, saying,
"Within three years, as the years of a hired
man, the glory of Moab will be despised
with all that great multitude, and the rem-
nant *will be* very small *and* feeble."

PROCLAMATION AGAINST SYRIA AND ISRAEL

17 The burden against Damascus.

"Behold, Damascus will cease
from *being* a city,
And it will be a ruinous heap.
2The cities of Aroer *are* forsaken;[a]
They will be for flocks
Which lie down, and no one will make
them afraid.
3The fortress also will cease from
Ephraim,
The kingdom from Damascus,
And the remnant of Syria;
They will be as the glory of the
children of Israel,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

4"In that day it shall come to pass
That the glory of Jacob will wane,
And the fatness of his flesh grow lean.
5It shall be as when the harvester
gathers the grain,
And reaps the heads with his arm;
It shall be as he who gathers heads of
grain
In the Valley of Rephaim.
6Yet gleaning grapes will be left in it,
Like the shaking of an olive tree,
Two *or* three olives at the top of the
uppermost bough,
Four *or* five in its most fruitful
branches,"
Says the LORD God of Israel.

7In that day a man will look to his
Maker,

17:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *It shall be forsaken forever;* Targum reads *Its cities shall be forsaken and desolate.*

And his eyes will have respect for the
Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 17:8

The altars described here were probably used in the worship of Asherah, a Canaanite goddess who had been adopted by the Israelites. Wooden poles, possibly carved into some kind of statues, marked the spots where Asherah was worshiped.

8 He will not look to the altars,
The work of his hands;
He will not respect what his fingers
have made,
Nor the wooden images[a] nor the
incense altars.

9 In that day his strong cities will be as a
forsaken bough[a]
And an uppermost branch,[b]
Which they left because of the
children of Israel;
And there will be desolation.

MONEY

What can our possessions distract us from?

Isaiah 17:10

10 Because you have forgotten the God of
your salvation,
And have not been mindful of the
Rock of your stronghold,
Therefore you will plant pleasant
plants
And set out foreign seedlings;
11 In the day you will make your plant
to grow,
And in the morning you will make
your seed to flourish;
But the harvest *will be* a heap of ruins
In the day of grief and desperate
sorrow.

12 Woe to the multitude of many people
Who make a noise like the roar of the
seas,
And to the rushing of nations
That make a rushing like the rushing
of mighty waters!

13 The nations will rush like the rushing
of many waters;
But *God* will rebuke them and they will
flee far away,
And be chased like the chaff of the
mountains before the wind,
Like a rolling thing before the
whirlwind.
14 Then behold, at eventide, trouble!
And before the morning, he *is* no more.
This *is* the portion of those who
plunder us,
And the lot of those who rob us.

PROCLAMATION AGAINST ETHIOPIA

18 Woe to the land shadowed with
buzzing wings,
Which *is* beyond the rivers of
Ethiopia,
2 Which sends ambassadors by sea,
Even in vessels of reed on the waters,
saying,
"Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall
and smooth *of skin,*
To a people terrible from their
beginning onward,
A nation powerful and treading down,
Whose land the rivers divide."

3 All inhabitants of the world and
dwellers on the earth:
When he lifts up a banner on the
mountains, you see *it;*
And when he blows a trumpet, you
hear *it.*
4 For so the LORD said to me,
"I will take My rest,
And I will look from My dwelling place
Like clear heat in sunshine,
Like a cloud of dew in the heat of
harvest."
5 For before the harvest, when the bud
is perfect
And the sour grape is ripening in the
flower,
He will both cut off the sprigs with
pruning hooks
And take away *and* cut down the
branches.

17:8 [a]Hebrew *Asherim,* Canaanite deities
17:9 [a]Septuagint reads *Hivites;* Targum reads *laid waste;* Vulgate reads *as the plows.* [b]Septuagint reads *Amorites;* Targum reads *in ruins;* Vulgate reads *corn.*

6 They will be left together for the
mountain birds of prey
And for the beasts of the earth;
The birds of prey will summer on
them,
And all the beasts of the earth will
winter on them.

7 In that time a present will be brought
to the LORD of hosts
From[a] a people tall and smooth *of skin,*
And from a people terrible from their
beginning onward,
A nation powerful and treading down,
Whose land the rivers divide—
To the place of the name of the LORD
of hosts,
To Mount Zion.

PROCLAMATION AGAINST EGYPT

19 The burden against Egypt.

Behold, the LORD rides on a
swift cloud,
And will come into Egypt;
The idols of Egypt will totter at His
presence,
And the heart of Egypt will melt in its
midst.

2 "I will set Egyptians against
Egyptians;
Everyone will fight against his
brother,
And everyone against his neighbor,
City against city, kingdom against
kingdom.
3 The spirit of Egypt will fail in its
midst;
I will destroy their counsel,
And they will consult the idols and the
charmers,
The mediums and the sorcerers.
4 And the Egyptians I will give
Into the hand of a cruel master,
And a fierce king will rule over them,"
Says the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

5 The waters will fail from the sea,
And the river will be wasted and
dried up.
6 The rivers will turn foul;
The brooks of defense will be emptied
and dried up;
The reeds and rushes will wither.

Isaiah 19:5

Because Egypt received very little rainfall, ancient inhabitants relied heavily on the Nile for their water. The Nile flooded its banks nearly every year, watering the soil and creating a fertile farmland in the midst of a desert region. In those years when the Nile did not flood, the Egyptians experienced drought and famine. Today the Aswan Dam and the High Dam allow Egyptian officials to control the flooding and preserve water.

7 The papyrus reeds by the River,[a] by the
mouth of the River,
And everything sown by the River,
Will wither, be driven away, and be no
more.
8 The fishermen also will mourn;
All those will lament who cast hooks
into the River,
And they will languish who spread
nets on the waters.
9 Moreover those who work in fine flax
And those who weave fine fabric will
be ashamed;
10 And its foundations will be broken.
All who make wages *will be* troubled
of soul.

11 Surely the princes of Zoan *are* fools;
Pharaoh's wise counselors give foolish
counsel.
How do you say to Pharaoh, "I *am* the
son of the wise,
The son of ancient kings?"
12 Where *are* they?
Where are your wise men?
Let them tell you now,
And let them know what the LORD
of hosts has purposed against
Egypt.
13 The princes of Zoan have become
fools;
The princes of Noph[a] are deceived;
They have also deluded Egypt,
Those who are the mainstay of its
tribes.

18:7 [a]Following Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text omits *From;* Targum reads *To.* **19:7** [a]That is, the Nile
19:13 [a]That is, ancient Memphis

14 The LORD has mingled a perverse spirit in her midst;
And they have caused Egypt to err in all her work,
As a drunken man staggers in his vomit.
15 Neither will there be *any* work for Egypt,
Which the head or tail,
Palm branch or bulrush, may do.[a]

16 In that day Egypt will be like women, and will be afraid and fear because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He waves over it. 17 And the land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts which He has determined against it.

EGYPT, ASSYRIA, AND ISRAEL BLESSED

18 In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear by the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction.[a]

19 In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border. 20 And it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. 21 Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform *it.* 22 And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal *it;* they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.

23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians.

24 In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, 25 whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed *is* Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance."

THE SIGN AGAINST EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA

20 In the year that Tartan[a] came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it, 2 at the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, "Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet." And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

Isaiah 20:3, 4

The Assyrians were brutal with the people they conquered. Some were taken captive, stripped naked, and deported to other regions in the Assyrian Empire. Those who were left behind faced such torture as having their arms and legs cut off, having their skin peeled off, and being decapitated.

3 Then the LORD said, "Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years *for* a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, 4 so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. 5 Then they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation and Egypt their glory. 6 And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day, 'Surely such *is* our expectation, wherever we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria; and how shall we escape?' "

THE FALL OF BABYLON PROCLAIMED

21 The burden against the Wilderness of the Sea.

As whirlwinds in the South
pass through,

19:15 [a]Compare Isaiah 9:14–16 **19:18** [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Arabic, Dead Sea Scrolls, Targum, and Vulgate read *Sun;* Septuagint reads *Asedek* (literally *Righteousness*). **20:1** [a]Or *the Commander in Chief*

So it comes from the desert, from a
terrible land.
2A distressing vision is declared
to me;
The treacherous dealer deals
treacherously,
And the plunderer plunders.
Go up, O Elam!
Besiege, O Media!
All its sighing I have made to cease.

3Therefore my loins are filled with
pain;
Pangs have taken hold of me, like the
pangs of a woman in labor.
I was distressed when *I* heard *it;*
I was dismayed when *I* saw *it.*
4My heart wavered, fearfulness
frightened me;
The night for which I longed He
turned into fear for me.
5Prepare the table,
Set a watchman in the tower,
Eat and drink.
Arise, you princes,
Anoint the shield!

6For thus has the Lord said to me:
"Go, set a watchman,
Let him declare what he sees."
7And he saw a chariot *with* a pair of
horsemen,
A chariot of donkeys, *and* a chariot of
camels,
And he listened earnestly with great
care.
8Then he cried, "A lion,[a] my Lord!
I stand continually on the watchtower
in the daytime;
I have sat at my post every night.
9And look, here comes a chariot of
men *with* a pair of horsemen!"
Then he answered and said,
"Babylon is fallen, is fallen!
And all the carved images of her
gods
He has broken to the ground."

10Oh, my threshing and the grain of my
floor!
That which I have heard from the
LORD of hosts,
The God of Israel,
I have declared to you.

PROCLAMATION AGAINST EDOM

11The burden against Dumah.

He calls to me out of Seir,
"Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?"
12The watchman said,
"The morning comes, and also the
night.
If you will inquire, inquire;
Return! Come back!"

PROCLAMATION AGAINST ARABIA

13The burden against Arabia.

In the forest in Arabia you will lodge,
O you traveling companies of
Dedanites.
14O inhabitants of the land of Tema,
Bring water to him who is thirsty;
With their bread they met him who
fled.
15For they fled from the swords, from
the drawn sword,
From the bent bow, and from the
distress of war.

16For thus the LORD has said to me:
"Within a year, according to the year of a
hired man, all the glory of Kedar will fail;
17and the remainder of the number of archers, the mighty men of the people of Kedar, will be diminished; for the LORD God
of Israel has spoken *it.*"

PROCLAMATION AGAINST JERUSALEM

22 The burden against the Valley of Vision.

What ails you now, that you
have all gone up to the
housetops,
2You who are full of noise,
A tumultuous city, a joyous city?
Your slain *men are* not slain with the
sword,
Nor dead in battle.
3All your rulers have fled together;
They are captured by the archers.

21:8 [a]Dead Sea Scrolls read *Then the observer cried.*

All who are found in you are bound
together;
They have fled from afar.
4 Therefore I said, "Look away from me,
I will weep bitterly;
Do not labor to comfort me
Because of the plundering of the
daughter of my people."

5 For *it is* a day of trouble and treading
down and perplexity
By the Lord GOD of hosts
In the Valley of Vision—
Breaking down the walls
And of crying to the mountain.
6 Elam bore the quiver
With chariots of men *and* horsemen,
And Kir uncovered the shield.
7 It shall come to pass *that* your choicest
valleys
Shall be full of chariots,
And the horsemen shall set themselves
in array at the gate.

8 He removed the protection of Judah.
You looked in that day to the armor of
the House of the Forest;
9 You also saw the damage to the city of
David,
That it was great;
And you gathered together the waters
of the lower pool.
10 You numbered the houses of
Jerusalem,
And the houses you broke down
To fortify the wall.
11 You also made a reservoir between the
two walls
For the water of the old pool.
But you did not look to its Maker,
Nor did you have respect for Him who
fashioned it long ago.

12 And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts
Called for weeping and for mourning,
For baldness and for girding with
sackcloth.
13 But instead, joy and gladness,
Slaying oxen and killing sheep,
Eating meat and drinking wine:
"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow
we die!"

14 Then it was revealed in my hearing by
the LORD of hosts,
"Surely for this iniquity there will be no
atonement for you,
Even to your death," says the Lord GOD
of hosts.

Isaiah 22:15–19

When ordinary people died in ancient times, they were buried in shallow graves covered with stone slabs. The wealthy and powerful, on the other hand, often built elaborate tombs for themselves. These tombs were either created from natural caves or carved out of stone. The person's possessions were usually buried along with his body, in case he needed them in the afterlife.

THE JUDGMENT ON SHEBNA

15 Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts:

"Go, proceed to this steward,
To Shebna, who *is* over the house, *and*
say:
16 'What have you here, and whom have
you here,
That you have hewn a sepulcher here,
As he who hews himself a sepulcher
on high,
Who carves a tomb for himself in a
rock?
17 Indeed, the LORD will throw you away
violently,
O mighty man,
And will surely seize you.
18 He will surely turn violently and toss
you like a ball
Into a large country;
There you shall die, and there your
glorious chariots
Shall be the shame of your master's
house.
19 So I will drive you out of your office,
And from your position he will pull
you down.[a]

20 'Then it shall be in that day,
That I will call My servant Eliakim the
son of Hilkiah;

22:19 [a]Septuagint omits *he will pull you down;* Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *I will pull you down.*

21 I will clothe him with your robe
And strengthen him with your belt;
I will commit your responsibility into his hand.
He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem
And to the house of Judah.
22 The key of the house of David
I will lay on his shoulder;
So he shall open, and no one shall shut;
And he shall shut, and no one shall open.
23 I will fasten him *as* a peg in a secure place,
And he will become a glorious throne to his father's house.

24 "They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers. 25 In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that *was* on it will be cut off; for the LORD has spoken.'"

PROCLAMATION AGAINST TYRE

23 The burden against Tyre.

Wail, you ships of Tarshish!
For it is laid waste,
So that there is no house, no harbor;
From the land of Cyprus[a] it is revealed to them.

2 Be still, you inhabitants of the coastland,
You merchants of Sidon,
Whom those who cross the sea have filled.[a]
3 And on great waters the grain of Shihor,
The harvest of the River,[a] *is* her revenue;
And she is a marketplace for the nations.

4 Be ashamed, O Sidon;
For the sea has spoken,
The strength of the sea, saying,
"I do not labor, nor bring forth children;
Neither do I rear young men,
Nor bring up virgins."

5 When the report *reaches* Egypt,
They also will be in agony at the report of Tyre.

6 Cross over to Tarshish;
Wail, you inhabitants of the coastland!
7 *Is* this your joyous *city,*
Whose antiquity *is* from ancient days,
Whose feet carried her far off to dwell?
8 Who has taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning *city,*
Whose merchants *are* princes,
Whose traders *are* the honorable of the earth?
9 The LORD of hosts has purposed it,
To bring to dishonor the pride of all glory,
To bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.

10 Overflow through your land like the River,[a]
O daughter of Tarshish;
There is no more strength.
11 He stretched out His hand over the sea,
He shook the kingdoms;
The LORD has given a commandment against Canaan
To destroy its strongholds.
12 And He said, "You will rejoice no more,
O you oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon.
Arise, cross over to Cyprus;
There also you will have no rest."

13 Behold, the land of the Chaldeans,
This people *which* was not;
Assyria founded it for wild beasts of the desert.
They set up its towers,
They raised up its palaces,
And brought it to ruin.

14 Wail, you ships of Tarshish!
For your strength is laid waste.

15 Now it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre will be forgotten seventy years,

23:1 [a]Hebrew *Kittim,* western lands, especially Cyprus **23:2** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint and Targum read *Passing over the water;* Dead Sea Scrolls read *Your messengers passing over the sea.* **23:3** [a]That is, the Nile **23:10** [a]That is, the Nile

according to the days of one king. At the end of seventy years it will happen to Tyre as *in* the song of the harlot:

16"'Take a harp, go about the city,
You forgotten harlot;
Make sweet melody, sing many songs,
That you may be remembered."

17And it shall be, at the end of seventy years, that the LORD will deal with Tyre. She will return to her hire, and commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth. 18Her gain and her pay will be set apart for the LORD; it will not be treasured nor laid up, for her gain will be for those who dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for fine clothing.

IMPENDING JUDGMENT ON THE EARTH

24 Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste,
Distorts its surface
And scatters abroad its inhabitants.
2And it shall be:
As with the people, so with the priest;
As with the servant, so with his master;
As with the maid, so with her mistress;
As with the buyer, so with the seller;
As with the lender, so with the borrower;
As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
3The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered,
For the LORD has spoken this word.

4The earth mourns *and* fades away,
The world languishes *and* fades away;
The haughty people of the earth languish.
5The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants,
Because they have transgressed the laws,
Changed the ordinance,
Broken the everlasting covenant.
6Therefore the curse has devoured the earth,
And those who dwell in it are desolate.
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned,
And few men *are* left.

7The new wine fails, the vine languishes,
All the merry-hearted sigh.
8The mirth of the tambourine ceases,
The noise of the jubilant ends,
The joy of the harp ceases.
9They shall not drink wine with a song;
Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.
10The city of confusion is broken down;
Every house is shut up, so that none may go in.
11*There is* a cry for wine in the streets,
All joy is darkened,
The mirth of the land is gone.
12In the city desolation is left,
And the gate is stricken with destruction.
13When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people,
It shall be like the shaking of an olive tree,
Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.

14They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing;
For the majesty of the LORD
They shall cry aloud from the sea.
15Therefore glorify the LORD in the dawning light,
The name of the LORD God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.
16From the ends of the earth we have heard songs:
"Glory to the righteous!"
But I said, "I am ruined, ruined!
Woe to me!
The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously,
Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."

17Fear and the pit and the snare
Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.
18And it shall be
That he who flees from the noise of the fear
Shall fall into the pit,
And he who comes up from the midst of the pit
Shall be caught in the snare;

For the windows from on high are
open,
And the foundations of the earth are
shaken.

19 The earth is violently broken,
The earth is split open,
The earth is shaken exceedingly.
20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a
drunkard,
And shall totter like a hut;
Its transgression shall be heavy
upon it,
And it will fall, and not rise again.

21 It shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will punish on high the
host of exalted ones,
And on the earth the kings of the
earth.
22 They will be gathered together,
As prisoners are gathered in the pit,
And will be shut up in the prison;
After many days they will be punished.
23 Then the moon will be disgraced
And the sun ashamed;
For the LORD of hosts will reign
On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
And before His elders, gloriously.

PRAISE TO GOD

25 O LORD, You *are* my God.
I will exalt You,
I will praise Your name,
For You have done wonderful *things;*
Your counsels of old *are* faithfulness
and truth.
2 For You have made a city a ruin,
A fortified city a ruin,
A palace of foreigners to be a city no
more;
It will never be rebuilt.
3 Therefore the strong people will glorify
You;
The city of the terrible nations will
fear You.
4 For You have been a strength to the
poor,
A strength to the needy in his distress,
A refuge from the storm,
A shade from the heat;
For the blast of the terrible ones *is* as a
storm *against* the wall.
5 You will reduce the noise of aliens,
As heat in a dry place;
As heat in the shadow of a cloud,
The song of the terrible ones will be
diminished.

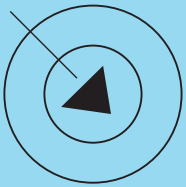
6 And in this mountain
The LORD of hosts will make for all
people
A feast of choice pieces,
A feast of wines on the lees,
Of fat things full of marrow,
Of well-refined wines on the lees.
7 And He will destroy on this mountain
The surface of the covering cast over
all people,
And the veil that is spread over all
nations.

HEAVEN
What will be missing in heaven?
Isaiah 25:8

8 He will swallow up death forever,
And the Lord GOD will wipe away
tears from all faces;
The rebuke of His people
He will take away from all the earth;
For the LORD has spoken.

9 And it will be said in that day:
"Behold, this *is* our God;
We have waited for Him, and He will
save us.
This *is* the LORD;
We have waited for Him;
We will be glad and rejoice in His
salvation."

10 For on this mountain the hand of the
LORD will rest,
And Moab shall be trampled down
under Him,
As straw is trampled down for the
refuse heap.
11 And He will spread out His hands in
their midst
As a swimmer reaches out to swim,
And He will bring down their pride
Together with the trickery of their
hands.
12 The fortress of the high fort of your
walls



PROMISE

God promises to destroy death and tears.

He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD *will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the* LORD *has spoken* (Is. 25:8).

When Jesus died and came back to life, He dealt death a mortal blow. He gave notice to anyone who would believe in Him that His power is greater than death. His friends don't have to be afraid of death because they know physical death is not the end and there will come a day when no one dies anymore.

Something else happened when Jesus died on the cross. He did battle with the spiritual death that has cast a shadow over planet Earth since Adam and Eve committed the first sin. And He won! Sin no longer has to have the last say because Jesus provided a way for us to be free from sin's power. All we need to do is believe Jesus is God's Son who died in our place, ask Him to forgive our sins, and turn away from those sins. Then we are free to follow Jesus and live a better life here and a perfect life for eternity when this one is over. If you put your confidence in Jesus rather than your own ability to fight sin, the seemingly irresistible urge to go your own way (instead of God's way) doesn't have to run your life.

Jesus promises that your tears will come to an end, too. That's because all the things that make you sad—parents getting a divorce, people getting sick, even natural disasters—are part of a world that's still under the power of sin. And this sick world is going to end and be replaced by a perfect place where God rules completely. That's the world Jesus is talking about in Revelation 21:5 when He says, "Behold, I make all things new."

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Romans 8:1–11; 2 Timothy 1:9, 10; Revelation 21:3–7

He will bring down, lay low,
And bring to the ground, down to the dust.

A SONG OF SALVATION

26 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

"We have a strong city;
God will appoint salvation *for* walls and bulwarks.
2 Open the gates,
That the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.
3 You will keep *him* in perfect peace,
Whose mind *is* stayed *on You,*
Because he trusts in You.
4 Trust in the LORD forever,
For in YAH, the LORD, *is* everlasting strength.[a]
5 For He brings down those who dwell on high,
The lofty city;
He lays it low,
He lays it low to the ground,
He brings it down to the dust.
6 The foot shall tread it down—
The feet of the poor
And the steps of the needy."

7 The way of the just *is* uprightness;
O Most Upright,
You weigh the path of the just.
8 Yes, in the way of Your judgments,
O LORD, we have waited for You;
The desire of *our* soul *is* for Your name
And for the remembrance of You.
9 With my soul I have desired You in the night,
Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early;
For when Your judgments *are* in the earth,
The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

26:4 [a]Or *Rock of Ages*

10 Let grace be shown to the wicked,
Yet he will not learn righteousness;
In the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly,
And will not behold the majesty of the LORD.
11 LORD, *when* Your hand is lifted up, they will not see.
But they will see and be ashamed
For *their* envy of people;
Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them.

12 LORD, You will establish peace for us,
For You have also done all our works in us.
13 O LORD our God, masters besides You
Have had dominion over us;
But by You only we make mention of Your name.
14 *They are* dead, they will not live;
They are deceased, they will not rise.
Therefore You have punished and destroyed them,
And made all their memory to perish.
15 You have increased the nation, O LORD,
You have increased the nation;
You are glorified;
You have expanded all the borders of the land.

16 LORD, in trouble they have visited You,
They poured out a prayer *when* Your chastening *was* upon them.
17 As a woman with child
Is in pain and cries out in her pangs,
When she draws near the time of her delivery,
So have we been in Your sight, O LORD.
18 We have been with child, we have been in pain;
We have, as it were, brought forth wind;
We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth,
Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

19 Your dead shall live;
Together with my dead body[a] they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs,
And the earth shall cast out the dead.

TAKE REFUGE FROM THE COMING JUDGMENT

20 Come, my people, enter your chambers,
And shut your doors behind you;
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment,
Until the indignation is past.
21 For behold, the LORD comes out of His place
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;
The earth will also disclose her blood,
And will no more cover her slain.

27 In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong,
Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent,
Leviathan that twisted serpent;
And He will slay the reptile that *is* in the sea.

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

2 In that day sing to her,
"A vineyard of red wine![a]
3 I, the LORD, keep it,
I water it every moment;
Lest any hurt it,
I keep it night and day.
4 Fury *is* not in Me.
Who would set briers *and* thorns
Against Me in battle?
I would go through them,
I would burn them together.
5 Or let him take hold of My strength,
That he may make peace with Me;
And he shall make peace with Me."

6 Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob;
Israel shall blossom and bud,
And fill the face of the world with fruit.

7 Has He struck Israel as He struck those who struck him?

26:19 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Syriac and Targum read *their dead bodies;* Septuagint reads *those in the tombs.*
27:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text (Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*), Bomberg, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*), some Hebrew manuscripts, and Septuagint read *delight;* Targum reads *choice vineyard.*

Or has He been slain according to the
slaughter of those who were slain
by Him?
8 In measure, by sending it away,
You contended with it.
He removes *it* by His rough wind
In the day of the east wind.
9 Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob
will be covered;
And this *is* all the fruit of taking away
his sin:
When he makes all the stones of the
altar
Like chalkstones that are beaten to
dust,
Wooden images[a] and incense altars
shall not stand.

10 Yet the fortified city *will be* desolate,
The habitation forsaken and left like a
wilderness;
There the calf will feed, and there it
will lie down
And consume its branches.
11 When its boughs are withered, they
will be broken off;
The women come *and* set them on fire.
For it *is* a people of no understanding;
Therefore He who made them will not
have mercy on them,
And He who formed them will show
them no favor.

Isaiah 27:12

God's intended boundaries for Israel were Egypt on the west and the Euphrates River on the east. The Lord had promised to give all of the land in between to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Israelites, though, never claimed all of what was rightfully theirs. They allowed other nations to live in the land that God had given to them.

12 And it shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will thresh,
From the channel of the River[a] to the
Brook of Egypt;
And you will be gathered one by one,
O you children of Israel.

13 So it shall be in that day:
The great trumpet will be blown;
They will come, who are about to
perish in the land of Assyria,
And they who are outcasts in the land
of Egypt,
And shall worship the LORD in the
holy mount at Jerusalem.

WOE TO EPHRAIM AND JERUSALEM

28 Woe to the crown of pride, to
the drunkards of Ephraim,
Whose glorious beauty *is* a
fading flower
Which *is* at the head of the verdant
valleys,
To those who are overcome with wine!
2 Behold, the Lord has a mighty and
strong one,
Like a tempest of hail and a destroying
storm,
Like a flood of mighty waters
overflowing,
Who will bring *them* down to the earth
with *His* hand.
3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of
Ephraim,
Will be trampled underfoot;
4 And the glorious beauty is a fading
flower
Which *is* at the head of the verdant
valley,
Like the first fruit before the summer,
Which an observer sees;
He eats it up while it is still in his hand.

5 In that day the LORD of hosts will be
For a crown of glory and a diadem of
beauty
To the remnant of His people,
6 For a spirit of justice to him who sits in
judgment,
And for strength to those who turn
back the battle at the gate.

7 But they also have erred through wine,
And through intoxicating drink are
out of the way;
The priest and the prophet have erred
through intoxicating drink,
They are swallowed up by wine,
They are out of the way through
intoxicating drink;

27:9 [a]Hebrew *Asherim*, Canaanite deities
27:12 [a]That is, the Euphrates

They err in vision, they stumble *in*
judgment.
8For all tables are full of vomit *and*
filth;
No place *is clean.*

9"Whom will he teach knowledge?
And whom will he make to
understand the message?
Those *just* weaned from milk?
Those *just* drawn from the breasts?
10For precept *must be* upon precept,
precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little."

11For with stammering lips and another
tongue
He will speak to this people,
12To whom He said, "This *is* the rest *with*
which
You may cause the weary to rest,"
And, "This *is* the refreshing";
Yet they would not hear.
13But the word of the LORD was to them,
"Precept upon precept, precept upon
precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little,"
That they might go and fall backward,
and be broken
And snared and caught.

14Therefore hear the word of the LORD,
you scornful men,
Who rule this people who *are* in
Jerusalem,
15Because you have said, "We have made
a covenant with death,
And with Sheol we are in agreement.
When the overflowing scourge passes
through,
It will not come to us,
For we have made lies our refuge,
And under falsehood we have hidden
ourselves."

A CORNERSTONE IN ZION

16Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a
foundation,
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone,
a sure foundation;
Whoever believes will not act hastily.

COMFORT
Who provides the only sure foundation for our lives?
Isaiah 28:16

17Also I will make justice the measuring
line,
And righteousness the plummet;
The hail will sweep away the refuge
of lies,
And the waters will overflow the
hiding place.
18Your covenant with death will be
annulled,
And your agreement with Sheol will
not stand;
When the overflowing scourge passes
through,
Then you will be trampled down by it.
19As often as it goes out it will take you;
For morning by morning it will pass
over,
And by day and by night;
It will be a terror just to understand
the report."

20For the bed is too short to stretch
out *on,*
And the covering so narrow that one
cannot wrap himself *in it.*
21For the LORD will rise up as *at* Mount
Perazim,
He will be angry as in the Valley of
Gibeon—
That He may do His work, His
awesome work,
And bring to pass His act, His unusual
act.
22Now therefore, do not be mockers,
Lest your bonds be made strong;
For I have heard from the Lord GOD
of hosts,
A destruction determined even upon
the whole earth.

LISTEN TO THE TEACHING OF GOD

23Give ear and hear my voice,
Listen and hear my speech.
24Does the plowman keep plowing all
day to sow?
Does he keep turning his soil and
breaking the clods?

25 When he has leveled its surface,
Does he not sow the black cummin
And scatter the cummin,
Plant the wheat in rows,
The barley in the appointed place,
And the spelt in its place?
26 For He instructs him in right judgment,
His God teaches him.

27 For the black cummin is not threshed
with a threshing sledge,
Nor is a cartwheel rolled over the
cummin;
But the black cummin is beaten out
with a stick,
And the cummin with a rod.
28 Bread *flour* must be ground;
Therefore he does not thresh it forever,
Break *it with* his cartwheel,
Or crush it *with* his horsemen.
29 This also comes from the LORD of
hosts,
Who is wonderful in counsel *and*
excellent in guidance.

WOE TO JERUSALEM

29 "Woe to Ariel,[a] to Ariel, the city
where David dwelt!
Add year to year;
Let feasts come around.
2 Yet I will distress Ariel;
There shall be heaviness and sorrow,
And it shall be to Me as Ariel.
3 I will encamp against you all around,
I will lay siege against you with a
mound,
And I will raise siegeworks against
you.
4 You shall be brought down,
You shall speak out of the ground;
Your speech shall be low, out of the
dust;
Your voice shall be like a medium's, out
of the ground;
And your speech shall whisper out of
the dust.

5 "Moreover the multitude of your foes
Shall be like fine dust,
And the multitude of the terrible ones
Like chaff that passes away;
Yes, it shall be in an instant, suddenly.
6 You will be punished by the LORD of
hosts
With thunder and earthquake and
great noise,
With storm and tempest
And the flame of devouring fire.
7 The multitude of all the nations who
fight against Ariel,
Even all who fight against her and her
fortress,
And distress her,
Shall be as a dream of a night vision.
8 It shall even be as when a hungry man
dreams,
And look—he eats;
But he awakes, and his soul is still
empty;
Or as when a thirsty man dreams,
And look—he drinks;
But he awakes, and indeed *he is* faint,
And his soul still craves:
So the multitude of all the nations
shall be,
Who fight against Mount Zion."

THE BLINDNESS OF DISOBEDIENCE

9 Pause and wonder!
Blind yourselves and be blind!
They are drunk, but not with wine;
They stagger, but not with intoxicating
drink.
10 For the LORD has poured out on you
The spirit of deep sleep,
And has closed your eyes, namely, the
prophets;
And He has covered your heads,
namely, the seers.

11 The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one who is literate, saying, "Read this, please."
And he says, "I cannot, for it *is* sealed."
12 Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, "Read this, please."
And he says, "I am not literate."
13 Therefore the Lord said:

"Inasmuch as these people draw near
with their mouths
And honor Me with their lips,
But have removed their hearts far
from Me,
And their fear toward Me is taught by
the commandment of men,

29:1 [a] That is, Jerusalem

HYPOCRISY
What is hypocrisy?
Isaiah 29:13

14 Therefore, behold, I will again do a
marvelous work
Among this people,
A marvelous work and a wonder;
For the wisdom of their wise *men* shall
perish,
And the understanding of their
prudent *men* shall be hidden."

15 Woe to those who seek deep to hide
their counsel far from the LORD,
And their works are in the dark;
They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who
knows us?"
16 Surely you have things turned around!
Shall the potter be esteemed as the
clay;
For shall the thing made say of him
who made it,
"He did not make me"?
Or shall the thing formed say of him
who formed it,
"He has no understanding"?

FUTURE RECOVERY OF WISDOM

17 *Is* it not yet a very little while
Till Lebanon shall be turned into a
fruitful field,
And the fruitful field be esteemed as
a forest?
18 In that day the deaf shall hear the
words of the book,
And the eyes of the blind shall see out
of obscurity and out of darkness.
19 The humble also shall increase *their*
joy in the LORD,
And the poor among men shall rejoice
In the Holy One of Israel.
20 For the terrible one is brought to
nothing,
The scornful one is consumed,
And all who watch for iniquity are cut
off—
21 Who make a man an offender by a
word,
And lay a snare for him who reproves
in the gate,
And turn aside the just by empty
words.

22 Therefore thus says the LORD, who re-
deemed Abraham, concerning the house of
Jacob:

"Jacob shall not now be ashamed,
Nor shall his face now grow pale;
23 But when he sees his children,
The work of My hands, in his midst,
They will hallow My name,
And hallow the Holy One of Jacob,
And fear the God of Israel.
24 These also who erred in spirit will
come to understanding,
And those who complained will learn
doctrine."

FUTILE CONFIDENCE IN EGYPT

30 "Woe to the rebellious
children," says the LORD,
"Who take counsel, but not
of Me,
And who devise plans, but not of My
Spirit,
That they may add sin to sin;
2 Who walk to go down to Egypt,
And have not asked My advice,
To strengthen themselves in the
strength of Pharaoh,
And to trust in the shadow of Egypt!
3 Therefore the strength of Pharaoh
Shall be your shame,
And trust in the shadow of Egypt
Shall be *your* humiliation.
4 For his princes were at Zoan,
And his ambassadors came to Hanes.
5 They were all ashamed of a people *who*
could not benefit them,
Or be help or benefit,
But a shame and also a reproach."

6 The burden against the beasts of the
South.

Through a land of trouble and
anguish,
From which *came* the lioness and
lion,
The viper and fiery flying serpent,
They will carry their riches on the
backs of young donkeys,
And their treasures on the humps of
camels,
To a people *who* shall not profit;
7 For the Egyptians shall help in vain
and to no purpose.

Therefore I have called her
Rahab-Hem-Shebeth.[a]

A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE

8 Now go, write it before them on a
tablet,
And note it on a scroll,
That it may be for time to come,
Forever and ever:
9 That this *is* a rebellious people,
Lying children,
Children *who* will not hear the law of
the LORD;
10 Who say to the seers, "Do not see,"
And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy
to us right things;
Speak to us smooth things, prophesy
deceits.
11 Get out of the way,
Turn aside from the path,
Cause the Holy One of Israel
To cease from before us."

12 Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel:

"Because you despise this word,
And trust in oppression and perversity,
And rely on them,
13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you
Like a breach ready to fall,
A bulge in a high wall,
Whose breaking comes suddenly, in
an instant.
14 And He shall break it like the breaking
of the potter's vessel,
Which is broken in pieces;
He shall not spare.
So there shall not be found among its
fragments
A shard to take fire from the hearth,
Or to take water from the cistern."

STRENGTH
Where should we go to find strength?
Isaiah 30:15

15 For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel:

"In returning and rest you shall be
saved;
In quietness and confidence shall be
your strength."
But you would not,
16 And you said, "No, for we will flee on
horses"—
Therefore you shall flee!
And, "We will ride on swift *horses*"—
Therefore those who pursue you shall
be swift!

17 One thousand *shall flee* at the threat
of one,
At the threat of five you shall flee,
Till you are left as a pole on top of a
mountain
And as a banner on a hill.

GOD WILL BE GRACIOUS

18 Therefore the LORD will wait, that He
may be gracious to you;
And therefore He will be exalted, that
He may have mercy on you.
For the LORD *is* a God of justice;
Blessed *are* all those who wait for Him.

19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at
Jerusalem;
You shall weep no more.
He will be very gracious to you at the
sound of your cry;
When He hears it, He will answer you.
20 And *though* the Lord gives you
The bread of adversity and the water of
affliction,
Yet your teachers will not be moved
into a corner anymore,
But your eyes shall see your teachers.
21 Your ears shall hear a word behind
you, saying,
"This *is* the way, walk in it,"
Whenever you turn to the right hand
Or whenever you turn to the left.
22 You will also defile the covering of
your images of silver,
And the ornament of your molded
images of gold.
You will throw them away as an
unclean thing;
You will say to them, "Get away!"

23 Then He will give the rain for your seed
With which you sow the ground,
And bread of the increase of the earth;

30:7 [a]Literally *Rahab Sits Idle*

It will be fat and plentiful.
In that day your cattle will feed
In large pastures.
24 Likewise the oxen and the young
donkeys that work the ground
Will eat cured fodder,
Which has been winnowed with the
shovel and fan.
25 There will be on every high mountain
And on every high hill
Rivers *and* streams of waters,
In the day of the great slaughter,
When the towers fall.
26 Moreover the light of the moon will be
as the light of the sun,
And the light of the sun will be
sevenfold,
As the light of seven days,
In the day that the LORD binds up the
bruise of His people
And heals the stroke of their wound.

JUDGMENT ON ASSYRIA

27 Behold, the name of the LORD comes
from afar,
Burning *with* His anger,
And *His* burden *is* heavy;
His lips are full of indignation,
And His tongue like a devouring fire.
28 His breath is like an overflowing
stream,
Which reaches up to the neck,
To sift the nations with the sieve of
futility;
And *there shall be* a bridle in the jaws
of the people,
Causing *them* to err.

29 You shall have a song
As in the night *when* a holy festival is
kept,
And gladness of heart as when one
goes with a flute,
To come into the mountain of the
LORD,
To the Mighty One of Israel.
30 The LORD will cause His glorious voice
to be heard,
And show the descent of His arm,
With the indignation of *His* anger
And the flame of a devouring fire,
With scattering, tempest, and
hailstones.
31 For through the voice of the LORD
Assyria will be beaten down,
As He strikes with the rod.
32 And *in* every place where the staff of
punishment passes,
Which the LORD lays on him,
It will be with tambourines and
harps;
And in battles of brandishing He will
fight with it.
33 For Tophet *was* established of old,
Yes, for the king it is prepared.
He has made *it* deep and large;
Its pyre *is* fire with much wood;
The breath of the LORD, like a stream
of brimstone,
Kindles it.

THE FOLLY OF NOT TRUSTING GOD

31 Woe to those who go down to
Egypt for help,
And rely on horses,
Who trust in chariots because *they are*
many,
And in horsemen because they are
very strong,
But who do not look to the Holy One
of Israel,
Nor seek the LORD!
2 Yet He also *is* wise and will bring
disaster,
And will not call back His words,
But will arise against the house of
evildoers,
And against the help of those who
work iniquity.
3 Now the Egyptians *are* men, and not
God;
And their horses are flesh, and not
spirit.
When the LORD stretches out His
hand,
Both he who helps will fall,
And he who is helped will fall down;
They all will perish together.

GOD WILL DELIVER JERUSALEM

4 For thus the LORD has spoken to me:

"As a lion roars,
And a young lion over his prey
(When a multitude of shepherds is
summoned against him,
He will not be afraid of their voice
Nor be disturbed by their noise),
So the LORD of hosts will come down

To fight for Mount Zion and for its
hill.
5Like birds flying about,
So will the LORD of hosts defend
Jerusalem.
Defending, He will also deliver *it;*
Passing over, He will preserve *it.*"

IDOLATRY
Is idolatry a sin against God?
Isaiah 31:6, 7

6Return *to Him* against whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. 7For in that day every man shall throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold—sin, which your own hands have made for yourselves.

8"Then Assyria shall fall by a sword not
of man,
And a sword not of mankind shall
devour him.
But he shall flee from the sword,
And his young men shall become
forced labor.
9He shall cross over to his stronghold
for fear,
And his princes shall be afraid of the
banner,"
Says the LORD,
Whose fire *is* in Zion
And whose furnace *is* in Jerusalem.

A REIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

32 Behold, a king will reign in
righteousness,
And princes will rule with
justice.
2A man will be as a hiding place from
the wind,
And a cover from the tempest,
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a
weary land.
3The eyes of those who see will not be
dim,
And the ears of those who hear will
listen.
4Also the heart of the rash will
understand knowledge,
And the tongue of the stammerers will
be ready to speak plainly.
5The foolish person will no longer be
called generous,
Nor the miser said *to be* bountiful;
6For the foolish person will speak
foolishness,
And his heart will work iniquity:
To practice ungodliness,
To utter error against the LORD,
To keep the hungry unsatisfied,
And he will cause the drink of the
thirsty to fail.
7Also the schemes of the schemer *are*
evil;
He devises wicked plans
To destroy the poor with lying words,
Even when the needy speaks justice.
8But a generous man devises generous
things,
And by generosity he shall stand.

CONSEQUENCES OF COMPLACENCY

9Rise up, you women who are at ease,
Hear my voice;
You complacent daughters,
Give ear to my speech.
10In a year and *some* days
You will be troubled, you complacent
women;
For the vintage will fail,
The gathering will not come.
11Tremble, you *women* who are at ease;
Be troubled, you complacent ones;
Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare,
And gird *sackcloth* on *your* waists.

12People shall mourn upon their breasts
For the pleasant fields, for the fruitful
vine.
13On the land of my people will come up
thorns *and* briers,
Yes, on all the happy homes *in* the
joyous city;
14Because the palaces will be forsaken,
The bustling city will be deserted.
The forts and towers will become lairs
forever,
A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of
flocks—
15Until the Spirit is poured upon us from
on high,
And the wilderness becomes a fruitful
field,
And the fruitful field is counted as a
forest.

THE PEACE OF GOD'S REIGN

16 Then justice will dwell in the
wilderness,
And righteousness remain in the
fruitful field.
17 The work of righteousness will be
peace,
And the effect of righteousness,
quietness and assurance forever.
18 My people will dwell in a peaceful
habitation,
In secure dwellings, and in quiet
resting places,
19 Though hail comes down on the
forest,
And the city is brought low in
humiliation.

20 Blessed *are* you who sow beside all
waters,
Who send out freely the feet of the ox
and the donkey.

A PRAYER IN DEEP DISTRESS

33 Woe to you who plunder,
though you *have* not *been*
plundered;
And you who deal treacherously,
though they have not dealt
treacherously with you!
When you cease plundering,
You will be plundered;
When you make an end of dealing
treacherously,
They will deal treacherously with you.

2 O LORD, be gracious to us;
We have waited for You.
Be their[a] arm every morning,
Our salvation also in the time of
trouble.
3 At the noise of the tumult the people
shall flee;
When You lift Yourself up, the nations
shall be scattered;
4 And Your plunder shall be gathered
Like the gathering of the caterpillar;
As the running to and fro of locusts,
He shall run upon them.

5 The LORD is exalted, for He dwells on
high;
He has filled Zion with justice and
righteousness.
6 Wisdom and knowledge will be the
stability of your times,
And the strength of salvation;
The fear of the LORD *is* His treasure.

7 Surely their valiant ones shall cry
outside,
The ambassadors of peace shall weep
bitterly.
8 The highways lie waste,
The traveling man ceases.
He has broken the covenant,
He has despised the cities,[a]
He regards no man.

Isaiah 33:9

Mount Lebanon towers over the region and produces majestic cedar trees. The fertile Sharon Valley was known for its breathtaking variety of flowers and plant life. Bashan was famous for its abundant wheat fields and vast herds of livestock. Mount Carmel is a beautiful, wooded mountain overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

9 The earth mourns *and* languishes,
Lebanon is shamed *and* shriveled;
Sharon is like a wilderness,
And Bashan and Carmel shake off *their
fruits.*

IMPENDING JUDGMENT ON ZION

10 "Now I will rise," says the LORD;
"Now I will be exalted,
Now I will lift Myself up.
11 You shall conceive chaff,
You shall bring forth stubble;
Your breath, *as* fire, shall devour you.
12 And the people shall be *like* the
burnings of lime;
Like thorns cut up they shall be
burned in the fire.
13 Hear, you *who are* afar off, what I have
done;
And you *who are* near, acknowledge
My might."

33:2 [a]Septuagint omits *their;* Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *our.* **33:8** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls read *witnesses;* Septuagint omits *cities;* Targum reads *They have been removed from their cities.*

14 The sinners in Zion are afraid;
Fearfulness has seized the
hypocrites:
"Who among us shall dwell with the
devouring fire?
Who among us shall dwell with
everlasting burnings?"
15 He who walks righteously and speaks
uprightly,
He who despises the gain of
oppressions,
Who gestures with his hands, refusing
bribes,
Who stops his ears from hearing of
bloodshed,
And shuts his eyes from seeing evil:
16 He will dwell on high;
His place of defense *will be* the fortress
of rocks;
Bread will be given him,
His water *will be* sure.

THE LAND OF THE MAJESTIC KING

17 Your eyes will see the King in His
beauty;
They will see the land that is very far
off.
18 Your heart will meditate on terror:
"Where *is* the scribe?
Where *is* he who weighs?
Where *is* he who counts the towers?"
19 You will not see a fierce people,
A people of obscure speech, beyond
perception,
Of a stammering tongue *that you*
cannot understand.

20 Look upon Zion, the city of our
appointed feasts;
Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet
home,
A tabernacle *that* will not be taken
down;
Not one of its stakes will ever be
removed,
Nor will any of its cords be broken.
21 But there the majestic LORD *will be*
for us
A place of broad rivers *and* streams,
In which no galley with oars will sail,
Nor majestic ships pass by
22 (For the LORD *is* our Judge,
The LORD *is* our Lawgiver,
The LORD *is* our King;
He will save us);
23 Your tackle is loosed,
They could not strengthen their mast,
They could not spread the sail.

Then the prey of great plunder is
divided;
The lame take the prey.
24 And the inhabitant will not say, "I am
sick";
The people who dwell in it *will be*
forgiven *their* iniquity.

JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS

34 Come near, you nations, to
hear;
And heed, you people!
Let the earth hear, and all that is in it,
The world and all things that come
forth from it.
2 For the indignation of the LORD *is*
against all nations,
And *His* fury against all their armies;
He has utterly destroyed them,
He has given them over to the
slaughter.
3 Also their slain shall be thrown out;
Their stench shall rise from their
corpses,
And the mountains shall be melted
with their blood.
4 All the host of heaven shall be
dissolved,
And the heavens shall be rolled up like
a scroll;
All their host shall fall down
As the leaf falls from the vine,
And as *fruit* falling from a fig tree.

5 "For My sword shall be bathed in
heaven;
Indeed it shall come down on Edom,
And on the people of My curse, for
judgment.
6 The sword of the LORD is filled with
blood,
It is made overflowing with fatness,
With the blood of lambs and goats,
With the fat of the kidneys of rams.
For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah,
And a great slaughter in the land of
Edom.
7 The wild oxen shall come down with
them,
And the young bulls with the mighty
bulls;

Their land shall be soaked with blood,
And their dust saturated with fatness."

8For *it is* the day of the LORD's
vengeance,
The year of recompense for the cause
of Zion.
9Its streams shall be turned into pitch,
And its dust into brimstone;
Its land shall become burning pitch.
10It shall not be quenched night or day;
Its smoke shall ascend forever.
From generation to generation it shall
lie waste;
No one shall pass through it forever
and ever.
11But the pelican and the porcupine
shall possess it,
Also the owl and the raven shall dwell
in it.
And He shall stretch out over it
The line of confusion and the stones of
emptiness.
12They shall call its nobles to the
kingdom,
But none *shall be* there, and all its
princes shall be nothing.

13And thorns shall come up in its
palaces,
Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;
It shall be a habitation of jackals,
A courtyard for ostriches.
14The wild beasts of the desert shall also
meet with the jackals,
And the wild goat shall bleat to its
companion;
Also the night creature shall rest
there,
And find for herself a place of rest.
15There the arrow snake shall make her
nest and lay *eggs*
And hatch, and gather *them* under her
shadow;
There also shall the hawks be
gathered,
Every one with her mate.

16"Search from the book of the LORD, and
read:
Not one of these shall fail;
Not one shall lack her mate.
For My mouth has commanded it, and
His Spirit has gathered them.
17He has cast the lot for them,
And His hand has divided it among
them with a measuring line.
They shall possess it forever;
From generation to generation they
shall dwell in it."

THE FUTURE GLORY OF ZION

35 The wilderness and the
wasteland shall be glad
for them,
And the desert shall rejoice and
blossom as the rose;
2It shall blossom abundantly and
rejoice,
Even with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given
to it,
The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
The excellency of our God.

3Strengthen the weak hands,
And make firm the feeble knees.
4Say to those *who are* fearful-hearted,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Behold, your God will come *with*
vengeance,
With the recompense of God;
He will come and save you."

5Then the eyes of the blind shall be
opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be
unstopped.
6Then the lame shall leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the dumb sing.
For waters shall burst forth in the
wilderness,
And streams in the desert.
7The parched ground shall become a
pool,
And the thirsty land springs of water;
In the habitation of jackals, where
each lay,
There shall be grass with reeds and
rushes.

8A highway shall be there, and a road,
And it shall be called the Highway of
Holiness.
The unclean shall not pass over it,
But it *shall be* for others.
Whoever walks the road, although a
fool,
Shall not go astray.

9No lion shall be there,
Nor shall *any* ravenous beast go up
on it;
It shall not be found there.
But the redeemed shall walk *there,*

FOLLOWING GOD
Where will following God lead us?
Isaiah 35:10

10And the ransomed of the LORD shall
return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness,
And sorrow and sighing shall flee
away.

SENNACHERIB BOASTS AGAINST THE LORD

36 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah *that* Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. 2Then the king of Assyria sent *the* Rabshakeh[a] with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field. 3And Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

4Then *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence is this in which you trust? 5I say you speak of having plans and power for war; but *they are* mere words. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? 6Look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

7"But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' *is it* not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar'?"' 8Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them! 9How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? 10Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'"

Isaiah 36:11

The average Israelite of Isaiah's day spoke and understood only Hebrew. Some, especially those who did business with people from other countries, also spoke Aramaic, the language of the Persians, Syrians, and Babylonians.

11Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to *the* Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it;* and do not speak to us in Hebrew[a] in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall."

12But *the* Rabshakeh said, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

13Then *the* Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! 14Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; 15nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."' 16Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make *peace* with me *by a* present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; 17until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. 18*Beware* lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 19Where *are* the gods of Hamath

36:2 [a]A title, probably *Chief of Staff* or *Governor*
36:11 [a]Literally *Judean*

and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? 20Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?'"

21But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." 22Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with *their* clothes torn, and told him the words of *the* Rabshakeh.

ISAIAH ASSURES DELIVERANCE

37 And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard *it,* that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2Then he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. 3And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day *is* a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but *there is* no strength to bring them forth. 4It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of *the* Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

5So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 6And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. 7Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."'"

SENNACHERIB'S THREAT AND HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

8Then *the* Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. 9And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "He has come out to make war with you." So when he heard *it,* he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10"Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." 11Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? 12Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who *were* in Telassar? 13Where *is* the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?'"

14And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. 15Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying: 16"O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, *the One* who dwells *between* the cherubim, You *are* God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 17Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. 18Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, 19and have cast their gods into the fire; for they *were* not gods, but the work of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. 20Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You *are* the LORD, You alone."

TRIALS
Who will help us overcome our problems?
Isaiah 37:20

THE WORD OF THE LORD CONCERNING SENNACHERIB

21Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, 22this

is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:

"The virgin, the daughter of Zion,
Has despised you, laughed you to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem
Has shaken *her* head behind your back!

23"Whom have you reproached and blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised *your* voice,
And lifted up your eyes on high?
Against the Holy One of Israel.
24By your servants you have reproached the Lord,
And said, 'By the multitude of my chariots
I have come up to the height of the mountains,
To the limits of Lebanon;
I will cut down its tall cedars
And its choice cypress trees;
I will enter its farthest height,
To its fruitful forest.
25I have dug and drunk water,
And with the soles of my feet I have dried up
All the brooks of defense.'

26"Did you not hear long ago
How I made it,
From ancient times that I formed it?
Now I have brought it to pass,
That you should be
For crushing fortified cities *into* heaps of ruins.
27Therefore their inhabitants *had* little power;
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field
And the green herb,
As the grass on the housetops
And *grain* blighted before it is grown.

28"But I know your dwelling place,
Your going out and your coming in,
And your rage against Me.
29Because your rage against Me and your tumult
Have come up to My ears,
Therefore I will put My hook in your nose
And My bridle in your lips,
And I will turn you back
By the way which you came."'

30"This *shall be* a sign to you:

You shall eat this year such as grows of itself,
And the second year what springs from the same;
Also in the third year sow and reap,
Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.
31And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah
Shall again take root downward,
And bear fruit upward.
32For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant,
And those who escape from Mount Zion.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

33"Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria:

'He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shield,
Nor build a siege mound against it.
34By the way that he came,
By the same shall he return;
And he shall not come into this city,'
Says the LORD.
35'For I will defend this city, to save it
For My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'"

SENNACHERIB'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

36Then the angel[a] of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. 37So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home,* and remained at Nineveh. 38Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat.

37:36 [a]Or *Angel*

Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

PRAYER
What's an example of answered prayer?
Isaiah 38:1–6

HEZEKIAH'S LIFE EXTENDED

38 In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'"

2Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, 3and said, "Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done *what is* good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4And the word of the LORD came to Isaiah, saying, 5"Go and tell Hezekiah, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years. 6I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city."' 7And this *is* the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing which He has spoken: 8"Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward." So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.

9This is the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness:

10I said,
"In the prime of my life
I shall go to the gates of Sheol;
I am deprived of the remainder of my years."
11I said,
"I shall not see YAH,
The LORD[a] in the land of the living;
I shall observe man no more among the inhabitants of the world.[b]
12My life span is gone,
Taken from me like a shepherd's tent;
I have cut off my life like a weaver.
He cuts me off from the loom;
From day until night You make an end of me.
13I have considered until morning—
Like a lion,
So He breaks all my bones;
From day until night You make an end of me.
14Like a crane *or* a swallow, so I chattered;
I mourned like a dove;
My eyes fail *from looking* upward.
O LORD,[a] I am oppressed;
Undertake for me!

15"What shall I say?
He has both spoken to me,[a]
And He Himself has done *it.*
I shall walk carefully all my years
In the bitterness of my soul.
16O Lord, by these *things men* live;
And in all these *things is* the life of my spirit;
So You will restore me and make me live.
17Indeed *it was* for *my own* peace
That I had great bitterness;
But You have lovingly *delivered* my soul from the pit of corruption,
For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.
18For Sheol cannot thank You,
Death cannot praise You;
Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.
19The living, the living man, he shall praise You,
As I *do* this day;
The father shall make known Your truth to the children.

20"The LORD *was ready* to save me;
Therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments

38:11 [a]Hebrew *YAH, YAH* [b]Following some Hebrew manuscripts; Masoretic Text and Vulgate read *rest;* Septuagint omits *among the inhabitants of the world;* Targum reads *land.* **38:14** [a]Following Bomberg; Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls read *Lord.* **38:15** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls and Targum read *And shall I say to Him;* Septuagint omits first half of this verse.

All the days of our life, in the house of
the LORD."

21Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a lump of figs, and apply *it* as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover."

22And Hezekiah had said, "What *is* the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?"

THE BABYLONIAN ENVOYS

39 At that time Merodach-Baladan[a] the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. 2And Hezekiah was pleased with them, and showed them the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

3Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?"

So Hezekiah said, "They came to me from a far country, from Babylon."

4And he said, "What have they seen in your house?"

So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that *is* in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."

5Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: 6'Behold, the days are coming when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. 7'And they shall take away *some* of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'"

8So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken *is* good!" For he said, "At least there will be peace and truth in my days."

GOD'S PEOPLE ARE COMFORTED

40 "Comfort, yes, comfort My
people!"
Says your God.

2"Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry
out to her,
That her warfare is ended,
That her iniquity is pardoned;
For she has received from the LORD's
hand
Double for all her sins."

3The voice of one crying in the
wilderness:
"Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make straight in the desert[a]
A highway for our God.
4Every valley shall be exalted
And every mountain and hill brought
low;
The crooked places shall be made
straight
And the rough places smooth;
5The glory of the LORD shall be
revealed,
And all flesh shall see *it* together;
For the mouth of the LORD has
spoken."

6The voice said, "Cry out!"
And he[a] said, "What shall I cry?"

"All flesh *is* grass,
And all its loveliness *is* like the flower
of the field.
7The grass withers, the flower fades,
Because the breath of the LORD blows
upon it;
Surely the people *are* grass.
8The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands
forever."

9O Zion,
You who bring good tidings,
Get up into the high mountain;
O Jerusalem,
You who bring good tidings,
Lift up your voice with strength,
Lift *it* up, be not afraid;
Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your
God!"

39:1 [a]Spelled *Berodach-Baladan* in 2 Kings 20:12 **40:3** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint omits *in the desert.* **40:6** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Vulgate read *I.*



LIFE APP

The Bible / Isaiah 40:8

The word "Bible" comes from the Latin word *biblia*. It means "the books." The Bible is a collection of sixty-six books written over thousands of years. Though many people actually wrote the words, God is the author. He told each person exactly what to write.

The Bible begins with thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. It contains the stories of God's creation of the world and all the events that took place from that day until about four hundred years before Jesus was born. It's mostly the story of God's people, the Israelites, and how God continually tried to reach them with His love.

The New Testament was actually written after Jesus returned to heaven following His death and resurrection. It contains twenty-seven books that tell the story about Jesus and how the church began. It also gives us understanding of God's plan of salvation and how to live in the middle of God's limitless love. It gives us direction on how to live our lives in ways that please Him. The first four books are the Gospels. They tell the story of Jesus' life on earth. The last book is a vision given to the apostle John. It is called Revelation because it reveals God's plan for the future of His people, the church.

Although the Bible was written so very long ago and has been copied, translated, and printed millions of times, we can be sure it continues to say exactly what God intended. Even though people are faulty and make mistakes constantly, God is big enough and powerful enough to protect His Word from human error. No matter what happens in the future, we can be sure that He will continue to speak to us through His Word and lead us with the truth it contains. His Word will stand forever (Is. 40:8). You can bank on it.

10 Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with
a strong *hand,*
And His arm shall rule for Him;
Behold, His reward *is* with Him,
And His work before Him.
11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd;
He will gather the lambs with His arm,
And carry *them* in His bosom,
And gently lead those who are with
young.

12 Who has measured the waters[a] in the
hollow of His hand,
Measured heaven with a span
And calculated the dust of the earth in
a measure?
Weighed the mountains in scales
And the hills in a balance?
13 Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,
Or *as* His counselor has taught Him?
14 With whom did He take counsel, and
who instructed Him,
And taught Him in the path of
justice?
Who taught Him knowledge,
And showed Him the way of
understanding?

15 Behold, the nations *are* as a drop in a
bucket,
And are counted as the small dust on
the scales;
Look, He lifts up the isles as a very
little thing.
16 And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn,
Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt
offering.
17 All nations before Him *are* as nothing,
And they are counted by Him less than
nothing and worthless.

18 To whom then will you liken God?
Or what likeness will you compare to
Him?
19 The workman molds an image,
The goldsmith overspreads it with
gold,
And the silversmith casts silver chains.
20 Whoever *is* too impoverished for *such*
a contribution
Chooses a tree *that* will not rot;
He seeks for himself a skillful
workman
To prepare a carved image *that* will
not totter.

21 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the
beginning?
Have you not understood from the
foundations of the earth?
22 *It is* He who sits above the circle of the
earth,
And its inhabitants *are* like
grasshoppers,
Who stretches out the heavens like a
curtain,
And spreads them out like a tent to
dwell in.
23 He brings the princes to nothing;
He makes the judges of the earth
useless.

24 Scarcely shall they be planted,
Scarcely shall they be sown,
Scarcely shall their stock take root in
the earth,
When He will also blow on them,
And they will wither,
And the whirlwind will take them
away like stubble.

TRUST
Why can we trust God?
Isaiah 40:25–28

Isaiah 40:26

Many people in ancient times believed the destiny of their nation was controlled by heavenly bodies—stars, planets, the sun, the moon, and so forth. Professional astrologers were in constant demand to help kings and their officials keep track of what was going on in the sky. These astrologers claimed to be able to predict the future based on the movement of the planets and stars.

25 "To whom then will you liken Me,
Or *to whom* shall I be equal?" says the
Holy One.
26 Lift up your eyes on high,

40:12 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls read *waters of the sea;* Targum reads *waters of the world.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ISAIAH 40:28–31

Soaring Everyone goes through times in life when they feel like nothing is happening, as if they are working hard with very few accomplishments. Nothing's new on the horizon. Each day looks the same and feels the same. Goals are just as far away as they've always been. It gets tiring to work so hard, be so committed, and see no fruit.

Isaiah says that even young people get tired and weary, so tired that they can stumble and fall. But the hope for tired people comes from the Lord. He says that if you trust in Him, He will give you a new strength—not just the ability to survive another day but new strength that lifts you up and makes you soar. It's the difference between just surviving tomorrow and soaring above the day with the strength and presence of an eagle. You don't have to figure out how to become an eagle. That's God's gift to those who trust in Him and who call on Him in any situation. (See also: Ps. 65:3, 5; Jer. 15:20; Hab. 3:19.)

Words to Live By

Weary: The word translated as "weary" in Isaiah 40:28 is the Hebrew word *yaga* (yaw-gah'). It means "to be exhausted" or "to tire." Isn't it amazing to know that, no matter what happens, God never gets tired. He never gets weary of loving us or helping us. He has never-ending strength, and He wants to share it with us. He never grows weary, so we can always go to Him for the strength we need.

And see who has created these *things,*
Who brings out their host by number;
He calls them all by name,
By the greatness of His might
And the strength of *His* power;
Not one is missing.

27 Why do you say, O Jacob,
And speak, O Israel:
"My way is hidden from the LORD,
And my just claim is passed over by my God"?
28 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
The everlasting God, the LORD,
The Creator of the ends of the earth,
Neither faints nor is weary.
His understanding is unsearchable.

STRENGTH
Where can we find strength when we're weak?
Isaiah 40:29–31

29 He gives power to the weak,
And to *those who have* no might He increases strength.
30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
And the young men shall utterly fall,
31 But those who wait on the LORD
Shall renew *their* strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.

ISRAEL ASSURED OF GOD'S HELP

41 "Keep silence before Me,
O coastlands,
And let the people renew *their* strength!
Let them come near, then let them speak;
Let us come near together for judgment.

2 "Who raised up one from the east?
Who in righteousness called him to His feet?
Who gave the nations before him,
And made *him* rule over kings?
Who gave *them* as the dust *to* his sword,
As driven stubble to his bow?
3 Who pursued them, *and* passed safely

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ISAIAH 41:13

Walk On Remember the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (Dan. 3)? The king had them thrown into the fire because they wouldn't bow to him. But the fire didn't burn them up; and when people looked into the flames, they saw four men. Well, the fourth person was Jesus. Because He was with those guys, they didn't burn. In fact, they didn't even smell like smoke when they came out!

Jesus is with you in the same way. In Isaiah, He says He is holding your hand. He goes with you through the fire of hard times in your life, preventing the flames from injuring you but letting the heat melt away some of the things about you that are not godly. With your hand in His, He can calm you down when things aren't going so well and the flames are licking at your heels. If you won't let go of Him, He can lead you out of the fire and into the place He wants you to be. (See also: Ps. 37:24; Prov. 2:7; Rom. 8:26; Heb. 13:6.)

Words to Live By

Fear: The word translated as "fear" in Isaiah 41:13 is the Hebrew word *yare* (yaw-ray'). It means "to dread" or "to be afraid." You may encounter many things in life that will tempt you to fear. But with Jesus beside you, you don't have to give into that fear. You don't have to dread what lies ahead. You don't have to be afraid of the present or the future. You can walk confidently, with faith that Jesus is leading you the whole way.

By the way *that* he had not gone with
his feet?

GOD
Is God eternal?
Isaiah 41:4

4 Who has performed and done *it,*
Calling the generations from the
beginning?
"I, the LORD, am the first;
And with the last I *am* He.'"

5 The coastlands saw *it* and feared,
The ends of the earth were afraid;
They drew near and came.
6 Everyone helped his neighbor,
And said to his brother,
"Be of good courage!"
7 So the craftsman encouraged the
goldsmith;
He who smooths *with* the hammer
inspired him who strikes the
anvil,
Saying, "It *is* ready for the soldering";
Then he fastened it with pegs,
That it might not totter.

8 "But you, Israel, *are* My servant,
Jacob whom I have chosen,
The descendants of Abraham My
friend.
9 *You* whom I have taken from the ends
of the earth,
And called from its farthest regions,
And said to you,
'You *are* My servant,
I have chosen you and have not cast
you away:
10 Fear not, for I *am* with you;
Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God.
I will strengthen you,
Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous
right hand.'

11 "Behold, all those who were incensed
against you
Shall be ashamed and disgraced;
They shall be as nothing,
And those who strive with you shall
perish.
12 You shall seek them and not find
them—
Those who contended with you.
Those who war against you
Shall be as nothing,

As a nonexistent thing.
13 For I, the LORD your God, will hold
your right hand,
Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'

14 "Fear not, you worm Jacob,
You men of Israel!
I will help you," says the LORD
And your Redeemer, the Holy One of
Israel.
15 "Behold, I will make you into a new
threshing sledge with sharp teeth;
You shall thresh the mountains and
beat *them* small,
And make the hills like chaff.
16 You shall winnow them, the wind shall
carry them away,
And the whirlwind shall scatter them;
You shall rejoice in the LORD,
And glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17 "The poor and needy seek water, but
there is none,
Their tongues fail for thirst.
I, the LORD, will hear them;
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake
them.
18 I will open rivers in desolate heights,
And fountains in the midst of the
valleys;
I will make the wilderness a pool of
water,
And the dry land springs of water.
19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar
and the acacia tree,
The myrtle and the oil tree;
I will set in the desert the cypress tree
and the pine
And the box tree together,
20 That they may see and know,
And consider and understand
together,
That the hand of the LORD has done
this,
And the Holy One of Israel has
created it.

THE FUTILITY OF IDOLS

21 "Present your case," says the LORD.
"Bring forth your strong *reasons,*" says
the King of Jacob.
22 "Let them bring forth and show us
what will happen;
Let them show the former things,
what they *were,*
That we may consider them,
And know the latter end of them;
Or declare to us things to come.
23 Show the things that are to come
hereafter,
That we may know that you *are* gods;
Yes, do good or do evil,
That we may be dismayed and see *it*
together.
24 Indeed you *are* nothing,
And your work *is* nothing;
He who chooses you *is* an
abomination.

25 "I have raised up one from the north,
And he shall come;
From the rising of the sun he shall call
on My name;
And he shall come against princes as
though mortar,
As the potter treads clay.
26 Who has declared from the beginning,
that we may know?
And former times, that we may say, '*He
is* righteous'?
Surely *there is* no one who shows,
Surely *there is* no one who declares,
Surely *there is* no one who hears your
words.
27 The first time *I said* to Zion,
'Look, there they are!'
And I will give to Jerusalem one who
brings good tidings.
28 For I looked, and *there was* no man;
I looked among them, but *there was* no
counselor,
Who, when I asked of them, could
answer a word.
29 Indeed they *are* all worthless;[a]
Their works *are* nothing;
Their molded images *are* wind and
confusion.

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

42 "Behold! My Servant whom I
uphold,
My Elect One *in whom* My
soul delights!
I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the
Gentiles.

41:29 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls, Syriac, and Targum read *nothing;* Septuagint omits the first line.

2 He will not cry out, nor raise *His voice,*
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.
3 A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench;
He will bring forth justice for truth.
4 He will not fail nor be discouraged,
Till He has established justice in the earth;
And the coastlands shall wait for His law."

5 Thus says God the LORD,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it,
Who gives breath to the people on it,
And spirit to those who walk on it:
6 "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness,
And will hold Your hand;
I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people,
As a light to the Gentiles,
7 To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the prison,
Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.
8 I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.
9 Behold, the former things have come to pass,
And new things I declare;
Before they spring forth I tell you of them."

PRAISE TO THE LORD

10 Sing to the LORD a new song,
And His praise from the ends of the earth,
You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it,
You coastlands and you inhabitants of them!
11 Let the wilderness and its cities lift up *their voice,*
The villages *that* Kedar inhabits.
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing,
Let them shout from the top of the mountains.
12 Let them give glory to the LORD,
And declare His praise in the coastlands.
13 The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man;
He shall stir up *His* zeal like a man of war.
He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud;
He shall prevail against His enemies.

PROMISE OF THE LORD'S HELP

14 "I have held My peace a long time,
I have been still and restrained Myself.
Now I will cry like a woman in labor,
I will pant and gasp at once.
15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills,
And dry up all their vegetation;
I will make the rivers coastlands,
And I will dry up the pools.
16 I will bring the blind by a way they did not know;
I will lead them in paths they have not known.
I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked places straight.
These things I will do for them,
And not forsake them.
17 They shall be turned back,
They shall be greatly ashamed,
Who trust in carved images,
Who say to the molded images,
'You *are* our gods.'

18 "Hear, you deaf;
And look, you blind, that you may see.
19 Who *is* blind but My servant,
Or deaf as My messenger *whom* I send?
Who *is* blind as *he who is* perfect,
And blind as the LORD's servant?
20 Seeing many things, but you do not observe;
Opening the ears, but he does not hear."

ISRAEL'S OBSTINATE DISOBEDIENCE

21 The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake;
He will exalt the law and make *it* honorable.
22 But this *is* a people robbed and plundered;
All of them are snared in holes,

And they are hidden in prison
houses;
They are for prey, and no one
delivers;
For plunder, and no one says,
"Restore!"

23 Who among you will give ear to this?
Who will listen and hear for the time
to come?
24 Who gave Jacob for plunder, and Israel
to the robbers?
Was it not the LORD,
He against whom we have sinned?
For they would not walk in His ways,
Nor were they obedient to His law.
25 Therefore He has poured on him the
fury of His anger
And the strength of battle;
It has set him on fire all around,
Yet he did not know;
And it burned him,
Yet he did not take *it* to heart.

THE REDEEMER OF ISRAEL

43 But now, thus says the LORD,
who created you, O Jacob,
And He who formed you,
O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called *you* by your name;
You *are* Mine.
2 When you pass through the waters, I
will be with you;
And through the rivers, they shall not
overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you
shall not be burned,
Nor shall the flame scorch you.
3 For I *am* the LORD your God,
The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I gave Egypt for your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in your place.
4 Since you were precious in My sight,
You have been honored,
And I have loved you;
Therefore I will give men for you,
And people for your life.
5 Fear not, for I *am* with you;
I will bring your descendants from
the east,
And gather you from the west;
6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'
And to the south, 'Do not keep them
back!'
Bring My sons from afar,
And My daughters from the ends of
the earth—
7 Everyone who is called by My name,
Whom I have created for My glory;
I have formed him, yes, I have made
him."

8 Bring out the blind people who have
eyes,
And the deaf who have ears.
9 Let all the nations be gathered
together,
And let the people be assembled.
Who among them can declare this,
And show us former things?
Let them bring out their witnesses,
that they may be justified;
Or let them hear and say, "*It is* truth."
10 "You *are* My witnesses," says the LORD,
"And My servant whom I have chosen,
That you may know and believe Me,
And understand that I *am* He.
Before Me there was no God formed,
Nor shall there be after Me.
11 I, *even* I, *am* the LORD,
And besides Me *there is* no savior.
12 I have declared and saved,
I have proclaimed,
And *there was* no foreign *god* among
you;
Therefore you *are* My witnesses,"
Says the LORD, "that I *am* God.
13 Indeed before the day *was,* I *am* He;
And *there is* no one who can deliver
out of My hand;
I work, and who will reverse it?"

Isaiah 43:16

The king of Egypt, after letting the Israelites leave his country, changed his mind and sent his army to bring them back. His plan was to trap the Israelites at the Red Sea. Just when things looked hopeless for the Israelites, God parted the waters of the sea to make a path of dry land through the middle of it. The Israelites were able to walk across to the other side. When the Egyptians tried to follow, the water collapsed on top of them and they drowned.

MAKING IT REAL // ISAIAH 43:18, 19

A New Thing One of the few things that you can count on in this lifetime is change. Just when you have everything kind of figured out, it's time to go in a different direction. So many things happen in life to throw us off balance—changing schools every few years, best friends who move away, divorce, new teachers with new expectations, a job transfer for Dad causes your family to move to a new city, a new stepparent and stepsiblings, the death of someone you love. Life is continually changing.

Isaiah says we should never look back and long for what used to be, because God is creating something new—new roads in the wilderness and new rivers in the desert. You may be a creature of habit, and change may make you uncomfortable. But one measure of your success will be how easily you adapt to change—to the new things God is doing in your life. You will miss all the blessing He has for you in this day if you continue to long for the past. Set your eyes toward the future and welcome the new paths that God is making for you. (See also: Is. 42:16; Jer. 29:11; 2 Cor. 5:17.)

Words to Live By

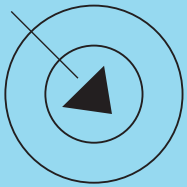
Road: The word translated as "road" in Isaiah 43:19 is the Hebrew word *derek* (deh'-rek). It carries the meaning of way, path, or even course of life. Although your life may seem confusing, God can make a way for you. He has a plan for your life. He can make a road in the middle of the wilderness, and He can lay out the path for you to walk throughout your entire life. Just be willing to walk with Him through every new thing.

14 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
"For your sake I will send to Babylon,
And bring them all down as fugitives—
The Chaldeans, who rejoice in their ships.
15 I *am* the LORD, your Holy One,
The Creator of Israel, your King."

16 Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea
And a path through the mighty waters,
17 Who brings forth the chariot and horse,
The army and the power
(They shall lie down together, they shall not rise;
They are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick):
18 "Do not remember the former things,
Nor consider the things of old.
19 Behold, I will do a new thing,
Now it shall spring forth;
Shall you not know it?
I will even make a road in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert.
20 The beast of the field will honor Me,
The jackals and the ostriches,
Because I give waters in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert,
To give drink to My people, My chosen.
21 This people I have formed for Myself;
They shall declare My praise.

PLEADING WITH UNFAITHFUL ISRAEL

22 "But you have not called upon Me,
O Jacob;
And you have been weary of Me,
O Israel.
23 You have not brought Me the sheep for your burnt offerings,
Nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices.
I have not caused you to serve with grain offerings,
Nor wearied you with incense.
24 You have bought Me no sweet cane with money,
Nor have you satisfied Me with the fat of your sacrifices;
But you have burdened Me with your sins,



PROMISE

God promises to forget your past sins.

"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins" (Is. 43:25).

What kind of past do you have? Decent? Wild? Funny? Tragic? Wonderful? Boring? Whatever the case, everybody has a past. Everyone has yesterdays and things that happened to them—some good, some bad. Everyone has things in the past they regret.

Sometimes people have a hard time coming to the Lord because of things they've done or said or thought (or things they haven't) in the past. But nothing in the past should be allowed to steal your future. When you confess your sins to God and ask Him to forgive you, He does. Forever. He doesn't just set the memory of your sins aside for later. He totally *forgets* what you've done. If you've sincerely asked Him to forgive you and turned away from your sin, He thinks of you as totally innocent. It's as if you never did anything wrong. Never let your past keep you away from the Lord. He's in the business of forgiveness; He'll use what you've learned from the past and throw out all the garbage. He'll accept you right where you are and invite you to grow and learn with Him. So let the past stay in the past, ask Jesus to forgive any sin in your life, and let Him lead you into a great future.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// 2 Corinthians 5:17–21; Hebrews 10:17; 1 John 1:9

You have wearied Me with your
iniquities.

25 "I, *even* I, *am* He who blots out your
transgressions for My own sake;
And I will not remember your sins.
26 Put Me in remembrance;
Let us contend together;
State your *case,* that you may be
acquitted.
27 Your first father sinned,
And your mediators have transgressed
against Me.
28 Therefore I will profane the princes of
the sanctuary;
I will give Jacob to the curse,
And Israel to reproaches.

GOD'S BLESSING ON ISRAEL

44 "Yet hear now, O Jacob My
servant,
And Israel whom I have
chosen.
2 Thus says the LORD who made you
And formed you from the womb, *who*
will help you:
'Fear not, O Jacob My servant;
And you, Jeshurun, whom I have
chosen.
3 For I will pour water on him who is
thirsty,
And floods on the dry ground;
I will pour My Spirit on your
descendants,
And My blessing on your offspring;
4 They will spring up among the grass
Like willows by the watercourses.'
5 One will say, 'I *am* the LORD's';
Another will call *himself* by the name
of Jacob;
Another will write *with* his hand, 'The
LORD's,'
And name *himself* by the name of
Israel.

THERE IS NO OTHER GOD

6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel,
And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
'I *am* the First and I *am* the Last;
Besides Me *there is* no God.
7 And who can proclaim as I do?
Then let him declare it and set it in
order for Me,
Since I appointed the ancient people.
And the things that are coming and
shall come,
Let them show these to them.
8 Do not fear, nor be afraid;

Have I not told you from that time,
and declared *it?*
You *are* My witnesses.
Is there a God besides Me?
Indeed *there is* no other Rock;
I know not *one.*'"

IDOLATRY IS FOOLISHNESS

9 Those who make an image, all of them
are useless,
And their precious things shall not
profit;
They *are* their own witnesses;
They neither see nor know, that they
may be ashamed.
10 Who would form a god or mold an
image
That profits him nothing?
11 Surely all his companions would be
ashamed;
And the workmen, they *are* mere men.
Let them all be gathered together,
Let them stand up;
Yet they shall fear,
They shall be ashamed together.

12 The blacksmith with the tongs works
one in the coals,
Fashions it with hammers,
And works it with the strength of his
arms.
Even so, he is hungry, and his strength
fails;
He drinks no water and is faint.

13 The craftsman stretches out *his* rule,
He marks one out with chalk;
He fashions it with a plane,
He marks it out with the compass,
And makes it like the figure of a man,
According to the beauty of a man, that
it may remain in the house.
14 He cuts down cedars for himself,
And takes the cypress and the oak;
He secures *it* for himself among the
trees of the forest.
He plants a pine, and the rain
nourishes *it.*

15 Then it shall be for a man to burn,
For he will take some of it and warm
himself;
Yes, he kindles *it* and bakes bread;
Indeed he makes a god and
worships *it;*
He makes it a carved image, and falls
down to it.
16 He burns half of it in the fire;
With this half he eats meat;
He roasts a roast, and is satisfied.
He even warms *himself* and says,
"Ah! I am warm,
I have seen the fire."
17 And the rest of it he makes into a god,
His carved image.
He falls down before it and worships *it,*
Prays to it and says,
"Deliver me, for you *are* my god!"

18 They do not know nor understand;
For He has shut their eyes, so that they
cannot see,
And their hearts, so that they cannot
understand.
19 And no one considers in his heart,
Nor *is there* knowledge nor
understanding to say,
"I have burned half of it in the fire,
Yes, I have also baked bread on its
coals;
I have roasted meat and eaten *it;*
And shall I make the rest of it an
abomination?
Shall I fall down before a block of
wood?"
20 He feeds on ashes;
A deceived heart has turned him
aside;
And he cannot deliver his soul,
Nor say, "*Is there* not a lie in my right
hand?"

ISRAEL IS NOT FORGOTTEN

21 "Remember these, O Jacob,
And Israel, for you *are* My servant;
I have formed you, you *are* My servant;
O Israel, you will not be forgotten
by Me!
22 I have blotted out, like a thick cloud,
your transgressions,
And like a cloud, your sins.
Return to Me, for I have redeemed
you."

23 Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has
done *it!*
Shout, you lower parts of the earth;
Break forth into singing, you
mountains,
O forest, and every tree in it!

For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
And glorified Himself in Israel.

JUDAH WILL BE RESTORED

24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
And He who formed you from the womb:
"I *am* the LORD, who makes all *things,*
Who stretches out the heavens all alone,
Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself;
25 Who frustrates the signs of the babblers,
And drives diviners mad;
Who turns wise men backward,
And makes their knowledge foolishness;
26 Who confirms the word of His servant,
And performs the counsel of His messengers;
Who says to Jerusalem, 'You shall be inhabited,'
To the cities of Judah, 'You shall be built,'
And I will raise up her waste places;
27 Who says to the deep, 'Be dry!
And I will dry up your rivers';
28 Who says of Cyrus, '*He is* My shepherd,
And he shall perform all My pleasure,
Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built,"
And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."'

CYRUS, GOD'S INSTRUMENT

45 "Thus says the LORD to His anointed,
To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held—
To subdue nations before him
And loose the armor of kings,
To open before him the double doors,
So that the gates will not be shut:
2 'I will go before you
And make the crooked places[a] straight;
I will break in pieces the gates of bronze
And cut the bars of iron.
3 I will give you the treasures of darkness
And hidden riches of secret places,
That you may know that I, the LORD,
Who call *you* by your name,
Am the God of Israel.
4 For Jacob My servant's sake,
And Israel My elect,
I have even called you by your name;
I have named you, though you have not known Me.
5 I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other;
There is no God besides Me.
I will gird you, though you have not known Me,
6 That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting
That *there is* none besides Me.
I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other;
7 I form the light and create darkness,
I make peace and create calamity;
I, the LORD, do all these *things.*'

8 "Rain down, you heavens, from above,
And let the skies pour down righteousness;
Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation,
And let righteousness spring up together.
I, the LORD, have created it.

9 "Woe to him who strives with his Maker!
Let the potsherd *strive* with the potsherds of the earth!
Shall the clay say to him who forms it,
'What are you making?'
Or shall your handiwork *say,* 'He has no hands'?
10 Woe to him who says to *his* father,
'What are you begetting?'
Or to the woman, 'What have you brought forth?'"

11 Thus says the LORD,
The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:
"Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons;
And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me.
12 I have made the earth,
And created man on it.
I—My hands—stretched out the heavens,

45:2 [a]Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *mountains;* Targum reads *I will trample down the walls;* Vulgate reads *I will humble the great ones of the earth.*

And all their host I have commanded.
13 I have raised him up in righteousness,
And I will direct all his ways;
He shall build My city
And let My exiles go free,
Not for price nor reward,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

THE LORD, THE ONLY SAVIOR

14 Thus says the LORD:

"The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush
And of the Sabeans, men of stature,
Shall come over to you, and they shall be yours;
They shall walk behind you,
They shall come over in chains;
And they shall bow down to you.
They will make supplication to you,
saying, 'Surely God *is* in you,
And *there is* no other;
There is no other God.'"

15 Truly You *are* God, who hide Yourself,
O God of Israel, the Savior!
16 They shall be ashamed
And also disgraced, all of them;
They shall go in confusion together,
Who are makers of idols.
17 *But* Israel shall be saved by the LORD
With an everlasting salvation;
You shall not be ashamed or disgraced
Forever and ever.

18 For thus says the LORD,
Who created the heavens,
Who is God,
Who formed the earth and made it,
Who has established it,
Who did not create it in vain,
Who formed it to be inhabited:
"I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.
19 I have not spoken in secret,
In a dark place of the earth;
I did not say to the seed of Jacob,
'Seek Me in vain';
I, the LORD, speak righteousness,
I declare things that are right.

20 "Assemble yourselves and come;
Draw near together,
You *who have* escaped from the nations.
They have no knowledge,
Who carry the wood of their carved image,
And pray to a god *that* cannot save.
21 Tell and bring forth *your case;*
Yes, let them take counsel together.
Who has declared this from ancient time?
Who has told it from that time?
Have not I, the LORD?
And *there is* no other God besides Me,
A just God and a Savior;
There is none besides Me.

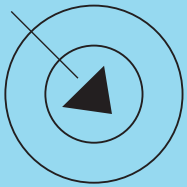
22 "Look to Me, and be saved,
All you ends of the earth!
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other.
23 I have sworn by Myself;
The word has gone out of My mouth *in* righteousness,
And shall not return,
That to Me every knee shall bow,
Every tongue shall take an oath.
24 He shall say,
'Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength.
To Him *men* shall come,
And all shall be ashamed
Who are incensed against Him.
25 In the LORD all the descendants of Israel
Shall be justified, and shall glory.'"

Isaiah 46:1

Bel (who was also known as Marduk) and Nebo were two of the Babylonians' favorite gods. Bel, the god of war, was the main deity of Babylon. Nebo, the god of education and wisdom, was thought to be Bel's son. Remember King Nebuchadnezzar, the guy who destroyed Jerusalem and took the Israelites captive? It's no coincidence that the first part of his name sounds an awful lot like the name of Nebo.

DEAD IDOLS AND THE LIVING GOD

46 Bel bows down, Nebo stoops;
Their idols were on the beasts and on the cattle.
Your carriages *were* heavily loaded,
A burden to the weary *beast.*



PROMISE

God promises to be there when you're old.

"Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Is. 46:4).

Believe it or not, if you live long enough, you will get old. And though it may be hard to imagine, you will still feel exactly like yourself. Older people aren't all that different, they've just lived longer. With medical science continually developing ways to lengthen our lives, you may live longer than any generation before you. Old age is not just a possibility for you, it's a probability.

If you're like most people, as you age, you'll probably worry about losing your good looks, your sharp mind, or your health. And when you become elderly, you may picture yourself struggling to survive on a monthly Social Security check (if there is such a thing by then) or wandering through the halls of a nursing home.

It's true that, as you get older, your body, your income, and even your address will probably go through a lot of changes. Some of these changes will be your idea; some won't. Obviously, you can't rely on things that can change constantly, so where can you find security?

Whether you're looking ahead into your future or just focusing on today, the only real security you will ever find is in the person who is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). Jesus says that He will take care of you and keep you safe when you're old. He will be just as strong, just as trustworthy, just as loving then as He is now. And even when you've been His friend for many years, you'll still be discovering how awesome He is.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Romans 8:38, 39; Hebrews 1:12; 13:8; 1 Peter 1:1–9

[2]They stoop, they bow down together;
They could not deliver the burden,
But have themselves gone into captivity.

[3]"Listen to Me, O house of Jacob,
And all the remnant of the house of Israel,
Who have been upheld *by Me* from birth,
Who have been carried from the womb:
[4]Even to *your* old age, I *am* He,
And *even* to gray hairs I will carry *you!*
I have made, and I will bear;
Even I will carry, and will deliver *you.*

[5]"To whom will you liken Me, and make *Me* equal
And compare Me, that we should be alike?
[6]They lavish gold out of the bag,
And weigh silver on the scales;
They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god;
They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.
[7]They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it
And set it in its place, and it stands;
From its place it shall not move.
Though *one* cries out to it, yet it cannot answer
Nor save him out of his trouble.

[8]"Remember this, and show yourselves men;
Recall to mind, O you transgressors.
[9]Remember the former things of old,
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;
I am God, and *there is* none like Me,
[10]Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,'
[11]Calling a bird of prey from the east,
The man who executes My counsel, from a far country.
Indeed I have spoken *it;*

I will also bring it to pass.
I have purposed *it;*
I will also do it.

12"Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted,
Who *are* far from righteousness:
13I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off;
My salvation shall not linger.
And I will place salvation in Zion,
For Israel My glory.

THE HUMILIATION OF BABYLON

47 "Come down and sit in the dust,
O virgin daughter of Babylon;
Sit on the ground without a throne,
O daughter of the Chaldeans!
For you shall no more be called
Tender and delicate.
2Take the millstones and grind meal.
Remove your veil,
Take off the skirt,
Uncover the thigh,
Pass through the rivers.
3Your nakedness shall be uncovered,
Yes, your shame will be seen;
I will take vengeance,
And I will not arbitrate with a man."

4*As for* our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts *is* His name,
The Holy One of Israel.

5"Sit in silence, and go into darkness,
O daughter of the Chaldeans;
For you shall no longer be called
The Lady of Kingdoms.
6I was angry with My people;
I have profaned My inheritance,
And given them into your hand.
You showed them no mercy;
On the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily.
7And you said, 'I shall be a lady forever,'
So that you did not take these *things* to heart,
Nor remember the latter end of them.

8"Therefore hear this now, *you who are* given to pleasures,
Who dwell securely,
Who say in your heart, 'I *am,* and *there is* no one else besides me;
I shall not sit *as* a widow,
Nor shall I know the loss of children';
9But these two *things* shall come to you
In a moment, in one day:
The loss of children, and widowhood.
They shall come upon you in their fullness
Because of the multitude of your sorceries,
For the great abundance of your enchantments.

10"For you have trusted in your wickedness;
You have said, 'No one sees me';
Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you;
And you have said in your heart,
'I *am,* and *there is* no one else besides me.'
11Therefore evil shall come upon you;
You shall not know from where it arises.
And trouble shall fall upon you;
You will not be able to put it off.
And desolation shall come upon you suddenly,
Which you shall not know.

12"Stand now with your enchantments
And the multitude of your sorceries,
In which you have labored from your youth—
Perhaps you will be able to profit,
Perhaps you will prevail.
13You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels;
Let now the astrologers, the stargazers,
And the monthly prognosticators
Stand up and save you
From what shall come upon you.
14Behold, they shall be as stubble,
The fire shall burn them;
They shall not deliver themselves
From the power of the flame;
It shall not *be* a coal to be warmed by,
Nor a fire to sit before!
15Thus shall they be to you
With whom you have labored,
Your merchants from your youth;
They shall wander each one to his quarter.
No one shall save you.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ISAIAH 47:13, 14

The Stars Open up almost any popular fashion magazine or daily newspaper and you will find a section that claims to tell you all about your future—astrology. These articles may claim they can tell you who you should marry, when you should find a new job, or what days you should just stay home. There are people who trust astrology so much that they actually make decisions based on their horoscopes. If you're a Christian, you have no reason to go there. You've got something so much greater—and someone you can totally depend on—the Holy Spirit. His job is to guide you, to help you make good decisions, and to give you insight about your future (John 16:13).

Isaiah 47:14 says that people who consult the stars are helpless. John 14:16 says that the Holy Spirit is sent from God to help you. Always put your trust in God, who knows everything. Never put your trust in anyone who claims to know the future except God. He says, "They shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame." In other words, people who trust the stars, and others like them, can't save themselves, so they certainly can't save you or point you in the right direction for your life. Only God can do that. (See also: 2 Kin. 21:6; Jer. 33:3.)

Words to Live By

Stubble: The word translated as "stubble" in Isaiah 47:14 is the Hebrew word *qash* (kash). It means "dry straw." For all their talk and claims of power, in the end, those who put their hope in anything but the Lord have no more strength than dry straw in a fire. They are not worthy of your trust. Only God is worthy of your trust. Put your hope in Him as His Spirit guides you through any fire into truth and life.

ISRAEL REFINED FOR GOD'S GLORY

48 "Hear this, O house of Jacob,
Who are called by the name of Israel,
And have come forth from the wellsprings of Judah;
Who swear by the name of the LORD,
And make mention of the God of Israel,
But not in truth or in righteousness;
2For they call themselves after the holy city,
And lean on the God of Israel;
The LORD of hosts *is* His name:

3"I have declared the former things from the beginning;
They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it.
Suddenly I did *them,* and they came to pass.
4Because I knew that you *were* obstinate,
And your neck *was* an iron sinew,
And your brow bronze,
5Even from the beginning I have declared *it* to you;
Before it came to pass I proclaimed *it* to you,
Lest you should say, 'My idol has done them,
And my carved image and my molded image
Have commanded them.'

6"You have heard;
See all this.
And will you not declare *it?*
I have made you hear new things from this time,
Even hidden things, and you did not know them.
7They are created now and not from the beginning;
And before this day you have not heard them,
Lest you should say, 'Of course I knew them.'

8 Surely you did not hear,
Surely you did not know;
Surely from long ago your ear was not opened.
For I knew that you would deal very treacherously,
And were called a transgressor from the womb.

9 "For My name's sake I will defer My anger,
And *for* My praise I will restrain it from you,
So that I do not cut you off.
10 Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.
11 For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do *it;*
For how should *My name* be profaned?
And I will not give My glory to another.

GOD'S ANCIENT PLAN TO REDEEM ISRAEL

12 "Listen to Me, O Jacob,
And Israel, My called:
I *am* He, I *am* the First,
I *am* also the Last.
13 Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth,
And My right hand has stretched out the heavens;
When I call to them,
They stand up together.

14 "All of you, assemble yourselves, and hear!
Who among them has declared these *things?*
The LORD loves him;
He shall do His pleasure on Babylon,
And His arm *shall be against* the Chaldeans.
15 I, *even* I, have spoken;
Yes, I have called him,
I have brought him, and his way will prosper.

16 "Come near to Me, hear this:
I have not spoken in secret from the beginning;
From the time that it was, I *was* there.
And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit
Have[a] sent Me."

17 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
"I *am* the LORD your God,
Who teaches you to profit,
Who leads you by the way you should go.
18 Oh, that you had heeded My commandments!
Then your peace would have been like a river,
And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.
19 Your descendants also would have been like the sand,
And the offspring of your body like the grains of sand;
His name would not have been cut off
Nor destroyed from before Me."

20 Go forth from Babylon!
Flee from the Chaldeans!
With a voice of singing,
Declare, proclaim this,
Utter it to the end of the earth;
Say, "The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob!"

Isaiah 48:21

God took care of the thirsty Israelites in the desert by giving them water to drink from an ordinary rock. The Israelites remembered that period—just after their ancestors' release from Egypt—as a time when God was especially close to them.

21 And they did not thirst
When He led them through the deserts;
He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them;
He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out.

22 "*There is* no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked."

THE SERVANT, THE LIGHT TO THE GENTILES

49 "Listen, O coastlands, to Me,
And take heed, you peoples from afar!

48:16 [a]The Hebrew verb is singular.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ISAIAH 49:1, 2

Special Creation Remember when you were in kindergarten and you made plaster imprints of your hands or a sculpture out of pipe cleaners? Remember how excited you were? When you made something you were proud of, you couldn't wait to show it off. You were so careful until you got it home and put it in a safe place. And every once in awhile you'd take a look at it and grin. You loved it.

God made you and that's why He loves you. You were His idea. Just as you carefully created your kindergarten masterpiece, God crafted each part of your being just exactly the way He wanted it. He made you a certain way so that you could be everything wonderful that He wants you to be. You're a part of His heart because He thought of you and then gave those thoughts life and created you. He's in love with you. He thinks you're awesome. And you are, because you're His. (See also: Gen. 1:27; Is. 43:7; 44:2; 1 John 3:1.)

Words to Live By

Called: The word translated as "called" in Isaiah 49:1 is the Hebrew word *qara* (kaw-raw'). It means "to call out, call for, or invite." God has been calling out for you since the moment you were conceived. He already knew you. And He has never stopped inviting you into His presence. He wants you to know Him more and become the amazing person He created you to be. Don't ignore His invitation. Answer His call.

The LORD has called Me from the
womb;
From the matrix of My mother He has
made mention of My name.

ABORTION
Does God know the unborn by name?
Isaiah 49:1

2 And He has made My mouth like a
sharp sword;
In the shadow of His hand He has
hidden Me,
And made Me a polished shaft;
In His quiver He has hidden Me."

3 "And He said to me,
'You *are* My servant, O Israel,
In whom I will be glorified.'
4 Then I said, 'I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing
and in vain;
Yet surely my just reward *is* with the
LORD,
And my work with my God.'"

5 "And now the LORD says,
Who formed Me from the womb *to be*
His Servant,
To bring Jacob back to Him,
So that Israel is gathered to Him[a]
(For I shall be glorious in the eyes of
the LORD,
And My God shall be My strength),
6 Indeed He says,
'It is too small a thing that You should
be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the preserved ones of
Israel;
I will also give You as a light to the
Gentiles,
That You should be My salvation to the
ends of the earth.'"

7 Thus says the LORD,
The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy
One,
To Him whom man despises,
To Him whom the nation abhors,

49:5 [a]Qere, Dead Sea Scrolls, and Septuagint read *is gathered to Him;* Kethib reads *is not gathered.*

To the Servant of rulers:
"Kings shall see and arise,
Princes also shall worship,
Because of the LORD who is faithful,
The Holy One of Israel;
And He has chosen You."

8 Thus says the LORD:

"In an acceptable time I have heard You,
And in the day of salvation I have helped You;
I will preserve You and give You
As a covenant to the people,
To restore the earth,
To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages;
9 That You may say to the prisoners, 'Go forth,'
To those who *are* in darkness, 'Show yourselves.'

"They shall feed along the roads,
And their pastures *shall be* on all desolate heights.
10 They shall neither hunger nor thirst,
Neither heat nor sun shall strike them;
For He who has mercy on them will lead them,
Even by the springs of water He will guide them.
11 I will make each of My mountains a road,
And My highways shall be elevated.
12 Surely these shall come from afar;
Look! Those from the north and the west,
And these from the land of Sinim."

13 Sing, O heavens!
Be joyful, O earth!
And break out in singing, O mountains!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
And will have mercy on His afflicted.

GOD WILL REMEMBER ZION

14 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
And my Lord has forgotten me."

15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child,
And not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Surely they may forget,
Yet I will not forget you.
16 See, I have inscribed you on the palms *of My hands;*
Your walls *are* continually before Me.
17 Your sons[a] shall make haste;
Your destroyers and those who laid you waste
Shall go away from you.
18 Lift up your eyes, look around and see;
All these gather together *and* come to you.
As I live," says the LORD,
"You shall surely clothe yourselves with them all as an ornament,
And bind them *on you* as a bride *does.*

19 "For your waste and desolate places,
And the land of your destruction,
Will even now be too small for the inhabitants;
And those who swallowed you up will be far away.
20 The children you will have,
After you have lost the others,
Will say again in your ears,
'The place *is* too small for me;
Give me a place where I may dwell.'
21 Then you will say in your heart,
'Who has begotten these for me,
Since I have lost my children and am desolate,
A captive, and wandering to and fro?
And who has brought these up?
There I was, left alone;
But these, where *were* they?' "

22 Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations,
And set up My standard for the peoples;
They shall bring your sons in *their* arms,
And your daughters shall be carried on *their* shoulders;
23 Kings shall be your foster fathers,
And their queens your nursing mothers;
They shall bow down to you with *their* faces to the earth,

49:17 [a]Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *builders.*

And lick up the dust of your feet.
Then you will know that I *am* the LORD,
For they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me."

24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty,
Or the captives of the righteous[a] be delivered?

25 But thus says the LORD:

"Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away,
And the prey of the terrible be delivered;
For I will contend with him who contends with you,
And I will save your children.
26 I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh,
And they shall be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine.
All flesh shall know
That I, the LORD, *am* your Savior,
And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

THE SERVANT, ISRAEL'S HOPE

50 Thus says the LORD:

"Where *is* the certificate of your mother's divorce,
Whom I have put away?
Or which of My creditors *is it* to whom I have sold you?
For your iniquities you have sold yourselves,
And for your transgressions your mother has been put away.
2 Why, when I came, *was there* no man?
Why, when I called, *was there* none to answer?
Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem?
Or have I no power to deliver?
Indeed with My rebuke I dry up the sea,
I make the rivers a wilderness;
Their fish stink because *there is* no water,
And die of thirst.
3 I clothe the heavens with blackness,
And I make sackcloth their covering."

4 "The Lord GOD has given Me
The tongue of the learned,
That I should know how to speak
A word in season to *him who is* weary.
He awakens Me morning by morning,
He awakens My ear
To hear as the learned.
5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear;
And I was not rebellious,
Nor did I turn away.
6 I gave My back to those who struck *Me,*
And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard;
I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.

7 "For the Lord GOD will help Me;
Therefore I will not be disgraced;
Therefore I have set My face like a flint,
And I know that I will not be ashamed.
8 *He is* near who justifies Me;
Who will contend with Me?
Let us stand together.
Who *is* My adversary?
Let him come near Me.
9 Surely the Lord GOD will help Me;
Who *is* he *who* will condemn Me?
Indeed they will all grow old like a garment;
The moth will eat them up.

10 "Who among you fears the LORD?
Who obeys the voice of His Servant?
Who walks in darkness
And has no light?
Let him trust in the name of the LORD
And rely upon his God.
11 Look, all you who kindle a fire,
Who encircle *yourselves* with sparks:
Walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks you have kindled—
This you shall have from My hand:
You shall lie down in torment.

THE LORD COMFORTS ZION

51 "Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness,
You who seek the LORD:
Look to the rock *from which* you were hewn,

49:24 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Dead Sea Scrolls, Syriac, and Vulgate read *the mighty;* Septuagint reads *unjustly*.

LIFE APP

The Power of Words / Isaiah 50:4

We all know the power of weapons and the destruction they can cause. But do we realize we all possess a weapon that can be even more destructive to the people in our lives? That weapon is made up of the words we speak. They can hurt others just as surely as any weapon in the world.

But our words can work just as powerfully for good as they can for evil. When your speech is positive, it affects you as well as everyone around you. This doesn't mean we should fake a smile and flatter people insincerely. That's not authentic, positive speech. But if we are seeking to be more like Christ every day, then controlling our speech is part of that transformation. Matthew 12:35 tells us that "a good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things." When God's love and mercy are alive in your heart, then your words will reflect them and you will more naturally speak in love and mercy to others.

Consider Isaiah's words: "The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary" (Is. 50:4). Have you ever had a really bad day that was made better by someone's kind words? It may have seemed they had the perfect thing to say at that moment, even though they didn't know your situation. When those kinds of encouragement happen to us, we can agree that "a word in season to him who is weary" is a very good thing.

As Christians, we should always strive to speak in a genuine way that honors God and encourages others. In the words of Paul, "let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Eph. 4:29).

And to the hole of the pit *from which*
you were dug.
2Look to Abraham your father,
And to Sarah *who* bore you;
For I called him alone,
And blessed him and increased him."

3For the LORD will comfort Zion,
He will comfort all her waste places;
He will make her wilderness like Eden,
And her desert like the garden of the
LORD;
Joy and gladness will be found in it,
Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

4"Listen to Me, My people;
And give ear to Me, O My nation:
For law will proceed from Me,
And I will make My justice rest
As a light of the peoples.
5My righteousness *is* near,
My salvation has gone forth,
And My arms will judge the peoples;
The coastlands will wait upon Me,
And on My arm they will trust.
6Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
And look on the earth beneath.
For the heavens will vanish away like
smoke,
The earth will grow old like a garment,
And those who dwell in it will die in
like manner;
But My salvation will be forever,
And My righteousness will not be
abolished.

7"Listen to Me, you who know
righteousness,
You people in whose heart *is* My law:
Do not fear the reproach of men,
Nor be afraid of their insults.
8For the moth will eat them up like a
garment,
And the worm will eat them like wool;
But My righteousness will be forever,
And My salvation from generation to
generation."

9Awake, awake, put on strength,
O arm of the LORD!
Awake as in the ancient days,
In the generations of old.
Are You not *the arm* that cut Rahab
apart,
And wounded the serpent?

Isaiah 51:9

"Rahab" in this passage is not a woman, but a sea monster. According to a popular ancient myth, a dragon-like creature named Rahab tried to prevent God from creating the world. Needless to say, God defeated Rahab and her followers. Later, the name Rahab came to symbolize Egypt and the years the Israelites spent there.

10*Are* You not *the One* who dried up the
sea,
The waters of the great deep;
That made the depths of the sea a road
For the redeemed to cross over?
11So the ransomed of the LORD shall
return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness;
Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

DEVOTION

What can happen if you begin to forget God?

Isaiah 51:12, 13

12"I, *even* I, *am* He who comforts you.
Who *are* you that you should be afraid
Of a man *who* will die,
And of the son of a man *who* will be
made like grass?
13And you forget the LORD your Maker,
Who stretched out the heavens
And laid the foundations of the earth;
You have feared continually every day
Because of the fury of the oppressor,
When *he has* prepared to destroy.
And where *is* the fury of the
oppressor?
14The captive exile hastens, that he may
be loosed,
That he should not die in the pit,
And that his bread should not fail.
15But I *am* the LORD your God,
Who divided the sea whose waves
roared—
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.
16And I have put My words in your
mouth;

I have covered you with the shadow of
My hand,
That I may plant the heavens,
Lay the foundations of the earth,
And say to Zion, 'You *are* My people.'"

Isaiah 51:17

A cup that came from God's hand was a common symbol in ancient times for a person's (or a nation's) destiny. A cup of His fury symbolized punishment for a sin. A cup of His blessing symbolized a bright future.

GOD'S FURY REMOVED

17 Awake, awake!
Stand up, O Jerusalem,
You who have drunk at the hand of
the LORD
The cup of His fury;
You have drunk the dregs of the cup of
trembling,
And drained *it* out.
18 *There is* no one to guide her
Among all the sons she has brought
forth;
Nor *is there any* who takes her by the
hand
Among all the sons she has
brought up.
19 These two *things* have come to you;
Who will be sorry for you?—
Desolation and destruction, famine
and sword—
By whom will I comfort you?
20 Your sons have fainted,
They lie at the head of all the streets,
Like an antelope in a net;
They are full of the fury of the LORD,
The rebuke of your God.

21 Therefore please hear this, you
afflicted,
And drunk but not with wine.
22 Thus says your Lord,
The LORD and your God,
Who pleads the cause of His people:
"See, I have taken out of your hand
The cup of trembling,
The dregs of the cup of My fury;
You shall no longer drink it.
23 But I will put it into the hand of those
who afflict you,
Who have said to you,[a]
'Lie down, that we may walk over you.'
And you have laid your body like the
ground,
And as the street, for those who walk
over."

GOD REDEEMS JERUSALEM

52 Awake, awake!
Put on your strength, O Zion;
Put on your beautiful
garments,
O Jerusalem, the holy city!
For the uncircumcised and the unclean
Shall no longer come to you.
2 Shake yourself from the dust, arise;
Sit down, O Jerusalem!
Loose yourself from the bonds of your
neck,
O captive daughter of Zion!

3 For thus says the LORD:

"You have sold yourselves for nothing,
And you shall be redeemed without
money."

4 For thus says the Lord GOD:

"My people went down at first
Into Egypt to dwell there;
Then the Assyrian oppressed them
without cause.
5 Now therefore, what have I here," says
the LORD,
"That My people are taken away for
nothing?
Those who rule over them
Make them wail,"[a] says the LORD,
"And My name *is* blasphemed
continually every day.
6 Therefore My people shall know My
name;
Therefore *they shall know* in that day
That I *am* He who speaks:
'Behold, *it is* I.'"

7 How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good
news,

51:23 [a]Literally *your soul* **52:5** [a]Dead Sea Scrolls read *Mock;* Septuagint reads *Marvel and wail;* Targum reads *Boast themselves;* Vulgate reads *Treat them unjustly*.

Who proclaims peace,
Who brings glad tidings of good *things,*
Who proclaims salvation,
Who says to Zion,
"Your God reigns!"
8Your watchmen shall lift up *their* voices,
With their voices they shall sing together;
For they shall see eye to eye
When the LORD brings back Zion.
9Break forth into joy, sing together,
You waste places of Jerusalem!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
He has redeemed Jerusalem.
10The LORD has made bare His holy arm
In the eyes of all the nations;
And all the ends of the earth shall see
The salvation of our God.

11Depart! Depart! Go out from there,
Touch no unclean *thing;*
Go out from the midst of her,
Be clean,
You who bear the vessels of the LORD.
12For you shall not go out with haste,
Nor go by flight;
For the LORD will go before you,
And the God of Israel *will be* your rear guard.

THE SIN-BEARING SERVANT

13Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently;
He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.
14Just as many were astonished at you,
So His visage was marred more than any man,
And His form more than the sons of men;
15So shall He sprinkle[a] many nations.
Kings shall shut their mouths at Him;
For what had not been told them they shall see,
And what they had not heard they shall consider.

53 Who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
2For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground.
He has no form or comeliness;
And when we see Him,
There is no beauty that we should desire Him.
3He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

4Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
5But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.

SIN
What happens to the sin of Christians?
Isaiah 53:6

6All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

7He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He opened not His mouth;
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.
8He was taken from prison and from judgment,
And who will declare His generation?
For He was cut off from the land of the living;
For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.
9And they[a] made His grave with the wicked—
But with the rich at His death,

52:15 [a]Or *startle* **53:9** [a]Literally *he* or *He*

Because He had done no violence,
Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;
He has put *Him* to grief.
When You make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days,
And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.
11 He shall see the labor of His soul,[a] *and* be satisfied.
By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,
For He shall bear their iniquities.
12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,
Because He poured out His soul unto death,
And He was numbered with the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors.

A PERPETUAL COVENANT OF PEACE

54 "Sing, O barren,
You *who* have not borne!
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,
You *who* have not labored with child!
For more *are* the children of the desolate
Than the children of the married woman," says the LORD.
2 "Enlarge the place of your tent,
And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings;
Do not spare;
Lengthen your cords,
And strengthen your stakes.
3 For you shall expand to the right and to the left,
And your descendants will inherit the nations,
And make the desolate cities inhabited.

4 "Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;
Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame;
For you will forget the shame of your youth,
And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.
5 For your Maker *is* your husband,
The LORD of hosts *is* His name;
And your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel;
He is called the God of the whole earth.
6 For the LORD has called you
Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,
Like a youthful wife when you were refused,"
Says your God.
7 "For a mere moment I have forsaken you,
But with great mercies I will gather you.
8 With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment;
But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,"
Says the LORD, your Redeemer.

9 "For this *is* like the waters of Noah to Me;
For as I have sworn
That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth,
So have I sworn
That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.
10 For the mountains shall depart
And the hills be removed,
But My kindness shall not depart from you,
Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,"
Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

11 "O you afflicted one,
Tossed with tempest, *and* not comforted,
Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems,
And lay your foundations with sapphires.

53:11 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *From the labor of His soul He shall see light.*

12 I will make your pinnacles of rubies,
Your gates of crystal,
And all your walls of precious stones.
13 All your children *shall be* taught by the LORD,
And great *shall be* the peace of your children.
14 In righteousness you shall be established;
You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear;
And from terror, for it shall not come near you.
15 Indeed they shall surely assemble, *but* not because of Me.
Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.

16 "Behold, I have created the blacksmith
Who blows the coals in the fire,
Who brings forth an instrument for his work;
And I have created the spoiler to destroy.
17 No weapon formed against you shall prosper,
And every tongue *which* rises against you in judgment
You shall condemn.
This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD,
And their righteousness *is* from Me,"
Says the LORD.

AN INVITATION TO ABUNDANT LIFE

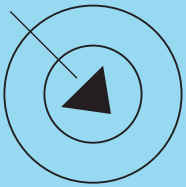
55 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money,
Come, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price.
2 Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread,
And your wages for *what* does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is* good,
And let your soul delight itself in abundance.
3 Incline your ear, and come to Me.
Hear, and your soul shall live;
And I will make an everlasting covenant with you—
The sure mercies of David.
4 Indeed I have given him *as* a witness to the people,
A leader and commander for the people.
5 Surely you shall call a nation you do not know,
And nations *who* do not know you shall run to you,
Because of the LORD your God,
And the Holy One of Israel;
For He has glorified you."

6 Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.
7 Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the LORD,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.

8 "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts,
Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD.
9 "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,
11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.

12 "For you shall go out with joy,
And be led out with peace;
The mountains and the hills
Shall break forth into singing before you,
And all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.
13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree,



PROMISE

God promises to love you forever.

"Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David" (Is. 55:3).

Can you imagine having someone be eternally loyal to you, someone who will never leave you and will love you forever? For most of us, even the thought of eternity blows our minds. We can't even imagine being eighty years old—much less living forever and ever and ever. God loves you so much that He promises not only to let you live with Him forever but also to love you and be loyal to you throughout eternity. That's the ultimate friendship!

God has so much confidence in who you are, who He made you to be, that He wants to spend forever with you. Even if every friend you ever had were to desert you, He would still be there loving you. If you did something that cut off everyone you knew, He would be loyal to you. God hasn't committed Himself to you for the length of your life, but for the length of *His* life—for all eternity.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Isaiah 49:15; Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 8:35–39

And instead of the brier shall come up
the myrtle tree;
And it shall be to the LORD for a name,
For an everlasting sign *that* shall not
be cut off."

SALVATION FOR THE GENTILES

56 Thus says the LORD:

"Keep justice, and do
righteousness,
For My salvation *is* about to come,
And My righteousness to be revealed.
2Blessed *is* the man *who* does this,
And the son of man *who* lays hold
on it;
Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And keeps his hand from doing any
evil."

3Do not let the son of the foreigner
Who has joined himself to the LORD
Speak, saying,
"The LORD has utterly separated me
from His people";
Nor let the eunuch say,
"Here I am, a dry tree."
4For thus says the LORD:
"To the eunuchs who keep My
Sabbaths,
And choose what pleases Me,
And hold fast My covenant,

Isaiah 56:4

The Old Testament Sabbath is the seventh day of the week—Saturday, not Sunday. God instructed His people to set aside the seventh day of each week for Him. All forms of normal work were forbidden on the Sabbath. Only acts of kindness, worship, and emergency were allowed. Most Christians recognize Sunday as the Sabbath because it was the day of the week Jesus rose from death.

5Even to them I will give in My house
And within My walls a place and a
name
Better than that of sons and
daughters;
I will give them[a] an everlasting name
That shall not be cut off.

6"Also the sons of the foreigner
Who join themselves to the LORD, to
serve Him,
And to love the name of the LORD, to
be His servants—
Everyone who keeps from defiling the
Sabbath,
And holds fast My covenant—

56:5 [a]Literally *him*

7 Even them I will bring to My holy
mountain,
And make them joyful in My house of
prayer.
Their burnt offerings and their
sacrifices
Will be accepted on My altar;
For My house shall be called a house of
prayer for all nations."
8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the
outcasts of Israel, says,
"Yet I will gather to him
Others besides those who are gathered
to him."

ISRAEL'S IRRESPONSIBLE LEADERS

9 All you beasts of the field, come to
devour,
All you beasts in the forest.
10 His watchmen *are* blind,
They are all ignorant;
They *are* all dumb dogs,
They cannot bark;
Sleeping, lying down, loving to
slumber.
11 Yes, *they are* greedy dogs
Which never have enough.
And they *are* shepherds
Who cannot understand;
They all look to their own way,
Every one for his own gain,
From his *own* territory.
12 "Come," *one says,* "I will bring wine,
And we will fill ourselves with
intoxicating drink;
Tomorrow will be as today,
And much more abundant."

ISRAEL'S FUTILE IDOLATRY

57 The righteous perishes,
And no man takes *it* to heart;
Merciful men *are* taken away,
While no one considers
That the righteous is taken away from
evil.
2 He shall enter into peace;
They shall rest in their beds,
Each one walking *in* his uprightness.

3 "But come here,
You sons of the sorceress,
You offspring of the adulterer and the
harlot!
4 Whom do you ridicule?
Against whom do you make a wide
mouth
And stick out the tongue?
Are you not children of transgression,
Offspring of falsehood,

Isaiah 57:5

Pagan religions in and around Israel built their temples of idol worship on hilltops or in groves of trees. They practiced all kinds of sexual perversion during their so-called worship ceremonies. Some rituals called for children to be sacrificed. God despised such pagan rituals and specifically told the Israelites not to get involved in them.

5 Inflaming yourselves with gods under
every green tree,
Slaying the children in the valleys,
Under the clefts of the rocks?
6 Among the smooth *stones* of the
stream
Is your portion;
They, they, *are* your lot!
Even to them you have poured a drink
offering,
You have offered a grain offering.
Should I receive comfort in these?

7 "On a lofty and high mountain
You have set your bed;
Even there you went up
To offer sacrifice.
8 Also behind the doors and their posts
You have set up your remembrance;
For you have uncovered yourself *to
those other* than Me,
And have gone up to them;
You have enlarged your bed
And made *a covenant* with them;
You have loved their bed,
Where you saw *their* nudity.[a]
9 You went to the king with ointment,
And increased your perfumes;
You sent your messengers far off,
And *even* descended to Sheol.
10 You are wearied in the length of your
way;
Yet you did not say, 'There is no hope.'

57:8 [a]Literally *hand,* a euphemism

You have found the life of your hand;
Therefore you were not grieved.

11"And of whom have you been afraid, or feared,
That you have lied
And not remembered Me,
Nor taken *it* to your heart?
Is it not because I have held My peace from of old
That you do not fear Me?
12I will declare your righteousness
And your works,
For they will not profit you.
13When you cry out,
Let your collection *of idols* deliver you.
But the wind will carry them all away,
A breath will take *them.*
But he who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land,
And shall inherit My holy mountain."

HEALING FOR THE BACKSLIDER

14And one shall say,
"Heap it up! Heap it up!
Prepare the way,
Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people."

15For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity, whose name *is* Holy:
"I dwell in the high and holy *place,*
With him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.
16For I will not contend forever,
Nor will I always be angry;
For the spirit would fail before Me,
And the souls *which* I have made.
17For the iniquity of his covetousness
I was angry and struck him;
I hid and was angry,
And he went on backsliding in the way of his heart.
18I have seen his ways, and will heal him;
I will also lead him,
And restore comforts to him
And to his mourners.

19"I create the fruit of the lips:
Peace, peace to *him who is* far off and to *him who is* near,"
Says the LORD,
"And I will heal him."
20But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea,
When it cannot rest,
Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21"*There is* no peace,"
Says my God, "for the wicked."

FASTING THAT PLEASES GOD

58 "Cry aloud, spare not;
Lift up your voice like a trumpet;
Tell My people their transgression,
And the house of Jacob their sins.
2Yet they seek Me daily,
And delight to know My ways,
As a nation that did righteousness,
And did not forsake the ordinance of their God.
They ask of Me the ordinances of justice;
They take delight in approaching God.

HYPOCRISY
What kinds of actions show a true, sincere faith?
Isaiah 58:3–7

3'Why have we fasted,' *they say,* 'and You have not seen?
Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?'

"In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure,
And exploit all your laborers.
4Indeed you fast for strife and debate,
And to strike with the fist of wickedness.
You will not fast as *you do* this day,
To make your voice heard on high.
5Is it a fast that I have chosen,
A day for a man to afflict his soul?
Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush,
And to spread out sackcloth and ashes?
Would you call this a fast,
And an acceptable day to the LORD?

6"*Is* this not the fast that I have chosen:
To loose the bonds of wickedness,

To undo the heavy burdens,
To let the oppressed go free,
And that you break every yoke?
7 *Is it* not to share your bread with the hungry,
And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;
When you see the naked, that you cover him,
And not hide yourself from your own flesh?
8 Then your light shall break forth like the morning,
Your healing shall spring forth speedily,
And your righteousness shall go before you;
The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.
9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I *am*.'

"If you take away the yoke from your midst,
The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,
10 *If* you extend your soul to the hungry
And satisfy the afflicted soul,
Then your light shall dawn in the darkness,
And your darkness shall *be* as the noonday.
11 The LORD will guide you continually,
And satisfy your soul in drought,
And strengthen your bones;
You shall be like a watered garden,
And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.
12 Those from among you
Shall build the old waste places;
You shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach,
The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

13 "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,
From doing your pleasure on My holy day,
And call the Sabbath a delight,
The holy *day* of the LORD honorable,
And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,
Nor finding your own pleasure,
Nor speaking *your own* words,
14 Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD;
And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,
And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.
The mouth of the LORD has spoken."

SEPARATED FROM GOD

59 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened,
That it cannot save;
Nor His ear heavy,
That it cannot hear.
2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
And your sins have hidden *His* face from you,
So that He will not hear.
3 For your hands are defiled with blood,
And your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips have spoken lies,
Your tongue has muttered perversity.

4 No one calls for justice,
Nor does *any* plead for truth.
They trust in empty words and speak lies;
They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.
5 They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web;
He who eats of their eggs dies,
And *from* that which is crushed a viper breaks out.

6 Their webs will not become garments,
Nor will they cover themselves with their works;
Their works *are* works of iniquity,
And the act of violence *is* in their hands.
7 Their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed innocent blood;
Their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity;
Wasting and destruction *are* in their paths.
8 The way of peace they have not known,
And *there is* no justice in their ways;
They have made themselves crooked paths;

Whoever takes that way shall not
know peace.

SIN CONFESSED

9 Therefore justice is far from us,
Nor does righteousness overtake us;
We look for light, but there is darkness!
For brightness, *but* we walk in
blackness!
10 We grope for the wall like the blind,
And we grope as if *we had* no eyes;
We stumble at noonday as at twilight;
We are as dead *men* in desolate places.
11 We all growl like bears,
And moan sadly like doves;
We look for justice, but *there is* none;
For salvation, *but* it is far from us.
12 For our transgressions are multiplied
before You,
And our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions *are* with us,
And *as for* our iniquities, we know
them:
13 In transgressing and lying against the
LORD,
And departing from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt,
Conceiving and uttering from the
heart words of falsehood.
14 Justice is turned back,
And righteousness stands afar off;
For truth is fallen in the street,
And equity cannot enter.
15 So truth fails,
And he *who* departs from evil makes
himself a prey.

THE REDEEMER OF ZION

Then the LORD saw *it,* and it displeased
Him
That *there was* no justice.
16 He saw that *there was* no man,
And wondered that *there was* no
intercessor;
Therefore His own arm brought
salvation for Him;
And His own righteousness, it
sustained Him.
17 For He put on righteousness as a
breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
He put on the garments of vengeance
for clothing,
And was clad with zeal as a cloak.
18 According to *their* deeds, accordingly
He will repay,
Fury to His adversaries,
Recompense to His enemies;
The coastlands He will fully repay.
19 So shall they fear
The name of the LORD from the west,
And His glory from the rising of the
sun;
When the enemy comes in like a
flood,
The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a
standard against him.

20 "The Redeemer will come to Zion,
And to those who turn from
transgression in Jacob,"
Says the LORD.

21 "As for Me," says the LORD, "this *is* My
covenant with them: My Spirit who *is* upon
you, and My words which I have put in your
mouth, shall not depart from your mouth,
nor from the mouth of your descendants,
nor from the mouth of your descendants'
descendants," says the LORD, "from this
time and forevermore."

THE GENTILES BLESS ZION

60 Arise, shine;
For your light has come!
And the glory of the LORD is
risen upon you.
2 For behold, the darkness shall cover
the earth,
And deep darkness the people;
But the LORD will arise over you,
And His glory will be seen upon you.
3 The Gentiles shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your
rising.

4 "Lift up your eyes all around, and see:
They all gather together, they come
to you;
Your sons shall come from afar,
And your daughters shall be nursed at
your side.
5 Then you shall see and become
radiant,
And your heart shall swell with joy;
Because the abundance of the sea
shall be turned to you,
The wealth of the Gentiles shall come
to you.

6 The multitude of camels shall cover
your *land,*
The dromedaries of Midian and
Ephah;
All those from Sheba shall come;
They shall bring gold and incense,
And they shall proclaim the praises of
the LORD.
7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be
gathered together to you,
The rams of Nebaioth shall minister
to you;
They shall ascend with acceptance on
My altar,
And I will glorify the house of My glory.

8 "Who *are* these *who* fly like a cloud,
And like doves to their roosts?
9 Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me;
And the ships of Tarshish *will come*
first,
To bring your sons from afar,
Their silver and their gold with them,
To the name of the LORD your God,
And to the Holy One of Israel,
Because He has glorified you.

10 "The sons of foreigners shall build up
your walls,
And their kings shall minister to you;
For in My wrath I struck you,
But in My favor I have had mercy on
you.

Isaiah 60:11

Many ancient cities were protected on all sides by enormous walls. The gates in those walls were always closed at night to keep out thieves and enemy armies.

11 Therefore your gates shall be open
continually;
They shall not be shut day or night,
That *men* may bring to you the wealth
of the Gentiles,
And their kings in procession.
12 For the nation and kingdom which will
not serve you shall perish,
And *those* nations shall be utterly
ruined.

13 "The glory of Lebanon shall come to
you,
The cypress, the pine, and the box tree
together,
To beautify the place of My sanctuary;
And I will make the place of My feet
glorious.
14 Also the sons of those who afflicted
you
Shall come bowing to you,
And all those who despised you shall
fall prostrate at the soles of your
feet;
And they shall call you The City of the
LORD,
Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

15 "Whereas you have been forsaken and
hated,
So that no one went through *you,*
I will make you an eternal excellence,
A joy of many generations.
16 You shall drink the milk of the
Gentiles,
And milk the breast of kings;
You shall know that I, the LORD, *am*
your Savior
And your Redeemer, the Mighty One
of Jacob.

17 "Instead of bronze I will bring gold,
Instead of iron I will bring silver,
Instead of wood, bronze,
And instead of stones, iron.
I will also make your officers peace,
And your magistrates righteousness.
18 Violence shall no longer be heard in
your land,
Neither wasting nor destruction
within your borders;
But you shall call your walls Salvation,
And your gates Praise.

GOD THE GLORY OF HIS PEOPLE

19 "The sun shall no longer be your light
by day,
Nor for brightness shall the moon give
light to you;
But the LORD will be to you an
everlasting light,
And your God your glory.
20 Your sun shall no longer go down,
Nor shall your moon withdraw itself;
For the LORD will be your everlasting
light,
And the days of your mourning shall
be ended.

MAKING IT REAL // ISAIAH 61:1–3

Trees of Righteousness Throughout the Bible, trees symbolize people. So it makes sense that the Bible says you have been planted by the Lord. Think of a farmer. Why does he plant a crop? He plants so that the seeds will grow strong and eventually produce a harvest for him. But he doesn't just throw the seeds in a hole and hope they produce. He takes care of them and does all he can to help them grow.

The Lord does the same thing with you. He plants you and gives you life. Then, as you grow, He helps you and does all He can to make you strong. He helps your roots go deep, so you won't be easily destroyed. He gives you living water—the life and love of Jesus. He gives you His Word—almost like a fertilizer—to help you be more than you would be without it. Then, one day, you are part of His harvest. You are one of the people who has produced well for Him and honored His name. (See also: Ps. 1:1–3; Jer. 17:7, 8; 24:6; Amos 9:15.)

Words to Live By

Righteousness: The word translated as "righteousness" in Isaiah 61:3 is the Hebrew word *tsedeq* (tseh'-dek). It means "right" or "just." Isaiah says the Lord's people will be like trees of righteousness. Not only will we be planted and nourished by God Himself, but He will also make us righteous. Through His love and strength, we will be able to make the right decisions and do the things that please Him.

21 Also your people *shall* all *be* righteous;
They shall inherit the land forever,
The branch of My planting,
The work of My hands,
That I may be glorified.
22 A little one shall become a thousand,
And a small one a strong nation.
I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time."

THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION

61 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;
2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn,
3 To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

4 And they shall rebuild the old ruins,
They shall raise up the former desolations,
And they shall repair the ruined cities,
The desolations of many generations.
5 Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
And the sons of the foreigner
Shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.
6 But you shall be named the priests of the LORD,
They shall call you the servants of our God.
You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles,
And in their glory you shall boast.
7 Instead of your shame *you shall have* double *honor,*
And *instead of* confusion they shall rejoice in their portion.

WORLD APP

Human Trafficking / Isaiah 61:1

In America, when we hear the word *slavery*, we usually think of the practice that was abolished in our country by President Abraham Lincoln. But slavery is not just an institution of the past. Today, all over the world, people are being bought and sold as slaves. According to the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT), "An estimated 2.5 million people are in forced labour (including sexual exploitation) at any given time as a result of trafficking."

It is an ugly and shameful fact that some people today have made a huge and lucrative business out of buying and selling, or "trafficking," people. The life of a trafficking victim is one of despair and danger; she (or he) faces abuse, threatening surroundings, and even death. This problem seems overwhelming because it is worldwide and incredibly difficult to track, much less stop. But there is hope. Law enforcement agencies all over the world are combatting the massive crime as best they can. But there's more to be done.

You may feel helpless when confronted with such rampant evil. But you can help. Ministries have been started by concerned Christians seeking to do their part to end human trafficking. You can commit to take the time to research this issue and find a trustworthy ministry to support. You can pray fervently for those victims all over the world who are living as slaves.

In Luke 4:18, 19, Jesus read from the Scriptures, proclaiming a prophetic message of liberty: "He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound" (Is. 61:1). We serve the God of liberty! As the body of Christ on earth, we can stand together for justice and speak for those who can't speak for themselves. We can act as one body with faith, determination, and God-given courage, until we see the last slave freed.

MAKING IT REAL // ISAIAH 62:3

Crown of Glory As Christians, we often talk about the things God gives us—hope, peace, forgiveness—everything we need, really. And it's good to think about all the good stuff God has given us and to say thanks.

But have you ever thought about it from the other side? Jesus left the greatest place you can imagine (heaven) to spend years on planet Earth. And He didn't exactly get the royal treatment while He was here. But He came willingly and gave His life for us. We know the amazing blessings we get from what He did. But what is His reward?

You are His reward. You are what He wants for His trouble. You are His crown—which means your relationship with Him brings Him glory. After everything He gave up to make that happen, He deserves His crown—He deserves you. Let Him have more of your life every day. (See also: Rev. 14:14.)

Words to Live By

Glory: The word translated as "glory" in Isaiah 62:3 is the Hebrew word *tipharah* (tif-aw-raw). It also means "beauty" or "honor" or "majesty." Isn't it amazing that the Lord sees you as something so beautiful as to bring Him honor and show His majesty to the world?

Therefore in their land they shall
possess double;
Everlasting joy shall be theirs.

8 "For I, the LORD, love justice;
I hate robbery for burnt offering;
I will direct their work in truth,
And will make with them an
everlasting covenant.
9 Their descendants shall be known
among the Gentiles,
And their offspring among the
people.
All who see them shall acknowledge
them,
That they *are* the posterity *whom* the
LORD has blessed."

10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
My soul shall be joyful in my God;
For He has clothed me with the
garments of salvation,
He has covered me with the robe of
righteousness,
As a bridegroom decks *himself* with
ornaments,
And as a bride adorns *herself* with her
jewels.
11 For as the earth brings forth its bud,
As the garden causes the things that
are sown in it to spring forth,
So the Lord GOD will cause
righteousness and praise to
spring forth before all the
nations.

ASSURANCE OF ZION'S SALVATION

62 For Zion's sake I will not hold
My peace,
And for Jerusalem's sake I will
not rest,
Until her righteousness goes forth as
brightness,
And her salvation as a lamp *that*
burns.
2 The Gentiles shall see your
righteousness,
And all kings your glory.
You shall be called by a new name,
Which the mouth of the LORD will
name.
3 You shall also be a crown of glory
In the hand of the LORD,
And a royal diadem
In the hand of your God.
4 You shall no longer be termed
Forsaken,

Nor shall your land any more be
termed Desolate;
But you shall be called Hephzibah,[a]
and your land Beulah;[b]
For the LORD delights in you,
And your land shall be married.

JOY
Does God find joy in His people?
Isaiah 62:5

5For *as* a young man marries a virgin,
So shall your sons marry you;
And *as* the bridegroom rejoices over
the bride,
So shall your God rejoice over you.

6I have set watchmen on your walls,
O Jerusalem;
They shall never hold their peace day
or night.
You who make mention of the LORD,
do not keep silent,
7And give Him no rest till He
establishes
And till He makes Jerusalem a praise
in the earth.

8The LORD has sworn by His right hand
And by the arm of His strength:
"Surely I will no longer give your grain
As food for your enemies;
And the sons of the foreigner shall not
drink your new wine,
For which you have labored.
9But those who have gathered it shall
eat it,
And praise the LORD;
Those who have brought it together
shall drink it in My holy courts."

10Go through,
Go through the gates!
Prepare the way for the people;
Build up,
Build up the highway!
Take out the stones,
Lift up a banner for the peoples!

11Indeed the LORD has proclaimed
To the end of the world:
"Say to the daughter of Zion,
'Surely your salvation is coming;
Behold, His reward *is* with Him,
And His work before Him.'"
12And they shall call them The Holy
People,
The Redeemed of the LORD;
And you shall be called Sought Out,
A City Not Forsaken.

THE LORD IN JUDGMENT AND SALVATION

63 Who *is* this who comes from
Edom,
With dyed garments from
Bozrah,
This *One who is* glorious in His apparel,
Traveling in the greatness of His
strength?—

"I who speak in righteousness, mighty
to save."

Isaiah 63:2
In ancient times, people who pressed grapes for a living literally stomped on the grapes with their bare feet to make juice. These vineyard workers developed permanent stains on their legs and clothes.

2Why *is* Your apparel red,
And Your garments like one who
treads in the winepress?

3"I have trodden the winepress alone,
And from the peoples no one *was*
with Me.
For I have trodden them in My anger,
And trampled them in My fury;
Their blood is sprinkled upon My
garments,
And I have stained all My robes.
4For the day of vengeance *is* in My
heart,
And the year of My redeemed has
come.
5I looked, but *there was* no one to help,
And I wondered
That *there was* no one to uphold;
Therefore My own arm brought
salvation for Me;

62:4 [a]Literally *My Delight Is in Her* [b]Literally *Married*

And My own fury, it sustained Me.
6I have trodden down the peoples in
My anger,
Made them drunk in My fury,
And brought down their strength to
the earth."

MERCY
Is there a limit to God's mercy?
Isaiah 63:7

GOD'S MERCY REMEMBERED

7I will mention the lovingkindnesses of
the LORD
And the praises of the LORD,
According to all that the LORD has
bestowed on us,
And the great goodness toward the
house of Israel,
Which He has bestowed on them
according to His mercies,
According to the multitude of His
lovingkindnesses.
8For He said, "Surely they *are* My
people,
Children *who* will not lie."
So He became their Savior.
9In all their affliction He was afflicted,
And the Angel of His Presence saved
them;
In His love and in His pity He
redeemed them;
And He bore them and carried them
All the days of old.
10But they rebelled and grieved His Holy
Spirit;
So He turned Himself against them as
an enemy,
And He fought against them.

11Then he remembered the days of old,
Moses *and* his people, *saying:*
"Where *is* He who brought them up out
of the sea
With the shepherd of His flock?
Where *is* He who put His Holy Spirit
within them,
12Who led *them* by the right hand of
Moses,
With His glorious arm,
Dividing the water before them
To make for Himself an everlasting
name,
13Who led them through the deep,
As a horse in the wilderness,
That they might not stumble?"

14As a beast goes down into the valley,
And the Spirit of the LORD causes him
to rest,
So You lead Your people,
To make Yourself a glorious name.

A PRAYER OF PENITENCE

15Look down from heaven,
And see from Your habitation, holy
and glorious.
Where *are* Your zeal and Your
strength,
The yearning of Your heart and Your
mercies toward me?
Are they restrained?
16Doubtless You *are* our Father,
Though Abraham was ignorant of us,
And Israel does not acknowledge us.
You, O LORD, *are* our Father;
Our Redeemer from Everlasting *is*
Your name.
17O LORD, why have You made us stray
from Your ways,
And hardened our heart from Your
fear?
Return for Your servants' sake,
The tribes of Your inheritance.
18Your holy people have possessed *it* but
a little while;
Our adversaries have trodden down
Your sanctuary.
19We have become *like* those of old, over
whom You never ruled,
Those who were never called by Your
name.

64 Oh, that You would rend the
heavens!
That You would come down!
That the mountains might shake at
Your presence—
2As fire burns brushwood,
As fire causes water to boil—
To make Your name known to Your
adversaries,
That the nations may tremble at Your
presence!
3When You did awesome things *for*
which we did not look,

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ISAIAH 64:8

Becoming God makes you who you are. He gave you the talents you were born with. Your personality came from Him, too. He uses all the things that happen to you to help you become the person He wants you to be. He also gives you discipline and a lot of gentle leading.

But God wants your cooperation. If you won't listen to Him or if you're always complaining every time your life isn't going the way you planned, then it's going to take a long time for you to change. But if you let Him do what He needs to do, the change will come more quickly.

That's the key—let Him do it. You can become more patient, more loving, or more thoughtful only by letting God change the way you think (Rom. 12:2). You can decide to change your actions ("I will not yell, I will not yell, I will not yell"), but unless you change on the inside, the outside changes won't last. Ask God to make the real changes, to mold you into the person He created you to be. That's His job. (See also: Rom. 12:2; 1 Pet. 4:10.)

Words to Live By

Potter: The word translated as "potter" in Isaiah 64:8 is the Hebrew word *yatsar* (yaw-tsar). It means "to mold into a form." That's exactly what a potter does. He takes the clay and uses his own hands to shape and mold it into a beautiful creation. Isaiah tells us that God is our potter and we are His clay. Always let yourself be moldable clay in His hands as He molds you into the amazing person He has designed you to become.

You came down,
The mountains shook at Your presence.
4 For since the beginning of the world
Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear,
Nor has the eye seen any God besides You,
Who acts for the one who waits for Him.
5 You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness,
Who remembers You in Your ways.
You are indeed angry, for we have sinned—
In these ways we continue;
And we need to be saved.

6 But we are all like an unclean *thing,*
And all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags;
We all fade as a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind,
Have taken us away.
7 And *there is* no one who calls on Your name,
Who stirs himself up to take hold of You;
For You have hidden Your face from us,
And have consumed us because of our iniquities.

8 But now, O LORD,
You *are* our Father;
We *are* the clay, and You our potter;
And all we *are* the work of Your hand.
9 Do not be furious, O LORD,
Nor remember iniquity forever;
Indeed, please look—we all *are* Your people!
10 Your holy cities are a wilderness,
Zion is a wilderness,
Jerusalem a desolation.
11 Our holy and beautiful temple,
Where our fathers praised You,
Is burned up with fire;
And all our pleasant things are laid waste.
12 Will You restrain Yourself because of these *things,* O LORD?
Will You hold Your peace, and afflict us very severely?

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

65 "I was sought by *those who* did
not ask *for Me;*
I was found by *those who* did
not seek Me.
I said, 'Here I am, here I am,'
To a nation *that* was not called by My
name.
2I have stretched out My hands all day
long to a rebellious people,
Who walk in a way *that is* not good,
According to their own thoughts;
3A people who provoke Me to anger
continually to My face;
Who sacrifice in gardens,
And burn incense on altars of brick;

Isaiah 65:4

There were certain foods that God did not want His people to eat. Pork was one of them. Shellfish was another. Not only did the Israelites not eat these foods themselves; they were disgusted by anyone who did.

4Who sit among the graves,
And spend the night in the tombs;
Who eat swine's flesh,
And the broth of abominable things is
in their vessels;
5Who say, 'Keep to yourself,
Do not come near me,
For I am holier than you!'
These *are* smoke in My nostrils,
A fire that burns all the day.

6"Behold, *it is* written before Me:
I will not keep silence, but will repay—
Even repay into their bosom—
7Your iniquities and the iniquities of
your fathers together,"
Says the LORD,
"Who have burned incense on the
mountains
And blasphemed Me on the hills;
Therefore I will measure their former
work into their bosom."

8Thus says the LORD:

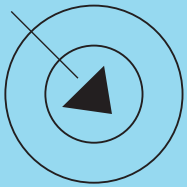
"As the new wine is found in the
cluster,
And *one* says, 'Do not destroy it,
For a blessing *is* in it,'
So will I do for My servants' sake,
That I may not destroy them all.
9I will bring forth descendants from
Jacob,
And from Judah an heir of My
mountains;
My elect shall inherit it,
And My servants shall dwell there.
10Sharon shall be a fold of flocks,
And the Valley of Achor a place for
herds to lie down,
For My people who have sought Me.

11"But you *are* those who forsake the
LORD,
Who forget My holy mountain,
Who prepare a table for Gad,[a]
And who furnish a drink offering for
Meni.[b]
12Therefore I will number you for the
sword,
And you shall all bow down to the
slaughter;
Because, when I called, you did not
answer;
When I spoke, you did not hear,
But did evil before My eyes,
And chose *that* in which I do not
delight."

13Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, My servants shall eat,
But you shall be hungry;
Behold, My servants shall drink,
But you shall be thirsty;
Behold, My servants shall rejoice,
But you shall be ashamed;
14Behold, My servants shall sing for joy
of heart,
But you shall cry for sorrow of heart,
And wail for grief of spirit.
15You shall leave your name as a curse to
My chosen;
For the Lord GOD will slay you,
And call His servants by another
name;
16So that he who blesses himself in the
earth
Shall bless himself in the God of truth;

65:11 [a]Literally *Troop* or *Fortune,* a pagan deity
[b]Literally *Number* or *Destiny,* a pagan deity



PROMISE

God promises to answer your prayers.

"It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear" (Is. 65:24).

Your best friend is lying in a hospital bed. She was in a car wreck over the weekend and the doctors have said she probably won't live through the night. You remember when your parents used to make you go to Sunday school. You remember God. You pray, for the first time in years, and beg God to let your friend live. He does.

Do you believe God answers your prayers? Not because you think you're supposed to, but because you really believe it? When you pray, do you just hope your prayer makes it all the way up to heaven, or do you know in your heart that God is listening to you?

God says He will answer your prayers before you even get through praying. Now that is awesome! He knows you so well that He gets to work on your request before it even gets out of your mouth. Remember, God may not always agree that what you want is what's best. He is totally wise, and He knows exactly what needs to happen at all times, so you need to trust Him to make the right move at the right time. All you need to do is know God's will (you can find it in His Word—the Bible), and trust Him to send the right answer. He may say yes, no, or not yet, but He will answer whenever you pray. Regardless of His answer, isn't it amazing that He always hears you and goes to work before you finish praying?

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Deuteronomy 4:5–8; Job 22:27, 28; Psalms 28:6; 91:15

And he who swears in the earth
Shall swear by the God of truth;
Because the former troubles are
forgotten,
And because they are hidden from My
eyes.

THE GLORIOUS NEW CREATION

17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a
new earth;
And the former shall not be
remembered or come to mind.
18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what
I create;
For behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a
rejoicing,
And her people a joy.
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
And joy in My people;
The voice of weeping shall no longer
be heard in her,
Nor the voice of crying.

20 "No more shall an infant from there *live*
but a few days,
Nor an old man who has not fulfilled
his days;
For the child shall die one hundred
years old,
But the sinner *being* one hundred
years old shall be accursed.
21 They shall build houses and inhabit
them;
They shall plant vineyards and eat
their fruit.
22 They shall not build and another
inhabit;
They shall not plant and another eat;
For as the days of a tree, *so shall be* the
days of My people,
And My elect shall long enjoy the work
of their hands.
23 They shall not labor in vain,
Nor bring forth children for trouble;
For they *shall be* the descendants of
the blessed of the LORD,
And their offspring with them.

24 "It shall come to pass
That before they call, I will answer;

And while they are still speaking, I will
hear.
25 "The wolf and the lamb shall feed
together,
The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
And dust *shall be* the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all
My holy mountain,"
Says the LORD.

TRUE WORSHIP AND FALSE

66 Thus says the LORD:

"Heaven *is* My throne,
And earth *is* My footstool.
Where *is* the house that you will
build Me?
And where *is* the place of My rest?

WORSHIP
How should we respond to God?
Isaiah 66:2

2 For all those *things* My hand has
made,
And all those *things* exist,"
Says the LORD.
"But on this *one* will I look:
On *him who is* poor and of a contrite
spirit,
And who trembles at My word.

3 "He who kills a bull *is as if* he slays a
man;
He who sacrifices a lamb, *as if* he
breaks a dog's neck;
He who offers a grain offering, *as if he
offers* swine's blood;
He who burns incense, *as if* he blesses
an idol.
Just as they have chosen their own
ways,
And their soul delights in their
abominations,
4 So will I choose their delusions,
And bring their fears on them;
Because, when I called, no one
answered,
When I spoke they did not hear;
But they did evil before My eyes,
And chose *that* in which I do not
delight."

THE LORD VINDICATES ZION

5 Hear the word of the LORD,
You who tremble at His word:
"Your brethren who hated you,
Who cast you out for My name's sake,
said,
'Let the LORD be glorified,
That we may see your joy.'
But they shall be ashamed."

6 The sound of noise from the city!
A voice from the temple!
The voice of the LORD,
Who fully repays His enemies!

7 "Before she was in labor, she gave
birth;
Before her pain came,
She delivered a male child.
8 Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Shall the earth be made to give birth in
one day?
Or shall a nation be born at once?
For as soon as Zion was in labor,
She gave birth to her children.
9 Shall I bring to the time of birth, and
not cause delivery?" says the
LORD.
"Shall I who cause delivery shut up *the
womb?*" says your God.
10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem,
And be glad with her, all you who love
her;
Rejoice for joy with her, all you who
mourn for her;
11 That you may feed and be satisfied
With the consolation of her bosom,
That you may drink deeply and be
delighted
With the abundance of her glory."

12 For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will extend peace to her like
a river,
And the glory of the Gentiles like a
flowing stream.
Then you shall feed;
On *her* sides shall you be carried,
And be dandled on *her* knees.
13 As one whom his mother comforts,
So I will comfort you;
And you shall be comforted in
Jerusalem."

THE REIGN AND INDIGNATION OF GOD

14 When you see *this,* your heart shall
rejoice,
And your bones shall flourish like
grass;
The hand of the LORD shall be known
to His servants,
And *His* indignation to His enemies.
15 For behold, the LORD will come with
fire
And with His chariots, like a
whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.
16 For by fire and by His sword
The LORD will judge all flesh;
And the slain of the LORD shall be
many.

17 "Those who sanctify themselves and
purify themselves,
To go to the gardens
After an *idol* in the midst,
Eating swine's flesh and the
abomination and the mouse,
Shall be consumed together," says the
LORD.

18 "For I *know* their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. 19 I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: *to* Tarshish and Pul[a] and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, *to* the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. 20 Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. 21 And I will also take some of them for priests *and* Levites," says the LORD.

22 "For as the new heavens and the new
earth
Which I will make shall remain before
Me," says the LORD,
"So shall your descendants and your
name remain.
23 And it shall come to pass
That from one New Moon to another,
And from one Sabbath to another,
All flesh shall come to worship before
Me," says the LORD.

24 "And they shall go forth and look
Upon the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me.
For their worm does not die,
And their fire is not quenched.
They shall be an abhorrence to all
flesh."

66:19 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint reads *Put* (compare Jeremiah 46:9).

Jeremiah

DATE OF WRITING: 626–586 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET JEREMIAH
THEME: FAILURE TO REPENT WILL LEAD TO DESTRUCTION
PURPOSE: IT IS WISE TO HEED GOD'S WARNINGS AND HONOR HIS MESSENGERS.

OUTLINE

1:1–19 .....God Chooses Jeremiah to Speak for Him
2:1—26:24.....God Will Punish the People of Judah and Jerusalem
27:1—29:32 .....Jeremiah Against the Lying Prophets
30:1—33:26 .....God Will Someday Bring His People Back to Their Land
34:1—38:28 .....Scenes from Jeremiah's Ministry
39:1—42:22 .....The Fall of Jerusalem and Later Events in Judah
43:1—44:30 .....Jeremiah in Egypt
45:1–5 .....A Message for Baruch
46:1—51:64 .....The Lord Speaks About the Nations
52:1–34.....Another Account of the Fall of Jerusalem

KEY VERSE:

"Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people" (Jeremiah 7:23).

THEN /// Jeremiah was not what you would call a diplomat. He didn't spend a lot of energy trying to find the softest way to say something. He just blurted out the truth and let his listeners deal with it in whatever way they wanted to. Because of this he wasn't a particularly loved prophet.

He wasn't a particularly happy prophet either; he is actually called the "weeping prophet." Jeremiah's heart was broken over the sin of his people. He knew that, if they didn't stay strong spiritually, they would eventually lose everything. He kept telling them, but they didn't listen. Jeremiah knew his people would eventually be destroyed because of their sin. His tears showed his people a picture of how God felt about their lifestyle.

NOW /// The Book of Jeremiah is really about consequences. Jeremiah's people were living their lives as if God didn't matter at all. As a result, when they needed God's protection they didn't get it. Eventually they were taken away like prisoners to a foreign country. They lost everything. How's that for consequences?

We deal with consequences, too. When we live our lives the way God wants us to, it's easier to find His guidance and direction. But if we live our lives as if God doesn't matter, then we don't even recognize His voice when He gives us direction. If we disregard God long enough, we could reach a point where we don't recognize His help at all. We might not become exiles, but we'll be alone just the same.

REALITY CHECK /// Jeremiah said some pretty harsh things to his people. I'm sure those things were hard for them to hear. But Jeremiah loved them so much that he didn't want them to suffer trouble and difficulty because they refused to live their lives in the right way. God knew how deep Jeremiah's love was, so He spoke to Jeremiah and told him how to warn his people of the consequences of their sinful behavior.

We, too, may hear harsh words regarding our behavior. Sometimes it's difficult to hear when those who love us warn us about the possible consequences of our poor choices. Although we may not like what we hear at those times, we would be wise to really listen and act on the good advice we're given. Just as Jeremiah tried to warn his people, so those who love us just may be able to warn us before disaster strikes.

1 The words of Jeremiah the son of
Hilkiah, of the priests who *were* in
Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,
2 to whom the word of the LORD came in
the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of
Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. 3 It
came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son
of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the
eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah,
king of Judah, until the carrying away of Je-
rusalem captive in the fifth month.

THE PROPHET IS CALLED

4 Then the word of the LORD came to me,
saying:

5 "Before I formed you in the womb I
knew you;
Before you were born I sanctified
you;
I ordained you a prophet to the
nations."

6 Then said I:

"Ah, Lord GOD!
Behold, I cannot speak, for I *am* a
youth."

7 But the LORD said to me:

"Do not say, 'I *am* a youth,'
For you shall go to all to whom I send
you,

ABORTION
What does God know about us before we're born?
Jeremiah 1:5



PROFILE
JEREMIAH

Our image of Old Testament prophets can make it difficult to imagine what they were like as kids. Did they thunder judgment as five-year-olds? Were they prematurely bearded? The Bible (as usual) has a way of correcting our impressions. Prophets came in all shapes and sizes. They were real people with real lives and, usually, just as normal as we are. Often, being called as God's prophet was just as much a shock to them as it would be to us. Jeremiah was probably typical.

When God called Jeremiah to be a prophet, Jeremiah responded that he was insecure and inexperienced. He believed he couldn't speak, and he claimed he was too young. God didn't tell Jeremiah he was wrong. In fact, God agreed with Jeremiah. The newly-appointed prophet was a tongue-tied beginner.

God told Jeremiah to stop thinking of his own inabilities and to start thinking about how God was going to make up for his obvious weaknesses. God gave Jeremiah three unforgettable promises as part of his commission. These promises are recorded in the Book of Jeremiah: 1) God's guidance (1:7); 2) God's words (1:7); 3) God's companionship (1:8). God also gave Jeremiah three commands: 1) Don't use your youth as an excuse (1:7); 2) Go where I send you (1:7); 3) Don't be afraid (1:8).

Jeremiah didn't have an easy life (he is sometimes called "the weeping prophet"). He may have been the least popular prophet: he spent time in prison; some of his writings were burned; he was even dropped in the bottom of a well. But God kept His promises. We know Jeremiah was always aware that God was with him—leading him, guiding him, and speaking to him. No matter where Jeremiah was or what he was doing, his conversation with God was never-ending. He complained to God constantly!

One of the ways Jeremiah made a difference was by living a faith that expressed reality—he shared his heart and real feelings with God. Jeremiah didn't edit his prayers. He didn't tell God what he thought God wanted to hear. He admitted to God what God already knew. Honest prayer changes the person who prays.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

God knows you inside out because He designed you. Like Jeremiah, you will discover that the more you are open to God's direction, the more you will find God using both your abilities and your inabilities to accomplish His purposes. God will make a difference through you. He will use you just as you are, regardless of your weaknesses. He will make a difference in you as He is making a difference through you. As God told Jeremiah, "I am with you to deliver you" (Jer. 1:8).

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

You can read about Jeremiah's life in the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations.

Even with all his weaknesses, Jeremiah was obedient to God and made a real difference. You can, too!

And whatever I command you, you
shall speak.
8Do not be afraid of their faces,
For I *am* with you to deliver you," says
the LORD.

9Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me:

"Behold, I have put My words in your
mouth.
10See, I have this day set you over the
nations and over the kingdoms,
To root out and to pull down,
To destroy and to throw down,
To build and to plant."

11Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?"
And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree."
12Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word."
13And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?"
And I said, "I see a boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north."
14Then the LORD said to me:

"Out of the north calamity shall break
forth
On all the inhabitants of the land.
15For behold, I am calling
All the families of the kingdoms of the
north," says the LORD;
"They shall come and each one set his
throne
At the entrance of the gates of
Jerusalem,
Against all its walls all around,
And against all the cities of Judah.
16I will utter My judgments
Against them concerning all their
wickedness,
Because they have forsaken Me,
Burned incense to other gods,
And worshiped the works of their own
hands.

17"Therefore prepare yourself and arise,
And speak to them all that I command
you.
Do not be dismayed before their faces,
Lest I dismay you before them.
18For behold, I have made you this day
A fortified city and an iron pillar,
And bronze walls against the whole
land—
Against the kings of Judah,
Against its princes,
Against its priests,
And against the people of the land.
19They will fight against you,
But they shall not prevail against you.
For I *am* with you," says the LORD, "to
deliver you."

GOD'S CASE AGAINST ISRAEL

2 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD:

"I remember you,
The kindness of your youth,
The love of your betrothal,
When you went after Me in the
wilderness,
In a land not sown.
3Israel *was* holiness to the LORD,
The firstfruits of His increase.
All that devour him will offend;
Disaster will come upon them," says
the LORD.'"

4Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel. 5Thus says the LORD:

"What injustice have your fathers
found in Me,
That they have gone far from Me,
Have followed idols,
And have become idolaters?
6Neither did they say, 'Where *is* the
LORD,
Who brought us up out of the land of
Egypt,
Who led us through the wilderness,
Through a land of deserts and pits,
Through a land of drought and the
shadow of death,
Through a land that no one crossed
And where no one dwelt?'
7I brought you into a bountiful
country,
To eat its fruit and its goodness.

But when you entered, you defiled My land
And made My heritage an abomination.
8 The priests did not say, 'Where *is* the LORD?'
And those who handle the law did not know Me;
The rulers also transgressed against Me;
The prophets prophesied by Baal,
And walked after *things that* do not profit.

9 "Therefore I will yet bring charges against you," says the LORD,
"And against your children's children I will bring charges.
10 For pass beyond the coasts of Cyprus[a] and see,
Send to Kedar[b] and consider diligently,
And see if there has been such *a thing.*
11 Has a nation changed *its* gods,
Which *are* not gods?
But My people have changed their Glory
For *what* does not profit.
12 Be astonished, O heavens, at this,
And be horribly afraid;
Be very desolate," says the LORD.
13 "For My people have committed two evils:
They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters,
And hewn themselves cisterns—
broken cisterns that can hold no water.

14 "*Is* Israel a servant?
Is he a homeborn *slave?*
Why is he plundered?
15 The young lions roared at him, *and* growled;
They made his land waste;
His cities are burned, without inhabitant.
16 Also the people of Noph[a] and Tahpanhes
Have broken the crown of your head.
17 Have you not brought this on yourself,
In that you have forsaken the LORD your God
When He led you in the way?
18 And now why take the road to Egypt,
To drink the waters of Sihor?
Or why take the road to Assyria,
To drink the waters of the River?[a]
19 Your own wickedness will correct you,
And your backslidings will rebuke you.
Know therefore and see that *it is* an evil and bitter *thing*
That you have forsaken the LORD your God,
And the fear of Me *is* not in you,"
Says the Lord GOD of hosts.

20 "For of old I have broken your yoke *and* burst your bonds;
And you said, 'I will not transgress,'
When on every high hill and under every green tree
You lay down, playing the harlot.
21 Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality.
How then have you turned before Me
Into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?
22 For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap,
Yet your iniquity is marked before Me," says the Lord GOD.

23 "How can you say, 'I am not polluted,
I have not gone after the Baals'?
See your way in the valley;
Know what you have done:
You are a swift dromedary breaking loose in her ways,
24 A wild donkey used to the wilderness,
That sniffs at the wind in her desire;
In her time of mating, who can turn her away?
All those who seek her will not weary themselves;
In her month they will find her.
25 Withhold your foot from being unshod, and your throat from thirst.
But you said, 'There is no hope.
No! For I have loved aliens, and after them I will go.'

26 "As the thief is ashamed when he is found out,
So is the house of Israel ashamed;

2:10 [a]Hebrew *Kittim,* western lands, especially Cyprus [b]In the northern Arabian desert, representative of the eastern cultures
2:16 [a]That is, Memphis in ancient Egypt
2:18 [a]That is, the Euphrates

They and their kings and their princes,
and their priests and their
prophets,
27 Saying to a tree, 'You *are* my father,'
And to a stone, 'You gave birth to me.'
For they have turned *their* back to Me,
and not *their* face.
But in the time of their trouble
They will say, 'Arise and save us.'
28 But where *are* your gods that you have
made for yourselves?
Let them arise,
If they can save you in the time of your
trouble;
For *according to* the number of your
cities
Are your gods, O Judah.

29 "Why will you plead with Me?
You all have transgressed against Me,"
says the LORD.
30 "In vain I have chastened your
children;
They received no correction.
Your sword has devoured your
prophets
Like a destroying lion.

31 "O generation, see the word of the
LORD!
Have I been a wilderness to Israel,
Or a land of darkness?
Why do My people say, 'We are lords;
We will come no more to You'?
32 Can a virgin forget her ornaments,
Or a bride her attire?
Yet My people have forgotten Me days
without number.

33 "Why do you beautify your way to seek
love?
Therefore you have also taught
The wicked women your ways.
34 Also on your skirts is found
The blood of the lives of the poor
innocents.
I have not found it by secret search,
But plainly on all these things.
35 Yet you say, 'Because I am innocent,
Surely His anger shall turn from me.'
Behold, I will plead My case against
you,
Because you say, 'I have not sinned.'
36 Why do you gad about so much to
change your way?
Also you shall be ashamed of Egypt as
you were ashamed of Assyria.
37 Indeed you will go forth from him
With your hands on your head;
For the LORD has rejected your trusted
allies,
And you will not prosper by them.

ISRAEL IS SHAMELESS

3 "They say, 'If a man divorces his wife,
And she goes from him
And becomes another man's,
May he return to her again?'
Would not that land be greatly
polluted?
But you have played the harlot with
many lovers;
Yet return to Me," says the LORD.

2 "Lift up your eyes to the desolate
heights and see:
Where have you not lain *with men?*
By the road you have sat for them
Like an Arabian in the wilderness;
And you have polluted the land
With your harlotries and your
wickedness.
3 Therefore the showers have been
withheld,
And there has been no latter rain.
You have had a harlot's forehead;
You refuse to be ashamed.
4 Will you not from this time cry to Me,
'My Father, You *are* the guide of my
youth?
5 Will He remain angry forever?
Will He keep it to the end?'
Behold, you have spoken and done evil
things,
As you were able."

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

6 The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. 7 And I said, after she had done all these *things,* 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and

played the harlot also. 9So it came to pass,
through her casual harlotry, that she de-
filed the land and committed adultery with
stones and trees. 10And yet for all this her
treacherous sister Judah has not turned to
Me with her whole heart, but in pretense,"
says the LORD.
11Then the LORD said to me, "Backslid-
ing Israel has shown herself more right-
eous than treacherous Judah. 12Go and
proclaim these words toward the north,
and say:

'Return, backsliding Israel,' says the
LORD;
'I will not cause My anger to fall on you.
For I *am* merciful,' says the LORD;
'I will not remain angry forever.
13Only acknowledge your iniquity,
That you have transgressed against the
LORD your God,
And have scattered your charms
To alien deities under every green tree,
And you have not obeyed My voice,'
says the LORD.

14"Return, O backsliding children," says
the LORD; "for I am married to you. I will
take you, one from a city and two from a
family, and I will bring you to Zion. 15And
I will give you shepherds according to My
heart, who will feed you with knowledge
and understanding.
16"Then it shall come to pass, when you
are multiplied and increased in the land in
those days," says the LORD, "that they will
say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the
LORD.' It shall not come to mind, nor shall
they remember it, nor shall they visit *it*, nor
shall it be made anymore.
17"At that time Jerusalem shall be called
The Throne of the LORD, and all the na-
tions shall be gathered to it, to the name of
the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they
follow the dictates of their evil hearts.
18"In those days the house of Judah shall
walk with the house of Israel, and they shall
come together out of the land of the north
to the land that I have given as an inheri-
tance to your fathers.
19"But I said:

'How can I put you among the
children
And give you a pleasant land,
A beautiful heritage of the hosts of
nations?'

"And I said:

'You shall call Me, "My Father,"
And not turn away from Me.'
20Surely, *as* a wife treacherously departs
from her husband,
So have you dealt treacherously
with Me,
O house of Israel," says the LORD.

21A voice was heard on the desolate
heights,
Weeping *and* supplications of the
children of Israel.
For they have perverted their way;
They have forgotten the LORD their
God.

22"Return, you backsliding children,
And I will heal your backslidings."

"Indeed we do come to You,
For You are the LORD our God.
23Truly, in vain *is salvation hoped for*
from the hills,
And from the multitude of
mountains;
Truly, in the LORD our God
Is the salvation of Israel.
24For shame has devoured
The labor of our fathers from our
youth—
Their flocks and their herds,
Their sons and their daughters.
25We lie down in our shame,
And our reproach covers us.
For we have sinned against the LORD
our God,
We and our fathers,
From our youth even to this day,
And have not obeyed the voice of the
LORD our God."

4 "If you will return, O Israel," says the
LORD,
"Return to Me;
And if you will put away your
abominations out of My sight,
Then you shall not be moved.
2And you shall swear, 'The LORD lives,'
In truth, in judgment, and in
righteousness;

The nations shall bless themselves in Him,
And in Him they shall glory."

3For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem:

"Break up your fallow ground,
And do not sow among thorns.
4Circumcise yourselves to the LORD,
And take away the foreskins of your hearts,
You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem,
Lest My fury come forth like fire,
And burn so that no one can quench *it,*
Because of the evil of your doings."

AN IMMINENT INVASION

5Declare in Judah and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say:

"Blow the trumpet in the land;
Cry, 'Gather together,'
And say, 'Assemble yourselves,
And let us go into the fortified cities.'
6Set up the standard toward Zion.
Take refuge! Do not delay!
For I will bring disaster from the north,
And great destruction."

7The lion has come up from his thicket,
And the destroyer of nations is on his way.
He has gone forth from his place
To make your land desolate.
Your cities will be laid waste,
Without inhabitant.
8For this, clothe yourself with sackcloth,
Lament and wail.
For the fierce anger of the LORD
Has not turned back from us.

9"And it shall come to pass in that day," says the LORD,
"*That* the heart of the king shall perish,
And the heart of the princes;
The priests shall be astonished,
And the prophets shall wonder."

10Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD!
Surely You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem,
Saying, 'You shall have peace,'
Whereas the sword reaches to the heart."

11At that time it will be said
To this people and to Jerusalem,
"A dry wind of the desolate heights *blows* in the wilderness
Toward the daughter of My people—
Not to fan or to cleanse—
12A wind too strong for these will come for Me;
Now I will also speak judgment against them."

13"Behold, he shall come up like clouds,
And his chariots like a whirlwind.
His horses are swifter than eagles.
Woe to us, for we are plundered!"

14O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness,
That you may be saved.
How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?
15For a voice declares from Dan
And proclaims affliction from Mount Ephraim:
16"Make mention to the nations,
Yes, proclaim against Jerusalem,
That watchers come from a far country
And raise their voice against the cities of Judah.
17Like keepers of a field they are against her all around,
Because she has been rebellious against Me," says the LORD.
18"Your ways and your doings
Have procured these *things* for you.
This *is* your wickedness,
Because it is bitter,
Because it reaches to your heart."

SORROW FOR THE DOOMED NATION

19O my soul, my soul!
I am pained in my very heart!
My heart makes a noise in me;
I cannot hold my peace,
Because you have heard, O my soul,
The sound of the trumpet,
The alarm of war.
20Destruction upon destruction is cried,
For the whole land is plundered.
Suddenly my tents are plundered,

And my curtains in a moment.
21 How long will I see the standard,
And hear the sound of the trumpet?

22 "For My people *are* foolish,
They have not known Me.
They *are* silly children,
And they have no understanding.
They *are* wise to do evil,
But to do good they have no knowledge."

23 I beheld the earth, and indeed *it was* without form, and void;
And the heavens, they *had* no light.
24 I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled,
And all the hills moved back and forth.
25 I beheld, and indeed *there was* no man,
And all the birds of the heavens had fled.
26 I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land *was* a wilderness,
And all its cities were broken down
At the presence of the LORD,
By His fierce anger.

27 For thus says the LORD:

"The whole land shall be desolate;
Yet I will not make a full end.
28 For this shall the earth mourn,
And the heavens above be black,
Because I have spoken.
I have purposed and will not relent,
Nor will I turn back from it.
29 The whole city shall flee from the noise of the horsemen and bowmen.
They shall go into thickets and climb up on the rocks.
Every city *shall be* forsaken,
And not a man shall dwell in it.

30 "And *when* you *are* plundered,
What will you do?
Though you clothe yourself with crimson,
Though you adorn *yourself* with ornaments of gold,
Though you enlarge your eyes with paint,
In vain you will make yourself fair;
Your lovers will despise you;
They will seek your life.

31 "For I have heard a voice as of a woman in labor,
The anguish as of her who brings forth her first child,
The voice of the daughter of Zion bewailing herself;
She spreads her hands, *saying,*
'Woe *is* me now, for my soul is weary
Because of murderers!'

THE JUSTICE OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

5 "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem;
See now and know;
And seek in her open places
If you can find a man,
If there is *anyone* who executes judgment,
Who seeks the truth,
And I will pardon her.
2 Though they say, '*As* the LORD lives,'
Surely they swear falsely."

3 O LORD, *are* not Your eyes on the truth?
You have stricken them,
But they have not grieved;
You have consumed them,
But they have refused to receive correction.
They have made their faces harder than rock;
They have refused to return.

4 Therefore I said, "Surely these *are* poor.
They are foolish;
For they do not know the way of the LORD,
The judgment of their God.
5 I will go to the great men and speak to them,
For they have known the way of the LORD,
The judgment of their God."

But these have altogether broken the yoke
And burst the bonds.
6 Therefore a lion from the forest shall slay them,
A wolf of the deserts shall destroy them;
A leopard will watch over their cities.

Everyone who goes out from there
shall be torn in pieces,
Because their transgressions are
many;
Their backslidings have increased.

7"How shall I pardon you for this?
Your children have forsaken Me
And sworn by *those that are* not gods.
When I had fed them to the full,
Then they committed adultery
And assembled themselves by troops
in the harlots' houses.
8They were *like* well-fed lusty stallions;
Every one neighed after his neighbor's
wife.
9Shall I not punish *them* for these
things?" says the LORD.
"And shall I not avenge Myself on such a
nation as this?

10"Go up on her walls and destroy,
But do not make a complete end.
Take away her branches,
For they *are* not the LORD's.
11For the house of Israel and the house
of Judah
Have dealt very treacherously with
Me," says the LORD.

12They have lied about the LORD,
And said, "*It is* not He.
Neither will evil come upon us,
Nor shall we see sword or famine.
13And the prophets become wind,
For the word *is* not in them.
Thus shall it be done to them."

14Therefore thus says the LORD God of
hosts:

"Because you speak this word,
Behold, I will make My words in your
mouth fire,
And this people wood,
And it shall devour them.
15Behold, I will bring a nation against
you from afar,
O house of Israel," says the LORD.
"It *is* a mighty nation,
It *is* an ancient nation,
A nation whose language you do not
know,
Nor can you understand what they
say.
16Their quiver *is* like an open tomb;
They *are* all mighty men.
17And they shall eat up your harvest and
your bread,
Which your sons and daughters should
eat.
They shall eat up your flocks and your
herds;
They shall eat up your vines and your
fig trees;
They shall destroy your fortified
cities,
In which you trust, with the sword.

18"Nevertheless in those days," says the
LORD, "I will not make a complete end of
you. 19And it will be when you say, 'Why
does the LORD our God do all these *things*
to us?' then you shall answer them, 'Just as
you have forsaken Me and served foreign
gods in your land, so you shall serve aliens
in a land *that is* not yours.'

20"Declare this in the house of Jacob
And proclaim it in Judah, saying,
21'Hear this now, O foolish people,
Without understanding,
Who have eyes and see not,
And who have ears and hear not:
22Do you not fear Me?' says the LORD.
'Will you not tremble at My presence,
Who have placed the sand as the
bound of the sea,
By a perpetual decree, that it cannot
pass beyond it?
And though its waves toss to and fro,
Yet they cannot prevail;
Though they roar, yet they cannot pass
over it.
23But this people has a defiant and
rebellious heart;
They have revolted and departed.
24They do not say in their heart,
"Let us now fear the LORD our God,
Who gives rain, both the former and
the latter, in its season.
He reserves for us the appointed
weeks of the harvest."
25Your iniquities have turned these
things away,
And your sins have withheld good
from you.

26'For among My people are found
wicked *men;*

They lie in wait as one who sets snares;
They set a trap;
They catch men.
27 As a cage is full of birds,
So their houses *are* full of deceit.
Therefore they have become great and grown rich.
28 They have grown fat, they are sleek;
Yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked;
They do not plead the cause,
The cause of the fatherless;
Yet they prosper,
And the right of the needy they do not defend.
29 Shall I not punish *them* for these *things?*' says the LORD.
'Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?'

30 "An astonishing and horrible thing
Has been committed in the land:
31 The prophets prophesy falsely,
And the priests rule by their *own* power;
And My people love *to have it* so.
But what will you do in the end?

IMPENDING DESTRUCTION FROM THE NORTH

6 "O you children of Benjamin,
Gather yourselves to flee from the midst of Jerusalem!
Blow the trumpet in Tekoa,
And set up a signal-fire in Beth Haccerem;
For disaster appears out of the north,
And great destruction.
2 I have likened the daughter of Zion
To a lovely and delicate woman.
3 The shepherds with their flocks shall come to her.
They shall pitch *their* tents against her all around.
Each one shall pasture in his own place."

4 "Prepare war against her;
Arise, and let us go up at noon.
Woe to us, for the day goes away,
For the shadows of the evening are lengthening.
5 Arise, and let us go by night,
And let us destroy her palaces."

6 For thus has the LORD of hosts said:

"Cut down trees,
And build a mound against Jerusalem.
This *is* the city to be punished.
She *is* full of oppression in her midst.
7 As a fountain wells up with water,
So she wells up with her wickedness.
Violence and plundering are heard in her.
Before Me continually *are* grief and wounds.
8 Be instructed, O Jerusalem,
Lest My soul depart from you;
Lest I make you desolate,
A land not inhabited."

9 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"They shall thoroughly glean as a vine the remnant of Israel;
As a grape-gatherer, put your hand back into the branches."

10 To whom shall I speak and give warning,
That they may hear?
Indeed their ear *is* uncircumcised,
And they cannot give heed.
Behold, the word of the LORD is a reproach to them;
They have no delight in it.
11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD.
I am weary of holding *it* in.
"I will pour it out on the children outside,
And on the assembly of young men together;
For even the husband shall be taken with the wife,
The aged with *him who is* full of days.
12 And their houses shall be turned over to others,
Fields and wives together;
For I will stretch out My hand
Against the inhabitants of the land," says the LORD.
13 "Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them,
Everyone *is* given to covetousness;
And from the prophet even to the priest,
Everyone deals falsely.

14 They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly,
Saying, 'Peace, peace!'
When *there is* no peace.
15 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?
No! They were not at all ashamed;
Nor did they know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;
At the time I punish them,
They shall be cast down," says the LORD.

16 Thus says the LORD:

"Stand in the ways and see,
And ask for the old paths, where the good way *is,*
And walk in it;
Then you will find rest for your souls.
But they said, 'We will not walk *in it.*'
17 Also, I set watchmen over you, *saying,*
'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!'
But they said, 'We will not listen.'
18 Therefore hear, you nations,
And know, O congregation, what *is* among them.
19 Hear, O earth!
Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people—
The fruit of their thoughts,
Because they have not heeded My words
Nor My law, but rejected it.
20 For what purpose to Me
Comes frankincense from Sheba,
And sweet cane from a far country?
Your burnt offerings *are* not acceptable,
Nor your sacrifices sweet to Me."

21 Therefore thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people,
And the fathers and the sons together shall fall on them.
The neighbor and his friend shall perish."

22 Thus says the LORD:

"Behold, a people comes from the north country,
And a great nation will be raised from the farthest parts of the earth.
23 They will lay hold on bow and spear;
They *are* cruel and have no mercy;
Their voice roars like the sea;
And they ride on horses,
As men of war set in array against you, O daughter of Zion."

24 We have heard the report of it;
Our hands grow feeble.
Anguish has taken hold of us,
Pain as of a woman in labor.
25 Do not go out into the field,
Nor walk by the way.
Because of the sword of the enemy,
Fear *is* on every side.
26 O daughter of my people,
Dress in sackcloth
And roll about in ashes!
Make mourning *as for* an only son, most bitter lamentation;
For the plunderer will suddenly come upon us.

27 "I have set you *as* an assayer *and* a fortress among My people,
That you may know and test their way.
28 They *are* all stubborn rebels, walking as slanderers.
They are bronze and iron,
They *are* all corrupters;
29 The bellows blow fiercely,
The lead is consumed by the fire;
The smelter refines in vain,
For the wicked are not drawn off.
30 *People* will call them rejected silver,
Because the LORD has rejected them."

TRUSTING IN LYING WORDS

7 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 "Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, all *you of* Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD!'" 3 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. 4 Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD *are* these.'

5 "For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neigh-

bor, 6*if* you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, 7then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

HYPOCRISY
Can we live in sin and fool God by just going to church?
Jeremiah 7:8–11

8"Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. 9Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, 10and *then* come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'? 11Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen *it,*" says the LORD.

12"But go now to My place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. 13And now, because you have done all these works," says the LORD, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, 14therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. 15And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren—the whole posterity of Ephraim.

16"Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you. 17Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and *they* pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger. 19Do they provoke Me to anger?" says the LORD. "*Do they* not *provoke* themselves, to the shame of their own faces?"

20Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, My anger and My fury will be poured out on this place—on man and on beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground. And it will burn and not be quenched."

21Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat. 22For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. 23But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.' 24Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels *and* the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. 25Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them.* 26Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

27"Therefore you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not obey you. You shall also call to them, but they will not answer you.

Jeremiah 7:29

Normally, it would have been easy to tell who was an Egyptian and who was an Israelite, based on appearance alone. The Egyptians preferred a clean-cut look, while the Israelites wore their hair and beards long. For the Israelites, shaving one's hair was a sign of deep distress or mourning.

JUDGMENT ON OBSCENE RELIGION

28"So you shall say to them, 'This *is* a nation that does not obey the voice of the LORD their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth. 29Cut off your hair and cast *it* away, and take up a lamentation on the desolate heights; for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath.' 30For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight," says the LORD. "They have set their abominations in the house which is called

by My name, to pollute it. 31And they have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart.

32"Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "when it will no more be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room. 33The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten *them away.* 34Then I will cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. For the land shall be desolate.

8 "At that time," says the LORD, "they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of its princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves. 2They shall spread them before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, which they have loved and which they have served and after which they have walked, which they have sought and which they have worshiped. They shall not be gathered nor buried; they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. 3Then death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of those who remain of this evil family, who remain in all the places where I have driven them," says the LORD of hosts.

THE PERIL OF FALSE TEACHING

4"Moreover you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD:

"Will they fall and not rise?
Will one turn away and not return?
5Why has this people slidden back,
Jerusalem, in a perpetual backsliding?
They hold fast to deceit,
They refuse to return.
6I listened and heard,
But they do not speak aright.
No man repented of his wickedness,
Saying, 'What have I done?'
Everyone turned to his own course,
As the horse rushes into the battle.
7"Even the stork in the heavens
Knows her appointed times;
And the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow
Observe the time of their coming.
But My people do not know the judgment of the LORD.

8"How can you say, 'We *are* wise,
And the law of the LORD *is* with us'?
Look, the false pen of the scribe certainly works falsehood.
9The wise men are ashamed,
They are dismayed and taken.
Behold, they have rejected the word of the LORD;
So what wisdom do they have?

GREED
What does God think of greed and lying?
Jeremiah 8:10

10Therefore I will give their wives to others,
And their fields to those who will inherit *them;*
Because from the least even to the greatest
Everyone is given to covetousness;
From the prophet even to the priest
Everyone deals falsely.
11For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly,
Saying, 'Peace, peace!'
When *there is* no peace.
12Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?
No! They were not at all ashamed,
Nor did they know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;
In the time of their punishment
They shall be cast down," says the LORD.

13"I will surely consume them," says the LORD.
"No grapes *shall be* on the vine,
Nor figs on the fig tree,
And the leaf shall fade;
And *the things* I have given them shall pass away from them."'"

14 "Why do we sit still?
Assemble yourselves,
And let us enter the fortified cities,
And let us be silent there.
For the LORD our God has put us to silence
And given us water of gall to drink,
Because we have sinned against the LORD.

15 "*We* looked for peace, but no good *came;*
And for a time of health, and there was trouble!
16 The snorting of His horses was heard from Dan.
The whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of His strong ones;
For they have come and devoured the land and all that is in it,
The city and those who dwell in it."

17 "For behold, I will send serpents among you,
Vipers which cannot be charmed,
And they shall bite you," says the LORD.

THE PROPHET MOURNS FOR THE PEOPLE

18 I would comfort myself in sorrow;
My heart *is* faint in me.
19 Listen! The voice,
The cry of the daughter of my people
From a far country:
"*Is* not the LORD in Zion?
Is not her King in her?"

"Why have they provoked Me to anger
With their carved images—
With foreign idols?"

20 "The harvest is past,
The summer is ended,
And we are not saved!"

21 For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt.
I am mourning;
Astonishment has taken hold of me.
22 *Is there* no balm in Gilead,
Is there no physician there?
Why then is there no recovery
For the health of the daughter of my people?

9 Oh, that my head were waters,
And my eyes a fountain of tears,
That I might weep day and night
For the slain of the daughter of my people!
2 Oh, that I had in the wilderness
A lodging place for travelers;
That I might leave my people,
And go from them!
For they *are* all adulterers,
An assembly of treacherous men.

3 "And *like* their bow they have bent their tongues *for* lies.
They are not valiant for the truth on the earth.
For they proceed from evil to evil,
And they do not know Me," says the LORD.
4 "Everyone take heed to his neighbor,
And do not trust any brother;
For every brother will utterly supplant,
And every neighbor will walk with slanderers.
5 Everyone will deceive his neighbor,
And will not speak the truth;
They have taught their tongue to speak lies;
They weary themselves to commit iniquity.
6 Your dwelling place *is* in the midst of deceit;
Through deceit they refuse to know Me," says the LORD.

VALUES
Are our values important?
Jeremiah 9:7–9

7 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Behold, I will refine them and try them;
For how shall I deal with the daughter of My people?
8 Their tongue *is* an arrow shot out;
It speaks deceit;
One speaks peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth,
But in his heart he lies in wait.
9 Shall I not punish them for these *things?*" says the LORD.
"Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?"



LIFE APP

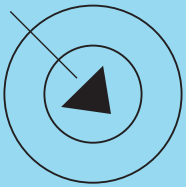
Honesty / Jeremiah 9:3–8

It's just a little white lie. No one will actually get hurt, and you won't get in trouble. So it's okay to stretch the truth just this one time, right?

Wrong. Stretching the truth is just a nice sounding way of saying that you're lying. A little white lie is still a lie; and usually one lie is followed by another. What seems at the time like telling a harmless fib, can lead to a pattern of deceitfulness. When you tell one lie, you often have to tell another one to cover your first deception. Then, you'll have to make up something else untrue to cover up your last falsehood. It can turn into a vicious cycle. Before long, you may have lied so much that you begin to assume everyone else must be lying as well. You will trust no one and no one will trust you. The wise move is to not start down that road at all.

Jeremiah 9:3–8 describes the danger and misery of a culture consumed with lies. God knows that deceitful lives lead to hurt feelings, anger, pain, bitterness, and sometimes, even danger for the person lying and those they lie to or about. Of course our God of justice and love doesn't want to see anyone suffer from the consequences of deception. What He loves to see are lives based on honesty and truthfulness. When you live honestly, you don't have to constantly worry about covering your back.

There may be times when you do mess up and tell a lie. That's not the end of the world; confess it to God and He will forgive and restore you. Then determine in your heart and mind not to choose lying as your way of life. Instead, decide you will delight the Lord by doing your best to live truthfully. It really is the best way.



PROMISE

God promises to purify your heart.

Therefore thus says the LORD *of hosts: "Behold, I will refine them and try them; for how shall I deal with the daughter of My people?"* (Jer. 9:7).

Sometimes we become paralyzed in our daily walk with God. We wake up one morning, take a look in the mirror, see our sin and its ugliness, and push God away. We might spend the next weeks or months trying to figure out how to make ourselves more presentable.

But you can't refine and purify your own heart. What you can do is stay hooked up to God through prayer, and you can constantly renew your mind by memorizing and meditating on Scripture. God can make the unclean holy and restore beauty to the unlovely. No matter how ugly your heart or how sinful your life has been, God can clean and restore. Ask Him daily to purify your heart. If you're continually allowing God in to remove your sin, your walk with Him stays fresh, and you stay acceptable to Him.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Zechariah 13:9; Acts 15:8, 9; Titus 2:11–14

10 I will take up a weeping and wailing
for the mountains,
And for the dwelling places of the
wilderness a lamentation,
Because they are burned up,
So that no one can pass through;
Nor can *men* hear the voice of the
cattle.
Both the birds of the heavens and the
beasts have fled;
They are gone.

11 "I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a
den of jackals.
I will make the cities of Judah desolate,
without an inhabitant."

12 Who *is* the wise man who may understand this? And *who is he* to whom the mouth of the LORD has spoken, that he may declare it? Why does the land perish *and* burn up like a wilderness, so that no one can pass through?

13 And the LORD said, "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, nor walked according to it, 14 but they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts and after the Baals, which their fathers taught them," 15 therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. 16 I will scatter them also among the Gentiles, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. And I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them."

THE PEOPLE MOURN IN JUDGMENT

17 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Consider and call for the mourning
women,
That they may come;
And send for skillful *wailing* women,
That they may come.
18 Let them make haste
And take up a wailing for us,
That our eyes may run with tears,
And our eyelids gush with water.
19 For a voice of wailing is heard from
Zion:
'How we are plundered!
We are greatly ashamed,
Because we have forsaken the land,
Because we have been cast out of our
dwellings.'"

20 Yet hear the word of the LORD,
O women,
And let your ear receive the word of
His mouth;
Teach your daughters wailing,

And everyone her neighbor a
lamentation.
21For death has come through our
windows,
Has entered our palaces,
To kill off the children—*no longer to be*
outside!
And the young men—*no longer* on the
streets!

22Speak, "Thus says the LORD:

'Even the carcasses of men shall fall as
refuse on the open field,
Like cuttings after the harvester,
And no one shall gather *them.*'"

23Thus says the LORD:

"Let not the wise *man* glory in his
wisdom,
Let not the mighty *man* glory in his
might,
Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches;
24But let him who glories glory in this,
That he understands and knows Me,
That I *am* the LORD, exercising
lovingkindness, judgment, and
righteousness in the earth.
For in these I delight," says the LORD.

25"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that I will punish all *who are* circumcised with the uncircumcised—
26Egypt, Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, and all *who are* in the farthest corners, who dwell in the wilderness. For all *these* nations *are* uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel *are* uncircumcised in the heart."

IDOLS AND THE TRUE GOD

10 Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.
2Thus says the LORD:

"Do not learn the way of the Gentiles;
Do not be dismayed at the signs of
heaven,
For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.
3For the customs of the peoples *are*
futile;
For *one* cuts a tree from the forest,
The work of the hands of the
workman, with the ax.
4They decorate it with silver and gold;
They fasten it with nails and
hammers
So that it will not topple.
5They *are* upright, like a palm tree,
And they cannot speak;
They must be carried,
Because they cannot go *by themselves.*
Do not be afraid of them,
For they cannot do evil,
Nor can they do any good."

6Inasmuch as *there is* none like You,
O LORD
(You *are* great, and Your name *is* great
in might),
7Who would not fear You, O King of the
nations?
For this is Your rightful due.
For among all the wise *men* of the
nations,
And in all their kingdoms,
There is none like You.
8But they are altogether dull-hearted
and foolish;
A wooden idol *is* a worthless doctrine.
9Silver is beaten into plates;
It is brought from Tarshish,
And gold from Uphaz,
The work of the craftsman
And of the hands of the metalsmith;
Blue and purple *are* their clothing;
They *are* all the work of skillful *men.*
10But the LORD *is* the true God;
He *is* the living God and the
everlasting King.
At His wrath the earth will tremble,
And the nations will not be able to
endure His indignation.

11Thus you shall say to them: "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens."

12He has made the earth by His power,
He has established the world by His
wisdom,
And has stretched out the heavens at
His discretion.
13When He utters His voice,
There is a multitude of waters in the
heavens:
"And He causes the vapors to ascend
from the ends of the earth.

He makes lightning for the rain,
He brings the wind out of His
treasuries."[a]

14 Everyone is dull-hearted, without
knowledge;
Every metalsmith is put to shame by
an image;
For his molded image *is* falsehood,
And *there is* no breath in them.
15 They *are* futile, a work of errors;
In the time of their punishment they
shall perish.
16 The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them,
For He *is* the Maker of all *things*,
And Israel *is* the tribe of His
inheritance;
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.

THE COMING CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

17 Gather up your wares from the land,
O inhabitant of the fortress!

18 For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will throw out at this time
The inhabitants of the land,
And will distress them,
That they may find *it so*."

19 Woe is me for my hurt!
My wound is severe.
But I say, "Truly this *is* an infirmity,
And I must bear it."
20 My tent is plundered,
And all my cords are broken;
My children have gone from me,
And they *are* no more.
There is no one to pitch my tent
anymore,
Or set up my curtains.

21 For the shepherds have become dull-
hearted,
And have not sought the LORD;
Therefore they shall not prosper,
And all their flocks shall be scattered.
22 Behold, the noise of the report has
come,
And a great commotion out of the
north country,
To make the cities of Judah desolate, a
den of jackals.

Jeremiah 10:22

Jackals were desert creatures (similar to dogs) that fed on garbage. They were especially unpopular with the Israelites not only because they destroyed crops, but also because they were filthy scavengers.

23 O LORD, I know the way of man *is* not
in himself;
It is not in man who walks to direct his
own steps.
24 O LORD, correct me, but with justice;
Not in Your anger, lest You bring me to
nothing.
25 Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles,
who do not know You,
And on the families who do not call on
Your name;
For they have eaten up Jacob,
Devoured him and consumed him,
And made his dwelling place desolate.

THE BROKEN COVENANT

11 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 "Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 3 and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Cursed *is* the man who does not obey the words of this covenant 4 which I commanded your fathers in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, 'Obey My voice, and do according to all that I command you; so shall you be My people, and I will be your God,' 5 that I may establish the oath which I have sworn to your fathers, to give them 'a land flowing with milk and honey,'[a] as *it is* this day."' "

And I answered and said, "So be it, LORD."

OBEDIENCE
How important is it to obey God?
Jeremiah 11:7

6 Then the LORD said to me, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in

10:13 [a]Psalm 135:7 **11:5** [a]Exodus 3:8

the streets of Jerusalem, saying: 'Hear the words of this covenant and do them. 7For I earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, rising early and exhorting, saying, "Obey My voice." 8Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart; therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded *them* to do, but *which* they have not done.'"

9And the LORD said to me, "A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers."

11Therefore thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them. 12Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they offer incense, but they will not save them at all in the time of their trouble. 13For *according to* the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and *according to* the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to *that* shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal.

14"So do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not hear *them* in the time that they cry out to Me because of their trouble.

15"What has My beloved to do in My house,
Having done lewd deeds with many?
And the holy flesh has passed from you.
When you do evil, then you rejoice.
16The LORD called your name,
Green Olive Tree, Lovely *and* of Good Fruit.
With the noise of a great tumult
He has kindled fire on it,
And its branches are broken.

17"For the LORD of hosts, who planted you, has pronounced doom against you for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke Me to anger in offering incense to Baal."

JEREMIAH'S LIFE THREATENED

18Now the LORD gave me knowledge *of it,* and I know *it;* for You showed me their doings. 19But I *was* like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter; and I did not know that they had devised schemes against me, *saying,* "Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be remembered no more."

20But, O LORD of hosts,
You who judge righteously,
Testing the mind and the heart,
Let me see Your vengeance on them,
For to You I have revealed my cause.

21"Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the men of Anathoth who seek your life, saying, 'Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, lest you die by our hand'— 22therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine; 23and there shall be no remnant of them, for I will bring catastrophe on the men of Anathoth, *even* the year of their punishment.'"

JEREMIAH'S QUESTION

12 Righteous *are* You, O LORD,
when I plead with You;
Yet let me talk with You about *Your* judgments.
Why does the way of the wicked prosper?
Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?
2You have planted them, yes, they have taken root;
They grow, yes, they bear fruit.
You *are* near in their mouth
But far from their mind.

3But You, O LORD, know me;
You have seen me,
And You have tested my heart toward You.
Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter,

And prepare them for the day of
slaughter.
4How long will the land mourn,
And the herbs of every field wither?
The beasts and birds are consumed,
For the wickedness of those who dwell
there,
Because they said, "He will not see our
final end."

THE LORD ANSWERS JEREMIAH

5"If you have run with the footmen, and
they have wearied you,
Then how can you contend with
horses?
And *if* in the land of peace,
In which you trusted, *they wearied you,*
Then how will you do in the
floodplain[a] of the Jordan?

> ***Jeremiah 12:5***
> Traveling the floodplain of the Jordan River would have been extremely difficult. Not only was it overgrown with shrubs, brush, trees, and vines, but anyone who passed by was in danger of attack by wild animals.

6For even your brothers, the house of
your father,
Even they have dealt treacherously
with you;
Yes, they have called a multitude after
you.
Do not believe them,
Even though they speak smooth words
to you.

7"I have forsaken My house, I have left
My heritage;
I have given the dearly beloved of My
soul into the hand of her
enemies.
8My heritage is to Me like a lion in the
forest;
It cries out against Me;
Therefore I have hated it.
9My heritage *is* to Me *like* a speckled
vulture;
The vultures all around *are* against her.
Come, assemble all the beasts of the
field,
Bring them to devour!

10"Many rulers[a] have destroyed My
vineyard,
They have trodden My portion
underfoot;
They have made My pleasant portion a
desolate wilderness.
11They have made it desolate;
Desolate, it mourns to Me;
The whole land is made desolate,
Because no one takes *it* to heart.
12The plunderers have come
On all the desolate heights in the
wilderness,
For the sword of the LORD shall devour
From *one* end of the land to the *other*
end of the land;
No flesh shall have peace.
13They have sown wheat but reaped
thorns;
They have put themselves to pain *but*
do not profit.
But be ashamed of your harvest
Because of the fierce anger of the
LORD."

14Thus says the LORD: "Against all My evil neighbors who touch the inheritance which I have caused My people Israel to inherit—behold, I will pluck them out of their land and pluck out the house of Judah from among them. 15Then it shall be, after I have plucked them out, that I will return and have compassion on them and bring them back, everyone to his heritage and everyone to his land. 16And it shall be, if they will learn carefully the ways of My people, to swear by My name, 'As the LORD lives,' as they taught My people to swear by Baal, then they shall be established in the midst of My people. 17But if they do not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation," says the LORD.

SYMBOL OF THE LINEN SASH

13 Thus the LORD said to me: "Go and get yourself a linen sash, and put it around your waist, but do not put it in water." 2So I got a sash according to the word of the LORD, and put *it* around my waist.

3And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying, 4"Take the sash

12:5 [a]Or *thicket* **12:10** [a]Literally *shepherds* or *pastors*

that you acquired, which *is* around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates,[a] and hide it there in a hole in the rock." 5So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.

6Now it came to pass after many days that the LORD said to me, "Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from there the sash which I commanded you to hide there." 7Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the sash from the place where I had hidden it; and there was the sash, ruined. It was profitable for nothing.

8Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9"Thus says the LORD: 'In this manner I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. 10This evil people, who refuse to hear My words, who follow the dictates of their hearts, and walk after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be just like this sash which is profitable for nothing. 11For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me,' says the LORD, 'that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear.'

SYMBOL OF THE WINE BOTTLES

12"Therefore you shall speak to them this word: 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Every bottle shall be filled with wine."'

And they will say to you, 'Do we not certainly know that every bottle will be filled with wine?'

13"Then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land—even the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—with drunkenness! 14And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together," says the LORD. "I will not pity nor spare nor have mercy, but will destroy them."'"

PRIDE PRECEDES CAPTIVITY

15Hear and give ear:
Do not be proud,
For the LORD has spoken.
16Give glory to the LORD your God
Before He causes darkness,
And before your feet stumble
On the dark mountains,
And while you are looking for light,
He turns it into the shadow of death
And makes *it* dense darkness.
17But if you will not hear it,
My soul will weep in secret for *your* pride;
My eyes will weep bitterly
And run down with tears,
Because the LORD's flock has been taken captive.

18Say to the king and to the queen mother,
"Humble yourselves;
Sit down,
For your rule shall collapse, the crown of your glory."
19The cities of the South shall be shut up,
And no one shall open *them;*
Judah shall be carried away captive, all of it;
It shall be wholly carried away captive.

20Lift up your eyes and see
Those who come from the north.
Where *is* the flock *that* was given to you,
Your beautiful sheep?
21What will you say when He punishes you?
For you have taught them
To be chieftains, to be head over you.
Will not pangs seize you,
Like a woman in labor?
22And if you say in your heart,
"Why have these things come upon me?"
For the greatness of your iniquity
Your skirts have been uncovered,
Your heels made bare.
23Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?
Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.

24"Therefore I will scatter them like stubble
That passes away by the wind of the wilderness.
25This is your lot,
The portion of your measures from Me," says the LORD,

13:4 [a]Hebrew *Perath*

"Because you have forgotten Me
And trusted in falsehood.
[26]Therefore I will uncover your skirts
over your face,
That your shame may appear.
[27]I have seen your adulteries
And your *lustful* neighings,
The lewdness of your harlotry,
Your abominations on the hills in the
fields.
Woe to you, O Jerusalem!
Will you still not be made clean?"

SWORD, FAMINE, AND PESTILENCE

14 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the droughts.

[2]"Judah mourns,
And her gates languish;
They mourn for the land,
And the cry of Jerusalem has gone up.
[3]Their nobles have sent their lads for
water;
They went to the cisterns *and* found
no water.
They returned with their vessels
empty;
They were ashamed and confounded
And covered their heads.
[4]Because the ground is parched,
For there was no rain in the land,
The plowmen were ashamed;
They covered their heads.
[5]Yes, the deer also gave birth in the
field,
But left because there was no grass.
[6]And the wild donkeys stood in the
desolate heights;
They sniffed at the wind like jackals;
Their eyes failed because *there was* no
grass."

[7]O LORD, though our iniquities testify
against us,
Do it for Your name's sake;
For our backslidings are many,
We have sinned against You.
[8]O the Hope of Israel, his Savior in time
of trouble,
Why should You be like a stranger in
the land,
And like a traveler *who* turns aside to
tarry for a night?
[9]Why should You be like a man
astonished,
Like a mighty one *who* cannot save?
Yet You, O LORD, *are* in our midst,
And we are called by Your name;
Do not leave us!

[10]Thus says the LORD to this people:

"Thus they have loved to wander;
They have not restrained their feet.
Therefore the LORD does not accept
them;
He will remember their iniquity now,
And punish their sins."

[11]Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for this people, for *their* good. [12]When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence."

[13]Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.'"

[14]And the LORD said to me, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart. [15]Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who prophesy in My name, whom I did not send, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not be in this land'—'By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed! [16]And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; they will have no one to bury them—them nor their wives, their sons nor their daughters—for I will pour their wickedness on them.'

[17]"Therefore you shall say this word to them:

'Let my eyes flow with tears night and
day,
And let them not cease;
For the virgin daughter of my people
Has been broken with a mighty stroke,
with a very severe blow.
[18]If I go out to the field,

Then behold, those slain with the sword!
And if I enter the city,
Then behold, those sick from famine!
Yes, both prophet and priest go about in a land they do not know.'"

THE PEOPLE PLEAD FOR MERCY

19 Have You utterly rejected Judah?
Has Your soul loathed Zion?
Why have You stricken us so that *there is* no healing for us?
We looked for peace, but *there was* no good;
And for the time of healing, and there was trouble.
20 We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness
And the iniquity of our fathers,
For we have sinned against You.
21 Do not abhor *us,* for Your name's sake;
Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory.
Remember, do not break Your covenant with us.
22 Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain?
Or can the heavens give showers?
Are You not He, O LORD our God?
Therefore we will wait for You,
Since You have made all these.

THE LORD WILL NOT RELENT

15 Then the LORD said to me, "*Even* if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind *would* not *be* favorable toward this people. Cast *them* out of My sight, and let them go forth. 2 And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you shall tell them, 'Thus says the LORD:

"Such as *are* for death, to death;
And such as *are* for the sword, to the sword;
And such as *are* for the famine, to the famine;
And such as *are* for the captivity, to the captivity."'

3 "And I will appoint over them four forms *of destruction,*" says the LORD: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. 4 I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.

> ***Jeremiah 15:4***
> Of all the kings of Judah, Manasseh was the most evil. He was unbelievably wicked; he even sacrificed his own son to the pagan god Molech.

5 "For who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem?
Or who will bemoan you?
Or who will turn aside to ask how you are doing?
6 You have forsaken Me," says the LORD,
"You have gone backward.
Therefore I will stretch out My hand against you and destroy you;
I am weary of relenting!
7 And I will winnow them with a winnowing fan in the gates of the land;
I will bereave *them* of children;
I will destroy My people,
Since they do not return from their ways.
8 Their widows will be increased to Me more than the sand of the seas;
I will bring against them,
Against the mother of the young men,
A plunderer at noonday;
I will cause anguish and terror to fall on them suddenly.

9 "She languishes who has borne seven;
She has breathed her last;
Her sun has gone down
While *it was* yet day;
She has been ashamed and confounded.
And the remnant of them I will deliver to the sword
Before their enemies," says the LORD.

JEREMIAH'S DEJECTION

10 Woe is me, my mother,
That you have borne me,
A man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!
I have neither lent for interest,

Nor have men lent to me for interest.
Every one of them curses me.

11 The LORD said:

"Surely it will be well with your
remnant;
Surely I will cause the enemy to
intercede with you
In the time of adversity and in the time
of affliction.
12 Can anyone break iron,
The northern iron and the bronze?
13 Your wealth and your treasures
I will give as plunder without price,
Because of all your sins,
Throughout your territories.
14 And I will make *you* cross over with[a]
your enemies
Into a land *which* you do not know;
For a fire is kindled in My anger,
Which shall burn upon you."

15 O LORD, You know;
Remember me and visit me,
And take vengeance for me on my
persecutors.
In Your enduring patience, do not take
me away.
Know that for Your sake I have
suffered rebuke.
16 Your words were found, and I ate
them,
And Your word was to me the joy and
rejoicing of my heart;
For I am called by Your name,
O LORD God of hosts.
17 I did not sit in the assembly of the
mockers,
Nor did I rejoice;
I sat alone because of Your hand,
For You have filled me with
indignation.
18 Why is my pain perpetual
And my wound incurable,
Which refuses to be healed?
Will You surely be to me like an
unreliable stream,
As waters *that* fail?

THE LORD REASSURES JEREMIAH

19 Therefore thus says the LORD:

"If you return,
Then I will bring you back;
You shall stand before Me;
If you take out the precious from the
vile,
You shall be as My mouth.
Let them return to you,
But you must not return to them.
20 And I will make you to this people a
fortified bronze wall;
And they will fight against you,
But they shall not prevail against you;
For I *am* with you to save you
And deliver you," says the LORD.
21 "I will deliver you from the hand of the
wicked,
And I will redeem you from the grip of
the terrible."

JEREMIAH'S LIFE-STYLE AND MESSAGE

16 The word of the LORD also came to me, saying, 2 "You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place." 3 For thus says the LORD concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who bore them and their fathers who begot them in this land: 4 "They shall die gruesome deaths; they shall not be lamented nor shall they be buried, *but* they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their corpses shall be meat for the birds of heaven and for the beasts of the earth."

5 For thus says the LORD: "Do not enter the house of mourning, nor go to lament or bemoan them; for I have taken away My peace from this people," says the LORD, "lovingkindness and mercies. 6 Both the great and the small shall die in this land. They shall not be buried; neither shall men lament for them, cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them. 7 Nor shall *men* break *bread* in mourning for them, to comfort them for the dead; nor shall *men* give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or their mother. 8 Also you shall not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and drink."

9 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will cause to cease

15:14 [a] Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum read *cause you to serve* (compare 17:4).

from this place, before your eyes and in your days, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.

10"And it shall be, when you show this people all these words, and they say to you, 'Why has the LORD pronounced all this great disaster against us? Or what *is* our iniquity? Or what *is* our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?' 11then you shall say to them, 'Because your fathers have forsaken Me,' says the LORD; 'they have walked after other gods and have served them and worshiped them, and have forsaken Me and not kept My law. 12And you have done worse than your fathers, for behold, each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart, so that no one listens to Me. 13Therefore I will cast you out of this land into a land that you do not know, neither you nor your fathers; and there you shall serve other gods day and night, where I will not show you favor.'

Jeremiah 16:13

When Jerusalem was conquered by Babylon in 586 B.C., the Jewish people who were taken captive had to learn a whole new way of life, including new religions and new customs. The Jews were held captive in Babylon for seventy years.

GOD WILL RESTORE ISRAEL

14"Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that it shall no more be said, 'The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' 15but, 'The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers.

SIN

Can we hide sin from God?

Jeremiah 16:17

16"Behold, I will send for many fishermen," says the LORD, "and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. 17For My eyes *are* on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes. 18And first I will repay double for their iniquity and their sin, because they have defiled My land; they have filled My inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable idols."

19O LORD, my strength and my fortress,
My refuge in the day of affliction,
The Gentiles shall come to You
From the ends of the earth and say,
"Surely our fathers have inherited lies,
Worthlessness and unprofitable *things.*"
20Will a man make gods for himself,
Which *are* not gods?

21"Therefore behold, I will this once cause them to know,
I will cause them to know
My hand and My might;
And they shall know that My name *is* the LORD.

Jeremiah 17:1

"Pens of iron" were used to carve permanent public records, announcements, and calendars in stone. The stones were then displayed in places where people could see them. Often the same announcement was posted in more than one place.

JUDAH'S SIN AND PUNISHMENT

17 "The sin of Judah *is* written with a pen of iron;
With the point of a diamond *it is* engraved
On the tablet of their heart,
And on the horns of your altars,
2While their children remember
Their altars and their wooden images[a]
By the green trees on the high hills.
3O My mountain in the field,
I will give as plunder your wealth, all your treasures,

17:2 [a]Hebrew *Asherim,* Canaanite deities

And your high places of sin within all
your borders.
4And you, even yourself,
Shall let go of your heritage which I
gave you;
And I will cause you to serve your
enemies
In the land which you do not know;
For you have kindled a fire in My anger
which shall burn forever."

5Thus says the LORD:

"Cursed *is* the man who trusts in man
And makes flesh his strength,
Whose heart departs from the LORD.
6For he shall be like a shrub in the
desert,
And shall not see when good comes,
But shall inhabit the parched places in
the wilderness,
In a salt land *which is* not inhabited.

7"Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the
LORD,
And whose hope is the LORD.
8For he shall be like a tree planted by
the waters,
Which spreads out its roots by the river,
And will not fear[a] when heat comes;
But its leaf will be green,
And will not be anxious in the year of
drought,
Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

9"The heart *is* deceitful above all *things,*
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it?
10I, the LORD, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give every man according to
his ways,
According to the fruit of his doings.

11"*As* a partridge that broods but does
not hatch,
So is he who gets riches, but not by
right;
It will leave him in the midst of his
days,
And at his end he will be a fool."

12A glorious high throne from the
beginning
Is the place of our sanctuary.
13O LORD, the hope of Israel,
All who forsake You shall be ashamed.

"Those who depart from Me
Shall be written in the earth,
Because they have forsaken the LORD,
The fountain of living waters."

JEREMIAH PRAYS FOR DELIVERANCE

14Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed;
Save me, and I shall be saved,
For You *are* my praise.
15Indeed they say to me,
"Where *is* the word of the LORD?
Let it come now!"
16As for me, I have not hurried away
from *being* a shepherd *who*
follows You,
Nor have I desired the woeful day;
You know what came out of my lips;
It was right there before You.
17Do not be a terror to me;
You *are* my hope in the day of doom.
18Let them be ashamed who
persecute me,
But do not let me be put to shame;
Let them be dismayed,
But do not let me be dismayed.
Bring on them the day of doom,
And destroy them with double
destruction!

HALLOW THE SABBATH DAY

19Thus the LORD said to me: "Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, by which the kings of Judah come in and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; 20and say to them, 'Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates. 21Thus says the LORD: "Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem; 22nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. 23But they did not obey nor incline their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear nor receive instruction.

24"And it shall be, if you heed Me carefully," says the LORD, "to bring no burden

17:8 [a]Qere and Targum read *see.*

through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work in it, 25then shall enter the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, accompanied by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever. 26And they shall come from the cities of Judah and from the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin and from the lowland, from the mountains and from the South, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and incense, bringing sacrifices of praise to the house of the LORD.

27"But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.'"

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

18 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2"Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." 3Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. 4And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

5Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 6"O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. "Look, as the clay *is* in the potter's hand, so *are* you in My hand, O house of Israel! 7The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it,* 8if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. 9And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it,* 10if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.

11"Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good."'"

GOD'S WARNING REJECTED

12And they said, "That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart."

13Therefore thus says the LORD:

"Ask now among the Gentiles,
Who has heard such things?
The virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing.
14Will *a man* leave the snow water of Lebanon,
Which comes from the rock of the field?
Will the cold flowing waters be forsaken for strange waters?

15"Because My people have forgotten Me,
They have burned incense to worthless idols.
And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways,
From the ancient paths,
To walk in pathways and not on a highway,
16To make their land desolate *and* a perpetual hissing;
Everyone who passes by it will be astonished
And shake his head.
17I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy;
I will show them[a] the back and not the face
In the day of their calamity."

JEREMIAH PERSECUTED

18Then they said, "Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words."

19Give heed to me, O LORD,
And listen to the voice of those who contend with me!

18:17 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *look them in.*

20 Shall evil be repaid for good?
For they have dug a pit for my life.
Remember that I stood before You
To speak good for them,
To turn away Your wrath from them.
21 Therefore deliver up their children to the famine,
And pour out their *blood*
By the force of the sword;
Let their wives *become* widows
And bereaved of their children.
Let their men be put to death,
Their young men *be* slain
By the sword in battle.
22 Let a cry be heard from their houses,
When You bring a troop suddenly upon them;
For they have dug a pit to take me,
And hidden snares for my feet.
23 Yet, LORD, You know all their counsel
Which is against me, to slay *me.*
Provide no atonement for their iniquity,
Nor blot out their sin from Your sight;
But let them be overthrown before You.
Deal *thus* with them
In the time of Your anger.

THE SIGN OF THE BROKEN FLASK

19 Thus says the LORD: "Go and get a potter's earthen flask, and *take* some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests. 2 And go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which *is* by the entry of the Potsherd Gate; and proclaim there the words that I will tell you, 3 and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle.

4 "Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents 5 (they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire *for* burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind), 6 therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that this place shall no more be called Tophet or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. 7 And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hands of those who seek their lives; their corpses I will give as meat for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. 8 I will make this city desolate and a hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its plagues. 9 And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and in the desperation with which their enemies and those who seek their lives shall drive them to despair."'

10 "Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, 11 and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Even so I will break this people and this city, as *one* breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury *them* in Tophet till *there is* no place to bury. 12 Thus I will do to this place," says the LORD, "and to its inhabitants, and make this city like Tophet. 13 And the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah shall be defiled like the place of Tophet, because of all the houses on whose roofs they have burned incense to all the host of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to other gods."'"

14 Then Jeremiah came from Tophet, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the Lord's house and said to all the people, 15 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will bring on this city and on all her towns all the doom that I have pronounced against it, because they have stiffened their necks that they might not hear My words.'"

THE WORD OF GOD TO PASHHUR

20 Now Pashhur the son of Immer, the priest who *was* also chief governor in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. 2 Then Pashhur struck Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that *were* in the high gate of Benjamin, which *was* by the house of the LORD.

3 And it happened on the next day that

Pashhur brought Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD has not called your name Pashhur, but Magor-Missabib.[a] 4For thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes shall see *it.* I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon and slay them with the sword. 5Moreover I will deliver all the wealth of this city, all its produce, and all its precious things; all the treasures of the kings of Judah I will give into the hand of their enemies, who will plunder them, seize them, and carry them to Babylon. 6And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity. You shall go to Babylon, and there you shall die, and be buried there, you and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied lies.'"

JEREMIAH'S UNPOPULAR MINISTRY

7O LORD, You induced me, and I was
persuaded;
You are stronger than I, and have
prevailed.
I am in derision daily;
Everyone mocks me.
8For when I spoke, I cried out;
I shouted, "Violence and plunder!"
Because the word of the LORD was
made to me
A reproach and a derision daily.
9Then I said, "I will not make mention
of Him,
Nor speak anymore in His name."
But *His word* was in my heart like a
burning fire
Shut up in my bones;
I was weary of holding *it* back,
And I could not.
10For I heard many mocking:
"Fear on every side!"
"Report," *they say,* "and we will report it!"
All my acquaintances watched for my
stumbling, *saying,*
"Perhaps he can be induced;
Then we will prevail against him,
And we will take our revenge on him."

11But the LORD *is* with me as a mighty,
awesome One.
Therefore my persecutors will stumble,
and will not prevail.
They will be greatly ashamed, for they
will not prosper.
Their everlasting confusion will never
be forgotten.

JUDGMENT
Does God judge motives?
Jeremiah 20:12

12But, O LORD of hosts,
You who test the righteous,
And see the mind and heart,
Let me see Your vengeance on them;
For I have pleaded my cause before
You.

13Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD!
For He has delivered the life of the
poor
From the hand of evildoers.

14Cursed *be* the day in which I was born!
Let the day not be blessed in which my
mother bore me!
15Let the man *be* cursed
Who brought news to my father,
saying,
"A male child has been born to you!"
Making him very glad.
16And let that man be like the cities
Which the LORD overthrew, and did
not relent;
Let him hear the cry in the morning
And the shouting at noon,
17Because he did not kill me from the
womb,
That my mother might have been my
grave,
And her womb always enlarged
with me.
18Why did I come forth from the womb
to see labor and sorrow,
That my days should be consumed
with shame?

JERUSALEM'S DOOM IS SEALED

21 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur

20:3 [a]Literally *Fear on Every Side*

the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, saying, 2"Please inquire of the LORD for us, for Nebuchadnezzar[a] king of Babylon makes war against us. Perhaps the LORD will deal with us according to all His wonderful works, that *the king* may go away from us."

Jeremiah 21:2

During Nebuchadnezzar's forty-year reign as king of Babylon, he attempted to collect heavy taxes from the people of Judah. When King Hezekiah of Judah refused to pay taxes, Nebuchadnezzar and his forces attacked Jerusalem and held the city in siege until 586 B.C., when the people of Judah finally surrendered. Nebuchadnezzar then destroyed the temple and took many Jews back to Babylon as prisoners.

3Then Jeremiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to Zedekiah, 4'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that *are* in your hands, with which you fight against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans[a] who besiege you outside the walls; and I will assemble them in the midst of this city. 5I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath. 6I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they shall die of a great pestilence. 7And afterward," says the LORD, "I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, his servants and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence and the sword and the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those who seek their life; and he shall strike them with the edge of the sword. He shall not spare them, or have pity or mercy."'

8"Now you shall say to this people, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. 9He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes out and defects to the Chaldeans who besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be as a prize to him. 10For I have set My face against this city for adversity and not for good," says the LORD. "It shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire."'

MESSAGE TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID

11"And concerning the house of the king of Judah, *say,* 'Hear the word of the LORD, 12O house of David! Thus says the LORD:

"Execute judgment in the morning;
And deliver *him who is* plundered
Out of the hand of the oppressor,
Lest My fury go forth like fire
And burn so that no one can quench *it,*
Because of the evil of your doings.

13"Behold, I *am* against you, O inhabitant
of the valley,
And rock of the plain," says the LORD,
"Who say, 'Who shall come down
against us?
Or who shall enter our dwellings?'
14But I will punish you according to
the fruit of your doings," says the
LORD;
"I will kindle a fire in its forest,
And it shall devour all things around
it.'"'

22 Thus says the LORD: "Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and there speak this word, 2and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David, you and your servants and your people who enter these gates! 3Thus says the LORD: "Execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. 4For if you indeed do this thing, then shall enter the gates of this house, riding on horses and in chariots, accompanied by servants and people, kings who sit on the throne of David. 5But if you will not hear these words, I swear by Myself," says the LORD, "that this house shall become a desolation."'"

6For thus says the LORD to the house of the king of Judah:

21:2 [a]Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* and so elsewhere
21:4 [a]Or *Babylonians*

"You *are* Gilead to Me,
The head of Lebanon;
Yet I surely will make you a
wilderness,
Cities *which* are not inhabited.
7I will prepare destroyers against you,
Everyone with his weapons;
They shall cut down your choice
cedars
And cast *them* into the fire.

8And many nations will pass by this city;
and everyone will say to his neighbor,
'Why has the LORD done so to this great
city?' 9Then they will answer, 'Because
they have forsaken the covenant of the
LORD their God, and worshiped other
gods and served them.'"

10Weep not for the dead, nor bemoan
him;
Weep bitterly for him who goes away,
For he shall return no more,
Nor see his native country.

MESSAGE TO THE SONS OF JOSIAH

11For thus says the LORD concerning Shallum[a] the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, who went from this place: "He shall not return here anymore, 12but he shall die in the place where they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.

13"Woe to him who builds his house by
unrighteousness
And his chambers by injustice,
Who uses his neighbor's service
without wages
And gives him nothing for his work,
14Who says, 'I will build myself a wide
house with spacious chambers,
And cut out windows for it,
Paneling *it* with cedar
And painting *it* with vermilion.'

15"Shall you reign because you enclose
yourself in cedar?
Did not your father eat and drink,
And do justice and righteousness?
Then *it was* well with him.
16He judged the cause of the poor and
needy;
Then *it was* well.
Was not this knowing Me?" says the
LORD.
17"Yet your eyes and your heart *are* for
nothing but your covetousness,
For shedding innocent blood,
And practicing oppression and
violence."

18Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah:

"They shall not lament for him,
Saying, 'Alas, my brother!' or 'Alas, my
sister!'
They shall not lament for him,
Saying, 'Alas, master!' or 'Alas, his
glory!'
19He shall be buried with the burial of a
donkey,
Dragged and cast out beyond the gates
of Jerusalem.

20"Go up to Lebanon, and cry out,
And lift up your voice in Bashan;
Cry from Abarim,
For all your lovers are destroyed.
21I spoke to you in your prosperity,
But you said, 'I will not hear.'
This *has been* your manner from your
youth,
That you did not obey My voice.
22The wind shall eat up all your rulers,
And your lovers shall go into captivity;
Surely then you will be ashamed and
humiliated
For all your wickedness.
23O inhabitant of Lebanon,
Making your nest in the cedars,
How gracious will you be when pangs
come upon you,
Like the pain of a woman in labor?

MESSAGE TO CONIAH

24"*As* I live," says the LORD, "though Coniah[a] the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off; 25and I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand *of those* whose face you fear—the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans. 26So I will

22:11 [a]Also called *Jehoahaz* **22:24** [a]Also called *Jeconiah* and *Jehoiachin*

cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die. 27But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return.

28"Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol—
A vessel in which *is* no pleasure?
Why are they cast out, he and his descendants,
And cast into a land which they do not know?
29O earth, earth, earth,
Hear the word of the LORD!
30Thus says the LORD:
'Write this man down as childless,
A man *who* shall not prosper in his days;
For none of his descendants shall prosper,
Sitting on the throne of David,
And ruling anymore in Judah.'"

THE BRANCH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

23 "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says the LORD. 2Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the LORD. 3"But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD.

5"Behold, *the* days are coming," says the LORD,
"That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;
A King shall reign and prosper,
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.
6In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will dwell safely;
Now this *is* His name by which He will be called:
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.[a]

7"Therefore, behold, *the* days are coming," says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' 8but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land."

FALSE PROPHETS AND EMPTY ORACLES

9My heart within me is broken
Because of the prophets;
All my bones shake.
I am like a drunken man,
And like a man whom wine has overcome,
Because of the LORD,
And because of His holy words.
10For the land is full of adulterers;
For because of a curse the land mourns.
The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up.
Their course of life is evil,
And their might *is* not right.

11"For both prophet and priest are profane;
Yes, in My house I have found their wickedness," says the LORD.
12"Therefore their way shall be to them
Like slippery *ways;*
In the darkness they shall be driven on
And fall in them;
For I will bring disaster on them,
The year of their punishment," says the LORD.
13"And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria:
They prophesied by Baal
And caused My people Israel to err.
14Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem:
They commit adultery and walk in lies;
They also strengthen the hands of evildoers,
So that no one turns back from his wickedness.
All of them are like Sodom to Me,
And her inhabitants like Gomorrah.

23:6 [a]Hebrew *YHWH Tsidkenu*

15 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts
concerning the prophets:

'Behold, I will feed them with
wormwood,
And make them drink the water of
gall;
For from the prophets of Jerusalem
Profaneness has gone out into all the
land.'"

HOPE
When is our hope misplaced?
Jeremiah 23:16

16 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Do not listen to the words of the
prophets who prophesy to you.
They make you worthless;
They speak a vision of their own heart,
Not from the mouth of the LORD.
17 They continually say to those who
despise Me,
'The LORD has said, "You shall have
peace"';
And *to* everyone who walks according
to the dictates of his own heart,
they say,
'No evil shall come upon you.'"

18 For who has stood in the counsel of
the LORD,
And has perceived and heard His
word?
Who has marked His word and
heard *it?*
19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD has
gone forth in fury—
A violent whirlwind!
It will fall violently on the head of the
wicked.
20 The anger of the LORD will not turn
back
Until He has executed and performed
the thoughts of His heart.
In the latter days you will understand
it perfectly.

21 "I have not sent these prophets, yet
they ran.
I have not spoken to them, yet they
prophesied.
22 But if they had stood in My counsel,
And had caused My people to hear My
words,
Then they would have turned them
from their evil way
And from the evil of their doings.

23 "*Am* I a God near at hand," says the LORD,
"And not a God afar off?
24 Can anyone hide himself in secret
places,
So I shall not see him?" says the LORD;
"Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says
the LORD.

25 "I have heard what the prophets have
said who prophesy lies in My name, saying,
'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' 26 How
long will *this* be in the heart of the prophets
who prophesy lies? Indeed *they are* proph-
ets of the deceit of their own heart, 27 who
try to make My people forget My name
by their dreams which everyone tells his
neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name
for Baal.

28 "The prophet who has a dream, let him
tell a dream;
And he who has My word, let him
speak My word faithfully.
What *is* the chaff to the wheat?" says
the LORD.
29 "*Is* not My word like a fire?" says the
LORD,
"And like a hammer *that* breaks the
rock in pieces?

30 "Therefore behold, I *am* against the
prophets," says the LORD, "who steal My
words every one from his neighbor. 31 Be-
hold, I *am* against the prophets," says the
LORD, "who use their tongues and say, 'He
says.' 32 Behold, I *am* against those who
prophesy false dreams," says the LORD,
"and tell them, and cause My people to err
by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet
I did not send them or command them;
therefore they shall not profit this people
at all," says the LORD.
33 "So when these people or the prophet
or the priest ask you, saying, 'What is the
oracle of the LORD?' you shall then say
to them, 'What oracle?'[a] I will even for-

23:33 [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read '*You are the burden.*'

sake you," says the LORD. 34"And *as for* the prophet and the priest and the people who say, 'The oracle of the LORD!' I will even punish that man and his house. 35Thus every one of you shall say to his neighbor, and every one to his brother, 'What has the LORD answered?' and, 'What has the LORD spoken?' 36And the oracle of the LORD you shall mention no more. For every man's word will be his oracle, for you have perverted the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God. 37Thus you shall say to the prophet, 'What has the LORD answered you?' and, 'What has the LORD spoken?' 38But since you say, 'The oracle of the LORD!' therefore thus says the LORD: 'Because you say this word, "The oracle of the LORD!" and I have sent to you, saying, "Do not say, 'The oracle of the LORD!' " 39therefore behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you and forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and *will cast you* out of My presence. 40And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.' "

THE SIGN OF TWO BASKETS OF FIGS

24 The LORD showed me, and there were two baskets of figs set before the temple of the LORD, after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. 2One basket *had* very good figs, like the figs *that are* first ripe; and the other basket *had* very bad figs which could not be eaten, they were so bad. 3Then the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

And I said, "Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, which cannot be eaten, they are so bad."

4Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 5"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for *their own* good, into the land of the Chaldeans. 6For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull *them* down, and I will plant them and not pluck *them* up. 7Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I *am* the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.

8"And as the bad figs which cannot be eaten, they are so bad'—surely thus says the LORD—'so will I give up Zedekiah the king of Judah, his princes, the residue of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt. 9I will deliver them to trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth, for *their* harm, *to be* a reproach and a byword, a taunt and a curse, in all places where I shall drive them. 10And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.' "

SEVENTY YEARS OF DESOLATION

25 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which *was* the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), 2which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: 3"From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this *is* the twenty-third year in which the word of the LORD has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened. 4And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them,* but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear. 5They said, 'Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers forever and ever. 6Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.' 7Yet you have not listened to Me," says the LORD, "that you might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

8"Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Because you have not heard My words, 9behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' says the LORD, 'and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this

land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. 10Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. 11And this whole land shall be a desolation *and* an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

12"Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity," says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation. 13So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations. 14(For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)'"

JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS

15For thus says the LORD God of Israel to me: "Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. 16And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them."

17Then I took the cup from the LORD's hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the LORD had sent me: 18Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its princes, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse, as *it is* this day; 19Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes, and all his people; 20all the mixed multitude, all the kings of the land of Uz, all the kings of the land of the Philistines (namely, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod); 21Edom, Moab, and the people of Ammon; 22all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastlands which *are* across the sea; 23Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all *who are* in the farthest corners; 24all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed multitude who dwell in the desert; 25all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes; 26all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another; and all the kingdoms of the world which *are* on the face of the earth. Also the king of Sheshach[a] shall drink after them.

27"Therefore you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Drink, be drunk, and vomit! Fall and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you."' 28And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "You shall certainly drink! 29For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city which is called by My name, and should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth," says the LORD of hosts.'

30"Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them:

'The LORD will roar from on high,
And utter His voice from His holy habitation;
He will roar mightily against His fold.
He will give a shout, as those who tread *the grapes,*
Against all the inhabitants of the earth.
31A noise will come to the ends of the earth—
For the LORD has a controversy with the nations;
He will plead His case with all flesh.
He will give those *who are* wicked to the sword,' says the LORD."

32Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Behold, disaster shall go forth
From nation to nation,
And a great whirlwind shall be raised up
From the farthest parts of the earth.

33"And at that day the slain of the LORD shall be from *one* end of the earth even to the *other* end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground.

34"Wail, shepherds, and cry!
Roll about *in the ashes,*
You leaders of the flock!

25:26 [a]A code word for Babylon (compare 51:41)

For the days of your slaughter and
your dispersions are fulfilled;
You shall fall like a precious vessel.
35And the shepherds will have no way
to flee,
Nor the leaders of the flock to escape.
36A voice of the cry of the shepherds,
And a wailing of the leaders to the
flock *will be heard.*
For the LORD has plundered their
pasture,
37And the peaceful dwellings are cut
down
Because of the fierce anger of the
LORD.
38He has left His lair like the lion;
For their land is desolate
Because of the fierceness of the
Oppressor,
And because of His fierce anger."

JEREMIAH SAVED FROM DEATH

26 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD: 'Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah, which come to worship *in* the LORD's house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not diminish a word. 3Perhaps everyone will listen and turn from his evil way, that I may relent concerning the calamity which I purpose to bring on them because of the evil of their doings.' 4And you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: "If you will not listen to Me, to walk in My law which I have set before you, 5to heed the words of My servants the prophets whom I sent to you, both rising up early and sending *them* (but you have not heeded), 6then I will make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." '"

7So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. 8Now it happened, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, "You will surely die! 9Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without an inhabitant'?" And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

10When the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD and sat down in the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's *house.* 11And the priests and the prophets spoke to the princes and all the people, saying, "This man deserves to die! For he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears."

12Then Jeremiah spoke to all the princes and all the people, saying: "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city with all the words that you have heard. 13Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; then the LORD will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you. 14As for me, here I am, in your hand; do with me as seems good and proper to you. 15But know for certain that if you put me to death, you will surely bring innocent blood on yourselves, on this city, and on its inhabitants; for truly the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing."

16So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God."

17Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: 18"Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Zion shall be plowed *like* a field,
Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple[a]
Like the bare hills of the forest." '[b]

19Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and seek the LORD's favor? And the LORD relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves."

20Now there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the

26:18 [a]Literally *house* [b]Compare Micah 3:12

son of Shemaiah of Kirjath Jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah. 21And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death; but when Urijah heard *it,* he was afraid and fled, and went to Egypt. 22Then Jehoiakim the king sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor, and *other* men *who went* with him to Egypt. 23And they brought Urijah from Egypt and brought him to Jehoiakim the king, who killed him with the sword and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

FRIENDSHIP
Can standing up for a friend make a difference?
Jeremiah 26:24

24Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

SYMBOL OF THE BONDS AND YOKES

27 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim[a] the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,[b] 2"Thus says the LORD to me: 'Make for yourselves bonds and yokes, and put them on your neck, 3and send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon, by the hand of the messengers who come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. 4And command them to say to their masters, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel—thus you shall say to your masters: 5'I have made the earth, the man and the beast that *are* on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me. 6And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. 7So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them. 8And it shall be, *that* the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,' says the LORD, 'with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand. 9Therefore do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your soothsayers, or your sorcerers, who speak to you, saying, "You shall not serve the king of Babylon." 10For they prophesy a lie to you, to remove you far from your land; and I will drive you out, and you will perish. 11But the nations that bring their necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let them remain in their own land,' says the LORD, 'and they shall till it and dwell in it.'"'"

12I also spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live! 13Why will you die, you and your people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD has spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? 14Therefore do not listen to the words of the prophets who speak to you, saying, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon,' for they prophesy a lie to you; 15for I have not sent them," says the LORD, "yet they prophesy a lie in My name, that I may drive you out, and that you may perish, you and the prophets who prophesy to you."

16Also I spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you, saying, "Behold, the vessels of the LORD's house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon"; for they prophesy a lie to you. 17Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon, and live! Why should this city be laid waste? 18But if they *are* prophets, and if the word of the LORD is with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, *in* the house of the

27:1 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts, Arabic, and Syriac read *Zedekiah* (compare 27:3, 12; 28:1).
[b]Septuagint omits verse 1.

king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, do not go to Babylon.'

19"For thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, concerning the Sea, concerning the carts, and concerning the remainder of the vessels that remain in this city, 20which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem— 21yes, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem: 22'They shall be carried to Babylon, and there they shall be until the day that I visit them,' says the LORD. 'Then I will bring them up and restore them to this place.'"

Jeremiah 27:19–21

The Sea was an enormous bronze bowl created by Solomon. Fifteen feet in diameter and weighing more than ten tons, the bowl was used by priests for their cleansing rituals. Nebuchadnezzar's forces broke the bowl when they destroyed the temple in 586 B.C.

HANANIAH'S FALSEHOOD AND DOOM

28 And it happened in the same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year *and* in the fifth month, *that* Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, who *was* from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the LORD in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying, 2"Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying: 'I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. 3Within two full years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the LORD's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. 4And I will bring back to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah who went to Babylon,' says the LORD, 'for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.'"

5Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and in the presence of all the people who stood in the house of the LORD, 6and the prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! The LORD do so; the LORD perform your words which you have prophesied, to bring back the vessels of the LORD's house and all who were carried away captive, from Babylon to this place. 7Nevertheless hear now this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: 8The prophets who have been before me and before you of old prophesied against many countries and great kingdoms—of war and disaster and pestilence. 9As for the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known *as* one whom the LORD has truly sent."

10Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke off the prophet Jeremiah's neck and broke it. 11And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Even so I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years.'" And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

Jeremiah 28:13, 14

A yoke was a bar that rested on the neck of a work animal, such as an ox, a horse, or a cow. The wagon or plow that the animal was supposed to pull was then attached to the yoke. Most yokes were made of wood and could be fashioned for one animal or to link two together for a task.

12Now the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 13"Go and tell Hananiah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "You have broken the yokes of wood, but you have made in their place yokes of iron." 14For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him. I have given him the beasts of the field also."'"

15Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "Hear now, Hananiah, the LORD has not sent you, but you

make this people trust in a lie. 16Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will cast you from the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have taught rebellion against the LORD.'"

17So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.

JEREMIAH'S LETTER TO THE CAPTIVES

29 Now these *are* the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive—to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. 2(This happened after Jeconiah the king, the queen mother, the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem.) 3*The letter was sent* by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, saying,

4Thus says the LORD of hosts, the
God of Israel, to all who were carried
away captive, whom I have caused
to be carried away from Jerusalem to
Babylon:

5Build houses and dwell *in them;* plant
gardens and eat their fruit. 6Take wives
and beget sons and daughters; and
take wives for your sons and give your
daughters to husbands, so that they
may bear sons and daughters—that
you may be increased there, and not
diminished. 7And seek the peace of
the city where I have caused you to be
carried away captive, and pray to the
LORD for it; for in its peace you will
have peace. 8For thus says the LORD of
hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your
prophets and your diviners who are
in your midst deceive you, nor listen
to your dreams which you cause to be
dreamed. 9For they prophesy falsely to
you in My name; I have not sent them,
says the LORD.

10For thus says the LORD: After seventy
years are completed at Babylon, I
will visit you and perform My good
word toward you, and cause you to
return to this place. 11For I know the
thoughts that I think toward you, says
the LORD, thoughts of peace and not
of evil, to give you a future and a hope.
12Then you will call upon Me and go
and pray to Me, and I will listen to
you. 13And you will seek Me and find
Me, when you search for Me with all
your heart. 14I will be found by you,
says the LORD, and I will bring you
back from your captivity; I will gather
you from all the nations and from all
the places where I have driven you,
says the LORD, and I will bring you to
the place from which I cause you to be
carried away captive.

15Because you have said, "The LORD
has raised up prophets for us in
Babylon"— 16therefore thus says the
LORD concerning the king who sits
on the throne of David, concerning all
the people who dwell in this city, and
concerning your brethren who have
not gone out with you into captivity—
17thus says the LORD of hosts: Behold,
I will send on them the sword, the
famine, and the pestilence, and will
make them like rotten figs that cannot
be eaten, they are so bad. 18And I will
pursue them with the sword, with
famine, and with pestilence; and I
will deliver them to trouble among
all the kingdoms of the earth—to be
a curse, an astonishment, a hissing,
and a reproach among all the nations
where I have driven them, 19because
they have not heeded My words, says
the LORD, which I sent to them by
My servants the prophets, rising up
early and sending *them;* neither would
you heed, says the LORD. 20Therefore
hear the word of the LORD, all you of
the captivity, whom I have sent from
Jerusalem to Babylon.

PRAYER
Why should I pray for people or places I don't like?
Jeremiah 29:7



LIFE APP

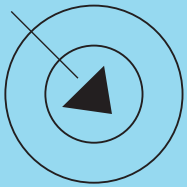
Destiny / Jeremiah 29:11

"Discover your destiny!" There probably aren't many days of the week that you don't either hear that phrase on TV or read it online. Many people claim they can tell your life's destiny simply by looking at your hand, or by knowing your birthday, or by looking at the letters in your name. It may sound exciting to think about finding out the whole plan for your life just by telling someone your name. But it doesn't work that way. Those people don't know the plan for your life. They don't know why you were born or where you fit in this giant world. They'll be happy to take your money and tell you a nice story. But that's all it will be: a story.

If you really want to know the plan for your life, there's only one place to go—to the Author of your life, the God of the universe. God created you with a beautiful design (Ps. 139:14–16) that includes a wonderful plan for your life. In Jeremiah 29:11, He says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you . . . thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

As we see in Jeremiah, God holds your future. He knows everything there is to know. He doesn't have to guess at what might happen by looking at the stars—He made the stars! He is not bound by space and time as we are—He already sees how you will play your role in His plan not only for you, but for the whole world.

Your future is not decided by mere chance. You get to actively participate in living out God's plan for your life! As a matter of fact, throughout the Word of God, you can find encouragement and instructions on how to continually seek God and His will for you. You don't have to try to find direction from those who simply guess at the future. You can rest in the knowledge that you are following the One who holds the future in His own hands.



PROMISE

God promises you a future of hope.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, *thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope* (Jer. 29:11).

A student's life can feel like a rollercoaster ride—lots of ups and downs. Sometimes you're upside down in a tunnel, wondering which way is out. If you can hang on, the ride is incredible and one day in the future, the memories will cause you to smile. But sometimes it's as if we get stuck on the ride during a power failure and we're left sitting in the dark wondering when we'll ever get out.

Life can be pretty crazy sometimes and take us to places just as changing and unpredictable as a rollercoaster ride. The downs seem to hang around too long, the curves throw us, and the bumps shake us up. Sometimes life is like a broken coaster that is taking forever to be fixed. It can be easy to lose hope in these scary places.

At these times, it's important to remember that God promises to give us a good future filled with hope. He promises to ride with us, restore power where there is none, and return order when things seem upside down and confusing. Though you may not know what's around the next corner or when the next breakdown might be, there is everything to live for. Your future is bright and blessed because you belong to Him. Stand on His promise and look toward the future—dream great dreams, and hope against the odds. You have everything to look forward to.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Proverbs 23:17, 18; 2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17; 1 Timothy 1:1; 1 Peter 1:3



21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God
of Israel, concerning Ahab the son
of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah the son of
Maaseiah, who prophesy a lie to you in
My name: Behold, I will deliver them
into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon, and he shall slay
them before your eyes. 22 And because
of them a curse shall be taken up by
all the captivity of Judah who *are* in
Babylon, saying, "The LORD make you
like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the
king of Babylon roasted in the fire";
23 because they have done disgraceful
things in Israel, have committed
adultery with their neighbors' wives,
and have spoken lying words in My
name, which I have not commanded
them. Indeed I know, and *am* a
witness, says the LORD.

24 You shall also speak to Shemaiah the
Nehelamite, saying, 25 Thus speaks
the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel,
saying: You have sent letters in your
name to all the people who *are* at
Jerusalem, to Zephaniah the son of
Maaseiah the priest, and to all the
priests, saying, 26 "The LORD has made
you priest instead of Jehoiada the
priest, so that there should be officers
in the house of the LORD over every
man *who* is demented and considers
himself a prophet, that you should put
him in prison and in the stocks. 27 Now
therefore, why have you not rebuked
Jeremiah of Anathoth who makes
himself a prophet to you? 28 For he has
sent to us *in* Babylon, saying, 'This
captivity is long; build houses and
dwell *in them,* and plant gardens and
eat their fruit.'"

29 Now Zephaniah the priest read this
letter in the hearing of Jeremiah the
prophet. 30 Then the word of the LORD
came to Jeremiah, saying: 31 Send to
all those in captivity, saying, Thus
says the LORD concerning Shemaiah
the Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah
has prophesied to you, and I have
not sent him, and he has caused you

to trust in a lie— 32therefore thus
says the LORD: Behold, I will punish
Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his
family: he shall not have anyone to
dwell among this people, nor shall
he see the good that I will do for
My people, says the LORD, because
he has taught rebellion against the
LORD.

Jeremiah 30:1, 2

Before books were created in the second or third century A.D., documents were written on an early form of paper called papyrus or on pieces of smooth, thin leather. The pieces were glued or sewn together to make a scroll. Most ancient scrolls were about eight inches wide and about fifteen to thirty-five feet long. To read a scroll, a person held it with one hand and unrolled it with the other.

RESTORATION OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

30 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
2"Thus speaks the LORD God of
Israel, saying: 'Write in a book for yourself
all the words that I have spoken to you.
3For behold, the days are coming,' says the
LORD, 'that I will bring back from captivity
My people Israel and Judah,' says the LORD.
'And I will cause them to return to the land
that I gave to their fathers, and they shall
possess it.'"

4Now these *are* the words that the LORD
spoke concerning Israel and Judah.

5"For thus says the LORD:

'We have heard a voice of trembling,
Of fear, and not of peace.
6Ask now, and see,
Whether a man is ever in labor with
child?
So why do I see every man *with* his
hands on his loins
Like a woman in labor,
And all faces turned pale?
7Alas! For that day *is* great,
So that none *is* like it;
And it *is* the time of Jacob's trouble,
But he shall be saved out of it.

8"For it shall come to pass in that day,'
Says the LORD of hosts,
'*That* I will break his yoke from your
neck,
And will burst your bonds;
Foreigners shall no more enslave
them.
9But they shall serve the LORD their
God,
And David their king,
Whom I will raise up for them.

10"Therefore do not fear, O My servant
Jacob,' says the LORD,
'Nor be dismayed, O Israel;
For behold, I will save you from afar,
And your seed from the land of their
captivity.
Jacob shall return, have rest and be
quiet,
And no one shall make *him* afraid.
11For I *am* with you,' says the LORD, 'to
save you;
Though I make a full end of all nations
where I have scattered you,
Yet I will not make a complete end of
you.
But I will correct you in justice,
And will not let you go altogether
unpunished.'

12"For thus says the LORD:

'Your affliction *is* incurable,
Your wound *is* severe.
13*There is* no one to plead your cause,
That you may be bound up;
You have no healing medicines.
14All your lovers have forgotten you;
They do not seek you;
For I have wounded you with the
wound of an enemy,
With the chastisement of a cruel one,
For the multitude of your iniquities,
Because your sins have increased.
15Why do you cry about your
affliction?
Your sorrow *is* incurable.
Because of the multitude of your
iniquities,
Because your sins have increased,
I have done these things to you.

16"Therefore all those who devour you
shall be devoured;

And all your adversaries, every one of
them, shall go into captivity;
Those who plunder you shall become
plunder,
And all who prey upon you I will make
a prey.
17For I will restore health to you
And heal you of your wounds,' says the
LORD,
'Because they called you an outcast
saying:
"This *is* Zion;
No one seeks her."'

Jeremiah 30:18

The people of Judah were held captive by the Babylonians for seventy years. Their captivity ended when Babylon was conquered by Persia. Cyrus, the king of Persia, allowed the Jewish people to return to their homeland and rebuild their temple.

18"Thus says the LORD:

'Behold, I will bring back the captivity
of Jacob's tents,
And have mercy on his dwelling places;
The city shall be built upon its own
mound,
And the palace shall remain according
to its own plan.
19Then out of them shall proceed
thanksgiving
And the voice of those who make
merry;
I will multiply them, and they shall not
diminish;
I will also glorify them, and they shall
not be small.
20Their children also shall be as before,
And their congregation shall be
established before Me;
And I will punish all who oppress
them.
21Their nobles shall be from among
them,
And their governor shall come from
their midst;
Then I will cause him to draw near,
And he shall approach Me;
For who *is* this who pledged his heart
to approach Me?' says the LORD.
22'You shall be My people,
And I will be your God.'"

23Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD
Goes forth with fury,
A continuing whirlwind;
It will fall violently on the head of the
wicked.
24The fierce anger of the LORD will not
return until He has done it,
And until He has performed the
intents of His heart.

In the latter days you will consider it.

THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL SAVED

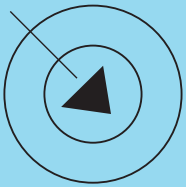
31 "At the same time," says the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people."
2Thus says the LORD:

"The people who survived the sword
Found grace in the wilderness—
Israel, when I went to give him rest."

3The LORD has appeared of old to me,
saying:
"Yes, I have loved you with an
everlasting love;
Therefore with lovingkindness I have
drawn you.
4Again I will build you, and you shall be
rebuilt,
O virgin of Israel!
You shall again be adorned with your
tambourines,
And shall go forth in the dances of
those who rejoice.
5You shall yet plant vines on the
mountains of Samaria;
The planters shall plant and eat *them*
as ordinary food.

FUTURE
Is the future of God's people bright?
Jeremiah 31:6

6For there shall be a day
When the watchmen will cry on
Mount Ephraim,



PROMISE

God promises to turn your sorrow into joy.

"Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together; for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them, and make them rejoice rather than sorrow" (Jer. 31:13).

One of the hardest things in life to face is loss. You may go through times when it seems you've lost important parts of your life—maybe you'll have to move away from your hometown, or change schools. Sometimes there are habits or friendships that have to end because you know God doesn't approve. When loss happens, it can seem as though your life will never be the same and you may even doubt you'll ever be happy again. It may even feel as if the best part of your life is over and you can't see anything good in your future. When you think your situation is hopeless, hold on; when God brings changes into your life, there is always a blessing waiting at the end.

God can use things that seem bad to make you glad. He's on your side! He's for you! He wants to see you joyful, healthy, and strong. He cares about you even more than you do. He is God, and He can do anything. He's especially good at turning your hardest times into your greatest blessings.

Look at what He did for Joseph (Gen. 37—50). Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery and thought he'd probably live a miserably hard life. Instead, God made Joseph a strong and successful leader. His brothers even bowed down to him! What they had meant for bad, God meant for good. Hard times will come; we all suffer loss in our lives. When you're hurting and it seems life will never be good again, hang in there with God and watch what He will do!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Genesis 50:20; Psalm 30:11, 12; Isaiah 61:3

'Arise, and let us go up *to* Zion,
To the LORD our God.'"

7For thus says the LORD:

"Sing with gladness for Jacob,
And shout among the chief of the nations;
Proclaim, give praise, and say,
'O LORD, save Your people,
The remnant of Israel!'
8Behold, I will bring them from the north country,
And gather them from the ends of the earth,
Among them the blind and the lame,
The woman with child
And the one who labors with child, together;
A great throng shall return there.
9They shall come with weeping,
And with supplications I will lead them.
I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters,
In a straight way in which they shall not stumble;
For I am a Father to Israel,
And Ephraim *is* My firstborn.

10"Hear the word of the LORD,
O nations,
And declare *it* in the isles afar off, and say,
'He who scattered Israel will gather him,
And keep him as a shepherd *does* his flock.'
11For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
And ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he.
12Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion,
Streaming to the goodness of the LORD—
For wheat and new wine and oil,

For the young of the flock and the herd;
Their souls shall be like a well-watered garden,
And they shall sorrow no more at all.

13"Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance,
And the young men and the old, together;
For I will turn their mourning to joy,
Will comfort them,
And make them rejoice rather than sorrow.
14I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance,
And My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the LORD."

MERCY ON EPHRAIM

15Thus says the LORD:

"A voice was heard in Ramah,
Lamentation *and* bitter weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted for her children,
Because they *are* no more."

16Thus says the LORD:

"Refrain your voice from weeping,
And your eyes from tears;
For your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD,
And they shall come back from the land of the enemy.
17There is hope in your future, says the LORD,
That *your* children shall come back to their own border.

18"I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself:
'You have chastised me, and I was chastised,
Like an untrained bull;
Restore me, and I will return,
For You *are* the LORD my God.
19Surely, after my turning, I repented;
And after I was instructed, I struck myself on the thigh;
I was ashamed, yes, even humiliated,
Because I bore the reproach of my youth.'
20*Is* Ephraim My dear son?
Is he a pleasant child?
For though I spoke against him,
I earnestly remember him still;
Therefore My heart yearns for him;
I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD.

21"Set up signposts,
Make landmarks;
Set your heart toward the highway,
The way in *which* you went.
Turn back, O virgin of Israel,
Turn back to these your cities.
22How long will you gad about,
O you backsliding daughter?
For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth—
A woman shall encompass a man."

FUTURE PROSPERITY OF JUDAH

23Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "They shall again use this speech in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I bring back their captivity: 'The LORD bless you, O home of justice, *and* mountain of holiness!' 24And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all its cities together, farmers and those going out with flocks. 25For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul."

26After this I awoke and looked around, and my sleep was sweet to me.

27"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast. 28And it shall come to pass, *that* as I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to throw down, to destroy, and to afflict, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the LORD. 29In those days they shall say no more:

'The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge.'

30But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

A NEW COVENANT

31"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant

MAKING IT REAL // JEREMIAH 31:33

New Covenant God made a covenant, or agreement, with the people of Israel after He miraculously rescued them from slavery in Egypt. Under the covenant, they had to perform a lot of rituals and make sacrifices in order to please Him. God said that He would bless them as long as they obeyed the laws He had given them. But they couldn't follow through. They constantly broke their agreement with God.

God spoke to Jeremiah and asked him to tell the Jewish people that He (God) was going to make a new covenant with them. That new agreement was put in place when Jesus died on the cross as a one-time, perfect sacrifice for everybody's sins. But this time the covenant wasn't just for Jews. Jesus specifically gave the apostle Paul the job of telling Gentiles, or non-Jews, about Him (Acts 9:15). So God's new agreement with His people is for you, too.

"I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts." That's part of God's new covenant. This covenant, it has nothing to do with continual sacrifices or rituals. Instead, you just have to accept Jesus as your Savior. Trust Jesus and obey Him with all of your heart. (See also: Matt. 26:26–28; Heb. 8:10; 12:24.)

Words to Live By

Minds: The word translated as "minds" in Jeremiah 31:33 is the Hebrew word *qereb* (keh'-reb). It means "the nearest part" or "the center." The idea is that God will put His law right into the center of our beings—where our thoughts and emotions are formed. We can have God's very presence within our minds and hearts.

with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 32not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them,[a] says the LORD. 33But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

35Thus says the LORD,
Who gives the sun for a light by day,
The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night,
Who disturbs the sea,
And its waves roar
(The LORD of hosts *is* His name):

36"If those ordinances depart
From before Me, says the LORD,
Then the seed of Israel shall also cease
From being a nation before Me forever."

37Thus says the LORD:

"If heaven above can be measured,
And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath,
I will also cast off all the seed of Israel
For all that they have done, says the LORD.

38"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that the city shall be built for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39The surveyor's line shall again extend straight forward over the hill Gareb; then it shall turn toward Goath. 40And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as far

31:32 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *and I turned away from them.*

as the Brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, *shall be* holy to the LORD. It shall not be plucked up or thrown down anymore forever."

JEREMIAH BUYS A FIELD

32 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. 2For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which *was in* the king of Judah's house. 3For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, "Why do you prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; 4and Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him face to face,[a] and see him eye to eye; 5then he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall be until I visit him," says the LORD; "though you fight with the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed" '?"

6And Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 7'Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, "Buy my field which *is* in Anathoth, for the right of redemption *is* yours to buy *it*."' 8Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Please buy my field that *is* in Anathoth, which *is* in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance *is* yours, and the redemption yours; buy *it* for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. 9So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who *was* in Anathoth, and weighed *out to* him the money—seventeen shekels of silver. 10And I signed the deed and sealed *it,* took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales. 11So I took the purchase deed, *both* that which was sealed *according* to the law and custom, and that which was open; 12and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle's *son,* and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison.

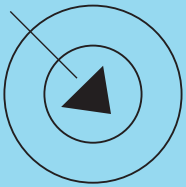
13"'Then I charged Baruch before them, saying, 14'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days." 15For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land."'

JEREMIAH PRAYS FOR UNDERSTANDING

16"Now when I had delivered the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying: 17'Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. 18*You* show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them—the Great, the Mighty God, whose name *is* the LORD of hosts. 19*You are* great in counsel and mighty in work, for Your eyes *are* open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. 20You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among *other* men; and You have made Yourself a name, as it is this day. 21You have brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror; 22You have given them this land, of which You swore to their fathers to give them—"a land flowing with milk and honey."[a] 23And they came in and took possession of it, but they have not obeyed Your voice or walked in Your law. They have done nothing of all that You commanded them to do; therefore You have caused all this calamity to come upon them.

24'Look, the siege mounds! They have come to the city to take it; and the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of the sword and famine and pestilence. What You have spoken has happened; there You

32:4 [a]Literally *mouth to mouth* **32:22** [a]Exodus 3:8



PROMISE

God promises to do good things for you forever.

"They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul" (Jer. 32:38–41).

On this earth, good things always end. Things we look forward to finally arrive and then they're over: we open our last birthday present; vacation comes to an end; the Christmas decorations are packed away for another year. We anticipate, plan, enjoy, and then it's over and all we have left are memories and photos.

Even the good things people do for each other come to an end. We get tired, we run out of resources, we don't have the ability to do anything more, or we may even just stop caring. Whatever the reason, people can only help so much and then the helping stops.

But the Lord is not like mere humans. His abilities and His love for you are limitless. He promises to always do good things for you. He will always be there when you ask for His help, and He will never reach the end of His ability to bring good into your life. He is at work in your most awesome days and in your worst days, doing what is best for you. He puts His entire heart and soul into all He does for you. And His goodness will never come to an end.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Romans 8:28



see *it!* 25And You have said to me, O Lord GOD, "Buy the field for money, and take witnesses"!—yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.'"

GOD'S ASSURANCE OF THE PEOPLE'S RETURN

26Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 27"Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? 28Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it. 29And the Chaldeans who fight against this city shall come and set fire to this city and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs they have offered incense to Baal and poured out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke Me to anger; 30because the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only evil before Me from their youth. For the children of Israel have provoked Me only to anger with the work of their hands,' says the LORD. 31'For this city has been to Me *a provocation of* My anger and My fury from the day that they built it, even to this day; so I will remove it from before My face 32because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me to anger—they, their kings, their princes, their priests, their prophets, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 33And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching *them,* yet they have not listened to receive instruction. 34But they set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to defile it. 35And they built the high places of Baal which *are* in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.'

36"Now therefore, thus says the LORD,

the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, 'It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence': 37Behold, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. 38They shall be My people, and I will be their God; 39then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. 40And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. 41Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.'

ASSURANCE
How long do God's promises last?
Jeremiah 32:40, 41

42"For thus says the LORD: 'Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them. 43And fields will be bought in this land of which you say, "*It is* desolate, without man or beast; it has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans." 44Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal *them,* and take witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the South; for I will cause their captives to return,' says the LORD."

EXCELLENCE OF THE RESTORED NATION

33 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the prison, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD who made it, the LORD who formed it to establish it (the LORD *is* His name): 3'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

4"For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah, which have been pulled down *to fortify*[a] against the siege mounds and the sword: 5'They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but *only* to fill their places[a] with the dead bodies of men whom I will slay in My anger and My fury, all for whose wickedness I have hidden My face from this city. 6Behold, I will bring it health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth. 7And I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will rebuild those places as at the first. 8I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me. 9Then it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.'

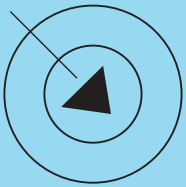
10"Thus says the LORD: 'Again there shall be heard in this place—of which you say, "It *is* desolate, without man and without beast"—in the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, 11the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say:

"Praise the LORD of hosts,
For the LORD *is* good,
For His mercy *endures* forever"—

and of those *who will* bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the LORD.

12"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In this place which is desolate, without man and without beast, and in all its cities, there shall again be a dwelling place of shepherds causing *their* flocks to lie down. 13In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, in the cities of the South, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the

33:4 [a]Compare Isaiah 22:10 **33:5** [a]Compare 2 Kings 23:14



PROMISE

God promises to cleanse you from your sin (iniquity).

"I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me" (Jer. 33:8).

When Jeremiah gave God's message to the people of Israel, the whole country was seriously messed up. The people were doing things that would be shocking to hear about even in these days, and God was understandably upset. Jeremiah warned Israel that God was going to punish them, but they didn't change their ways. Jeremiah began to think they were pretty hopeless.

But God knew better. He knew the people were not going to turn things around soon and that He would have to follow through with His punishment. But He also knew that after the people lived through all the terrible things that were going to happen, many of them would come to their senses. Then, in spite of all the awful things they had done, God said He would take their iniquities away.

That's God's promise to you, too. Even if you think that what you've done is too horrible to mention, God wants you to be honest with Him. He won't be shocked; He already knows everything you've ever done. And He won't stop loving you, because God is love. Turn around, face Him, repent, ask forgiveness, and He will take your guilt away. Jesus already paid the price for you so you don't have to suffer like the Israelites did. He took your punishment and has declared you "not guilty."

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34; 1 John 1:9

flocks shall again pass under the hands of him who counts *them,*' says the LORD.

14 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah:

15 "In those days and at that time
I will cause to grow up to David
A Branch of righteousness;
He shall execute judgment and
righteousness in the earth.
16 In those days Judah will be saved,
And Jerusalem will dwell safely.
And this *is the name* by which she will
be called:

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'[a]

17 "For thus says the LORD: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; 18 nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.'"

THE PERMANENCE OF GOD'S COVENANT

19 And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 20 "Thus says the LORD: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, 21 then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.'"

23 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 24 "Have you not considered what these people have spoken, saying, 'The two families which the LORD has chosen, He has also cast them off'? Thus they have despised My people, as if they should no more be a nation before them.

33:16 [a]Compare 23:5, 6

25"Thus says the LORD: 'If My covenant
is not with day and night, *and if* I have not
appointed the ordinances of heaven and
earth, 26then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, *so*
that I will not take *any* of his descendants
to be rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will cause their
captives to return, and will have mercy on
them.'"

ZEDEKIAH WARNED BY GOD

34 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army, all the kingdoms of
the earth under his dominion, and all the
people, fought against Jerusalem and all
its cities, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD, the
God of Israel: 'Go and speak to Zedekiah
king of Judah and tell him, "Thus says the
LORD: 'Behold, I will give this city into the
hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall
burn it with fire. 3And you shall not escape
from his hand, but shall surely be taken
and delivered into his hand; your eyes shall
see the eyes of the king of Babylon, he
shall speak with you face to face,[a] and you
shall go to Babylon.'"' 4Yet hear the word
of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah!
Thus says the LORD concerning you: 'You
shall not die by the sword. 5You shall die in
peace; as in the ceremonies of your fathers,
the former kings who were before you, so
they shall burn *incense* for you and lament
for you, *saying,* "Alas, lord!" For I have pronounced the word, says the LORD.'"

6Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all
these words to Zedekiah king of Judah in
Jerusalem, 7when the king of Babylon's
army fought against Jerusalem and all the
cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish and Azekah; for *only* these fortified
cities remained of the cities of Judah.

TREACHEROUS TREATMENT OF SLAVES

8*This is* the word that came to Jeremiah
from the LORD, after King Zedekiah had
made a covenant with all the people who
were at Jerusalem to proclaim liberty to
them: 9that every man should set free his
male and female slave—a Hebrew man
or woman—that no one should keep a
Jewish brother in bondage. 10Now when
all the princes and all the people, who
had entered into the covenant, heard that
everyone should set free his male and female slaves, that no one should keep them
in bondage anymore, they obeyed and let
them go. 11But afterward they changed
their minds and made the male and female
slaves return, whom they had set free, and
brought them into subjection as male and
female slaves.

12Therefore the word of the LORD came
to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 13"Thus
says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'I made a
covenant with your fathers in the day that
I brought them out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of bondage, saying, 14"At
the end of seven years let every man set
free his Hebrew brother, who has been sold
to him; and when he has served you six
years, you shall let him go free from you."
But your fathers did not obey Me nor incline their ear. 15Then you recently turned
and did what was right in My sight—every
man proclaiming liberty to his neighbor;
and you made a covenant before Me in the
house which is called by My name. 16Then
you turned around and profaned My name,
and every one of you brought back his male
and female slaves, whom you had set at liberty, at their pleasure, and brought them
back into subjection, to be your male and
female slaves.'

17"Therefore thus says the LORD: 'You
have not obeyed Me in proclaiming liberty,
every one to his brother and every one to
his neighbor. Behold, I proclaim liberty to
you,' says the LORD—'to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine! And I will deliver
you to trouble among all the kingdoms of
the earth. 18And I will give the men who
have transgressed My covenant, who have
not performed the words of the covenant
which they made before Me, when they
cut the calf in two and passed between
the parts of it— 19the princes of Judah,
the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the
priests, and all the people of the land who
passed between the parts of the calf— 20I
will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who
seek their life. Their dead bodies shall be
for meat for the birds of the heaven and
the beasts of the earth. 21And I will give

34:3 [a]Literally *mouth to mouth*

Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes into the hand of their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army which has gone back from you. 22Behold, I will command,' says the LORD, 'and cause them to return to this city. They will fight against it and take it and burn it with fire; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant.'"

THE OBEDIENT RECHABITES

35 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, 2"Go to the house of the Rechabites, speak to them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink."

> ***Jeremiah 35:2***
> The Rechabites were nomads who refused to drink wine or participate in the corrupt lifestyle of the people around them.

3Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, his brothers and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites, 4and I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which *was* by the chamber of the princes, above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door. 5Then I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, "Drink wine."

6But they said, "We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, 'You shall drink no wine, you nor your sons, forever. 7You shall not build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard, nor have *any of these;* but all your days you shall dwell in tents, that you may live many days in the land where you are sojourners.' 8Thus we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters, 9nor to build ourselves houses to dwell in; nor do we have vineyard, field, or seed. 10But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. 11But it came to pass, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, 'Come, let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans and for fear of the army of the Syrians.' So we dwell at Jerusalem."

12Then came the word of the LORD to Jeremiah, saying, 13"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "Will you not receive instruction to obey My words?" says the LORD. 14"The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; for to this day they drink none, and obey their father's commandment. But although I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, you did not obey Me. 15I have also sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them,* saying, 'Turn now everyone from his evil way, amend your doings, and do not go after other gods to serve them; then you will dwell in the land which I have given you and your fathers.' But you have not inclined your ear, nor obeyed Me. 16Surely the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them, but this people has not obeyed Me.'"

17"Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will bring on Judah and on all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the doom that I have pronounced against them; because I have spoken to them but they have not heard, and I have called to them but they have not answered.'"

18And Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Because you have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts and done according to all that he commanded you, 19therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not lack a man to stand before Me forever."'"

THE SCROLL READ IN THE TEMPLE

36 Now it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, *that* this word came to Jeremiah from the

LORD, saying: 2"Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day. 3It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."

4Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote on a scroll of a book, at the instruction of Jeremiah,[a] all the words of the LORD which He had spoken to him. 5And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, "I *am* confined, I cannot go into the house of the LORD. 6You go, therefore, and read from the scroll which you have written at my instruction,[a] the words of the LORD, in the hearing of the people in the LORD's house on the day of fasting. And you shall also read them in the hearing of all Judah who come from their cities. 7It may be that they will present their supplication before the LORD, and everyone will turn from his evil way. For great *is* the anger and the fury that the LORD has pronounced against this people." 8And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading from the book the words of the LORD in the LORD's house.

9Now it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, *that* they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem. 10Then Baruch read from the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the upper court at the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's house, in the hearing of all the people.

THE SCROLL READ IN THE PALACE

11When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the LORD from the book, 12he then went down to the king's house, into the scribe's chamber; and there all the princes were sitting—Elishama the scribe, Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, Elnathan the son of Achbor, Gemariah the son of Shaphan, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes. 13Then Michaiah declared to them all the words that he had heard when Baruch read the book in the hearing of the people. 14Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, to Baruch, saying, "Take in your hand the scroll from which you have read in the hearing of the people, and come." So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and came to them. 15And they said to him, "Sit down now, and read it in our hearing." So Baruch read *it* in their hearing.

16Now it happened, when they had heard all the words, that they looked in fear from one to another, and said to Baruch, "We will surely tell the king of all these words." 17And they asked Baruch, saying, "Tell us now, how did you write all these words—at his instruction?"[a]

18So Baruch answered them, "He proclaimed with his mouth all these words to me, and I wrote *them* with ink in the book."

19Then the princes said to Baruch, "Go and hide, you and Jeremiah; and let no one know where you are."

THE KING DESTROYS JEREMIAH'S SCROLL

20And they went to the king, into the court; but they stored the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the hearing of the king. 21So the king sent Jehudi to bring the scroll, and he took it from Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the hearing of the king and in the hearing of all the princes who stood beside the king. 22Now the king was sitting in the winter house in the ninth month, with *a fire* burning on the hearth before him. 23And it happened, when Jehudi had read three or four columns, *that the king* cut it with the scribe's knife and cast *it* into the fire that *was* on the hearth, until all the scroll was consumed in the fire that *was* on the hearth. 24Yet they were not afraid, nor did they tear their garments, the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words. 25Nevertheless Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah implored the king not to burn the scroll; but he would not listen to them. 26And the king commanded

36:4 [a]Literally *from Jeremiah's mouth*
36:6 [a]Literally *from my mouth* **36:17** [a]Literally *with his mouth*

Jerahmeel the king's[a] son, Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet, but the LORD hid them.

JEREMIAH REWRITES THE SCROLL

27Now after the king had burned the scroll with the words which Baruch had written at the instruction of Jeremiah,[a] the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: 28"Take yet another scroll, and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned. 29And you shall say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, 'Thus says the LORD: "You have burned this scroll, saying, 'Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and cause man and beast to cease from here?'" 30Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: "He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night. 31I will punish him, his family, and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring on them, on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah all the doom that I have pronounced against them; but they did not heed."'"

32Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the instruction of Jeremiah[a] all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And besides, there were added to them many similar words.

ZEDEKIAH'S VAIN HOPE

37 Now King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. 2But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land gave heed to the words of the LORD which He spoke by the prophet Jeremiah.

3And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "Pray now to the LORD our God for us." 4Now Jeremiah was coming and going among the people, for they had not *yet* put him in prison. 5Then Pharaoh's army came up from Egypt; and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

6Then the word of the LORD came to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 7"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Thus you shall say to the king of Judah, who sent you to Me to inquire of Me: "Behold, Pharaoh's army which has come up to help you will return to Egypt, to their own land. 8And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city, and take it and burn it with fire."' 9Thus says the LORD: 'Do not deceive yourselves, saying, "The Chaldeans will surely depart from us," for they will not depart. 10For though you had defeated the whole army of the Chaldeans who fight against you, and there remained *only* wounded men among them, they would rise up, every man in his tent, and burn the city with fire.'"

JEREMIAH IMPRISONED

11And it happened, when the army of the Chaldeans left *the siege* of Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, 12that Jeremiah went out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin to claim his property there among the people. 13And when he was in the Gate of Benjamin, a captain of the guard *was* there whose name *was* Irijah the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "You are defecting to the Chaldeans!"

14Then Jeremiah said, "False! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans." But he did not listen to him.

So Irijah seized Jeremiah and brought him to the princes. 15Therefore the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and they struck him and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe. For they had made that the prison.

16When Jeremiah entered the dungeon and the cells, and Jeremiah had remained there many days, 17then Zedekiah the king sent and took him *out.* The king asked him secretly in his house, and said, "Is there *any* word from the LORD?"

36:26 [a]Hebrew *Hammelech* **36:27** [a]Literally *from Jeremiah's mouth* **36:32** [a]Literally *from Jeremiah's mouth*

And Jeremiah said, "There is." Then he said, "You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon!"

18Moreover Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "What offense have I committed against you, against your servants, or against this people, that you have put me in prison? 19Where now *are* your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, 'The king of Babylon will not come against you or against this land'? 20Therefore please hear now, O my lord the king. Please, let my petition be accepted before you, and do not make me return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there."

21Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah to the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread from the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city was gone. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

JEREMIAH IN THE DUNGEON

38 Now Shephatiah the son of Mattan, Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, Jucal[a] the son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur the son of Malchiah heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken to all the people, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD: 'He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be as a prize to him, and he shall live.'[a] 3Thus says the LORD: 'This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.'"

4Therefore the princes said to the king, "Please, let this man be put to death, for thus he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man does not seek the welfare of this people, but their harm."

5Then Zedekiah the king said, "Look, he *is* in your hand. For the king can *do* nothing against you." 6So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king's[a] son, which *was* in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire.

7Now Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon. When the king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin, 8Ebed-Melech went out of the king's house and spoke to the king, saying: 9"My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon, and he is likely to die from hunger in the place where he is. For *there is* no more bread in the city." 10Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, "Take from here thirty men with you, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he dies." 11So Ebed-Melech took the men with him and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took from there old clothes and old rags, and let them down by ropes into the dungeon to Jeremiah. 12Then Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, "Please put these old clothes and rags under your armpits, under the ropes." And Jeremiah did so. 13So they pulled Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the dungeon. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

ZEDEKIAH'S FEARS AND JEREMIAH'S ADVICE

14Then Zedekiah the king sent and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance of the house of the LORD. And the king said to Jeremiah, "I will ask you something. Hide nothing from me."

15Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I declare *it* to you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you advice, you will not listen to me."

16So Zedekiah the king swore secretly to Jeremiah, saying, "*As* the LORD lives, who made our very souls, I will not put you to death, nor will I give you into the hand of these men who seek your life."

17Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'If you surely surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then your soul shall live; this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live. 18But if you do not surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans; they shall burn

38:1 [a]Same as *Jehucal* (compare 37:3)
38:2 [a]Compare 21:9 **38:6** [a]Hebrew *Hammelech*

it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand.'"

19And Zedekiah the king said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Jews who have defected to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they abuse me."

20But Jeremiah said, "They shall not deliver *you.* Please, obey the voice of the LORD which I speak to you. So it shall be well with you, and your soul shall live. 21But if you refuse to surrender, this *is* the word that the LORD has shown me: 22'Now behold, all the women who are left in the king of Judah's house *shall be* surrendered to the king of Babylon's princes, and those *women* shall say:

"Your close friends have set upon you
And prevailed against you;
Your feet have sunk in the mire,
And they have turned away again."

23'So they shall surrender all your wives and children to the Chaldeans. You shall not escape from their hand, but shall be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon. And you shall cause this city to be burned with fire.'"

24Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "Let no one know of these words, and you shall not die. 25But if the princes hear that I have talked with you, and they come to you and say to you, 'Declare to us now what you have said to the king, and also what the king said to you; do not hide *it* from us, and we will not put you to death,' 26then you shall say to them, 'I presented my request before the king, that he would not make me return to Jonathan's house to die there.'"

27Then all the princes came to Jeremiah and asked him. And he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they stopped speaking with him, for the conversation had not been heard. 28Now Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken. And he was *there* when Jerusalem was taken.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

39 In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem, and besieged it. 2In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth *day* of the month, the city was penetrated.

3Then all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris,[a] Nergal-Sarezer, Rabmag,[b] with the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon.

4So it was, when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them, that they fled and went out of the city by night, by way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls. And he went out by way of the plain.[a] 5But the Chaldean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. And when they had captured him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced judgment on him. 6Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes in Riblah; the king of Babylon also killed all the nobles of Judah. 7Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon. 8And the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. 9Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive to Babylon the remnant of the people who remained in the city and those who defected to him, with the rest of the people who remained. 10But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left in the land of Judah the poor people, who had nothing, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

JEREMIAH GOES FREE

11Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, 12"Take him and look after him, and do him no harm; but do to him just as he says to you." 13So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent Nebushasban, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's chief officers; 14then they sent

39:3 [a]A title, probably *Chief Officer;* also verse 13 [b]A title, probably *Troop Commander;* also verse 13 **39:4** [a]Or *the Arabah,* that is, the Jordan Valley

someone to take Jeremiah from the court of the prison, and committed him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he dwelt among the people.

15Meanwhile the word of the LORD had come to Jeremiah while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, 16"Go and speak to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring My words upon this city for adversity and not for good, and they shall be *performed* in that day before you. 17But I will deliver you in that day," says the LORD, "and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you *are* afraid. 18For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life shall be as a prize to you, because you have put your trust in Me," says the LORD.'"

JEREMIAH WITH GEDALIAH THE GOVERNOR

40 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him bound in chains among all who were carried away captive from Jerusalem and Judah, who were carried away captive to Babylon.

2And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him: "The LORD your God has pronounced this doom on this place. 3Now the LORD has brought *it,* and has done just as He said. Because you *people* have sinned against the LORD, and not obeyed His voice, therefore this thing has come upon you. 4And now look, I free you this day from the chains that *were* on your hand. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you. But if it seems wrong for you to come with me to Babylon, remain here. See, all the land *is* before you; wherever it seems good and convenient for you to go, go there."

5Now while Jeremiah had not yet gone back, *Nebuzaradan said,* "Go back to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people. Or go wherever it seems convenient for you to go." So the captain of the guard gave him rations and a gift and let him go. 6Then Jeremiah went to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, to Mizpah, and dwelt with him among the people who were left in the land.

7And when all the captains of the armies who *were* in the fields, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed to him men, women, children, and the poorest of the land who had not been carried away captive to Babylon, 8then they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah[a] the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. 9And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, took an oath before them and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. 10As for me, I will indeed dwell at Mizpah and serve the Chaldeans who come to us. But you, gather wine and summer fruit and oil, put *them* in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that you have taken." 11Likewise, when all the Jews who *were* in Moab, among the Ammonites, in Edom, and who *were* in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, 12then all the Jews returned out of all places where they had been driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruit in abundance.

13Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces that *were* in the fields came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, 14and said to him, "Do you certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to murder you?" But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam did not believe them.

15Then Johanan the son of Kareah spoke secretly to Gedaliah in Mizpah, saying, "Let me go, please, and I will kill Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no one will know *it.* Why should he murder you, so that all the Jews who are gathered to you would be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish?"

40:8 [a]Spelled *Jaazaniah* in 2 Kings 25:23

16But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said to
Johanan the son of Kareah, "You shall not
do this thing, for you speak falsely concern-
ing Ishmael."

INSURRECTION AGAINST GEDALIAH

41 Now it came to pass in the
seventh month *that* Ishmael
the son of Nethaniah, the son
of Elishama, of the royal family and of the
officers of the king, came with ten men to
Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, at Mizpah.
And there they ate bread together in Miz-
pah. 2Then Ishmael the son of Nethaniah,
and the ten men who were with him, arose
and struck Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the
son of Shaphan, with the sword, and killed
him whom the king of Babylon had made
governor over the land. 3Ishmael also
struck down all the Jews who were with
him, *that is,* with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and
the Chaldeans who were found there, the
men of war.
4And it happened, on the second day af-
ter he had killed Gedaliah, when as yet no
one knew *it,* 5that certain men came from
Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria,
eighty men with their beards shaved and
their clothes torn, having cut themselves,
with offerings and incense in their hand,
to bring *them* to the house of the LORD.
6Now Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went
out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as
he went along; and it happened as he met
them that he said to them, "Come to Geda-
liah the son of Ahikam!" 7So it was, when
they came into the midst of the city, that
Ishmael the son of Nethaniah killed them
and cast them into the midst of a pit, he
and the men who were with him. 8But ten
men were found among them who said to
Ishmael, "Do not kill us, for we have trea-
sures of wheat, barley, oil, and honey in the
field." So he desisted and did not kill them
among their brethren. 9Now the pit into
which Ishmael had cast all the dead bod-
ies of the men whom he had slain, because
of Gedaliah, *was* the same one Asa the king
had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel.
Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with
the slain. 10Then Ishmael carried away cap-
tive all the rest of the people who *were* in
Mizpah, the king's daughters and all the
people who remained in Mizpah, whom
Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had
committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam.
And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried
them away captive and departed to go over
to the Ammonites.
11But when Johanan the son of Kareah
and all the captains of the forces that *were*
with him heard of all the evil that Ishmael
the son of Nethaniah had done, 12they took
all the men and went to fight with Ishmael
the son of Nethaniah; and they found him
by the great pool that *is* in Gibeon. 13So it
was, when all the people who *were* with
Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah,
and all the captains of the forces who *were*
with him, that they were glad. 14Then all
the people whom Ishmael had carried
away captive from Mizpah turned around
and came back, and went to Johanan the
son of Kareah. 15But Ishmael the son of
Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with
eight men and went to the Ammonites.
16Then Johanan the son of Kareah, and
all the captains of the forces that were
with him, took from Mizpah all the rest of
the people whom he had recovered from
Ishmael the son of Nethaniah after he had
murdered Gedaliah the son of Ahikam—
the mighty men of war and the women
and the children and the eunuchs, whom
he had brought back from Gibeon. 17And
they departed and dwelt in the habitation
of Chimham, which is near Bethlehem, as
they went on their way to Egypt, 18because
of the Chaldeans; for they were afraid of
them, because Ishmael the son of Netha-
niah had murdered Gedaliah the son of
Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had
made governor in the land.

THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT FORBIDDEN

42 Now all the captains of the
forces, Johanan the son of
Kareah, Jezaniah the son of
Hoshaiah, and all the people, from the least
to the greatest, came near 2and said to Jer-
emiah the prophet, "Please, let our petition
be acceptable to you, and pray for us to the
LORD your God, for all this remnant (since
we are left *but* a few of many, as you can
see), 3that the LORD your God may show us
the way in which we should walk and the
thing we should do."
4Then Jeremiah the prophet said to
them, "I have heard. Indeed, I will pray

to the LORD your God according to your words, and it shall be, *that* whatever the LORD answers you, I will declare *it* to you. I will keep nothing back from you."

5So they said to Jeremiah, "Let the LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not do according to everything which the LORD your God sends us by you. 6Whether *it is* pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we send you, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the LORD our God."

OBEDIENCE
What will obeying God get us?
Jeremiah 42:6

7And it happened after ten days that the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. 8Then he called Johanan the son of Kareah, all the captains of the forces which *were* with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest, 9and said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition before Him: 10'If you will still remain in this land, then I will build you and not pull *you* down, and I will plant you and not pluck *you* up. For I relent concerning the disaster that I have brought upon you. 11Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; do not be afraid of him,' says the LORD, 'for I *am* with you, to save you and deliver you from his hand. 12And I will show you mercy, that he may have mercy on you and cause you to return to your own land.'

13"But if you say, 'We will not dwell in this land,' disobeying the voice of the LORD your God, 14saying, 'No, but we will go to the land of Egypt where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor be hungry for bread, and there we will dwell'— 15Then hear now the word of the LORD, O remnant of Judah! Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'If you wholly set your faces to enter Egypt, and go to dwell there, 16then it shall be *that* the sword which you feared shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; the famine of which you were afraid shall follow close after you there *in* Egypt; and there you shall die. 17So shall it be with all the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to dwell there. They shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. And none of them shall remain or escape from the disaster that I will bring upon them.'

18"'For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'As My anger and My fury have been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will My fury be poured out on you when you enter Egypt. And you shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse, and a reproach; and you shall see this place no more.'

19"'The LORD has said concerning you, O remnant of Judah, 'Do not go to Egypt!' Know certainly that I have admonished you this day. 20For you were hypocrites in your hearts when you sent me to the LORD your God, saying, 'Pray for us to the LORD our God, and according to all that the LORD your God says, so declare to us and we will do *it*.' 21And I have this day declared *it* to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, or anything which He has sent you by me. 22Now therefore, know certainly that you shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to dwell."

JEREMIAH TAKEN TO EGYPT

43 Now it happened, when Jeremiah had stopped speaking to all the people all the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, all these words, 2that Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men spoke, saying to Jeremiah, "You speak falsely! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, 'Do not go to Egypt to dwell there.' 3But Baruch the son of Neriah has set you against us, to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they may put us to death or carry us away captive to Babylon." 4So Johanan the son of Kareah, all the captains of the forces, and all the people would not obey the voice of the LORD, to remain in the land of Judah. 5But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces took all the remnant of Judah who had returned to dwell in the land of Judah, from all nations where they had been driven— 6men, women, children, the king's

daughters, and every person whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah. 7So they went to the land of Egypt, for they did not obey the voice of the LORD. And they went as far as Tahpanhes.

8Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, 9"Take large stones in your hand, and hide them in the sight of the men of Judah, in the clay in the brick courtyard which *is* at the entrance to Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes; 10and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will send and bring Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will set his throne above these stones that I have hidden. And he will spread his royal pavilion over them. 11When he comes, he shall strike the land of Egypt *and deliver* to death *those appointed* for death, and to captivity *those appointed* for captivity, and to the sword *those appointed* for the sword. 12I[a] will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them and carry them away captive. And he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd puts on his garment, and he shall go out from there in peace. 13He shall also break the *sacred* pillars of Beth Shemesh[a] that *are* in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians he shall burn with fire."'"

ISRAELITES WILL BE PUNISHED IN EGYPT

44 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews who dwell in the land of Egypt, who dwell at Migdol, at Tahpanhes, at Noph,[a] and in the country of Pathros, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'You have seen all the calamity that I have brought on Jerusalem and on all the cities of Judah; and behold, this day they *are* a desolation, and no one dwells in them, 3because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke Me to anger, in that they went to burn incense *and* to serve other gods whom they did not know, they nor you nor your fathers. 4However I have sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them,* saying, "Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!" 5But they did not listen or incline their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense to other gods. 6So My fury and My anger were poured out and kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted *and* desolate, as it is this day.'

7"Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Why do you commit *this* great evil against yourselves, to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant, out of Judah, leaving none to remain, 8in that you provoke Me to wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have gone to dwell, that you may cut yourselves off and be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? 9Have you forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, the wickedness of the kings of Judah, the wickedness of their wives, your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 10They have not been humbled, to this day, nor have they feared; they have not walked in My law or in My statutes that I set before you and your fathers.'

11"Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will set My face against you for catastrophe and for cutting off all Judah. 12And I will take the remnant of Judah who have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to dwell there, and they shall all be consumed *and* fall in the land of Egypt. They shall be consumed by the sword *and* by famine. They shall die, from the least to the greatest, by the sword and by famine; and they shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse and a reproach! 13For I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, 14so that none of the remnant of Judah who have gone into the land of Egypt to dwell there shall escape or survive, lest they return to the land of Judah, to which they desire to return and dwell. For none shall return except those who escape.'"

43:12 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *He.*
43:13 [a]Literally *House of the Sun,* ancient On; later called Heliopolis **44:1** [a]That is, ancient Memphis

15Then all the men who knew that their
wives had burned incense to other gods,
with all the women who stood by, a great
multitude, and all the people who dwelt in
the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jer-
emiah, saying: 16"*As for* the word that you
have spoken to us in the name of the LORD,
we will not listen to you! 17But we will cer-
tainly do whatever has gone out of our
own mouth, to burn incense to the queen
of heaven and pour out drink offerings to
her, as we have done, we and our fathers,
our kings and our princes, in the cities of
Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For
then we had plenty of food, were well-off,
and saw no trouble. 18But since we stopped
burning incense to the queen of heaven
and pouring out drink offerings to her, we
have lacked everything and have been con-
sumed by the sword and by famine."

Jeremiah 44:17

"Queen of heaven" refers to the god-
dess Astarte, the companion of the
popular Canaanite god, Baal. Also
known as Ishtar or Ashtoreth, Astarte
was similar to Venus, the Roman god-
dess of love.

19*The women also said,* "And when we
burned incense to the queen of heaven
and poured out drink offerings to her, did
we make cakes for her, to worship her, and
pour out drink offerings to her without our
husbands' *permission?*"

20Then Jeremiah spoke to all the
people—the men, the women, and all the
people who had given him *that* answer—
saying: 21"The incense that you burned in
the cities of Judah and in the streets of Je-
rusalem, you and your fathers, your kings
and your princes, and the people of the
land, did not the LORD remember them,
and did it *not* come into His mind? 22So
the LORD could no longer bear *it,* because
of the evil of your doings *and* because of
the abominations which you commit-
ted. Therefore your land is a desolation,
an astonishment, a curse, and without an
inhabitant, as *it is* this day. 23Because you
have burned incense and because you have
sinned against the LORD, and have not
obeyed the voice of the LORD or walked in
His law, in His statutes or in His testimo-
nies, therefore this calamity has happened
to you, as *at* this day."

24Moreover Jeremiah said to all the peo-
ple and to all the women, "Hear the word
of the LORD, all Judah who *are* in the land
of Egypt! 25Thus says the LORD of hosts,
the God of Israel, saying: 'You and your
wives have spoken with your mouths and
fulfilled with your hands, saying, "We will
surely keep our vows that we have made,
to burn incense to the queen of heaven
and pour out drink offerings to her." You
will surely keep your vows and perform
your vows!' 26Therefore hear the word of
the LORD, all Judah who dwell in the land
of Egypt: 'Behold, I have sworn by My great
name,' says the LORD, 'that My name shall
no more be named in the mouth of any
man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, say-
ing, "The Lord GOD lives." 27Behold, I will
watch over them for adversity and not for
good. And all the men of Judah who *are* in
the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the
sword and by famine, until there is an end
to them. 28Yet a small number who escape
the sword shall return from the land of
Egypt to the land of Judah; and all the rem-
nant of Judah, who have gone to the land
of Egypt to dwell there, shall know whose
words will stand, Mine or theirs. 29And this
shall be a sign to you,' says the LORD, 'that
I will punish you in this place, that you
may know that My words will surely stand
against you for adversity.'

30"Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will
give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the
hand of his enemies and into the hand of
those who seek his life, as I gave Zedekiah
king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchad-
nezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who
sought his life.'"

Jeremiah 45:1

Baruch was Jeremiah's scribe or sec-
retary, a common occupation for men
in ancient times.

ASSURANCE TO BARUCH

45 The word that Jeremiah the
prophet spoke to Baruch
the son of Neriah, when he
had written these words in a book at the

instruction of Jeremiah,[a] in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: 3'You said, "Woe is me now! For the LORD has added grief to my sorrow. I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest."'

4"'Thus you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, what I have built I will break down, and what I have planted I will pluck up, that is, this whole land. 5And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek *them;* for behold, I will bring adversity on all flesh," says the LORD. "But I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go."'"

JUDGMENT ON EGYPT

46 The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the nations. 2Against Egypt.

Concerning the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, which was by the River Euphrates in Carchemish, and which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah:

3"Order the buckler and shield,
And draw near to battle!
4Harness the horses,
And mount up, you horsemen!
Stand forth with *your* helmets,
Polish the spears,
Put on the armor!
5Why have I seen them dismayed *and* turned back?
Their mighty ones are beaten down;
They have speedily fled,
And did not look back,
For fear *was* all around," says the LORD.
6"Do not let the swift flee away,
Nor the mighty man escape;
They will stumble and fall
Toward the north, by the River Euphrates.

7"Who *is* this coming up like a flood,
Whose waters move like the rivers?
8Egypt rises up like a flood,
And *its* waters move like the rivers;
And he says, 'I will go up *and* cover the earth,
I will destroy the city and its inhabitants.'
9Come up, O horses, and rage,
O chariots!
And let the mighty men come forth:
The Ethiopians and the Libyans who handle the shield,
And the Lydians who handle *and* bend the bow.
10For this *is* the day of the Lord GOD of hosts,
A day of vengeance,
That He may avenge Himself on His adversaries.
The sword shall devour;
It shall be satiated and made drunk with their blood;
For the Lord GOD of hosts has a sacrifice
In the north country by the River Euphrates.

11"Go up to Gilead and take balm,
O virgin, the daughter of Egypt;
In vain you will use many medicines;
You shall not be cured.
12The nations have heard of your shame,
And your cry has filled the land;
For the mighty man has stumbled against the mighty;
They both have fallen together."

BABYLONIA WILL STRIKE EGYPT

13The word that the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon would come *and* strike the land of Egypt.

14"Declare in Egypt, and proclaim in Migdol;
Proclaim in Noph[a] and in Tahpanhes;
Say, 'Stand fast and prepare yourselves,
For the sword devours all around you.'
15Why are your valiant *men* swept away?

Jeremiah 46:7

Before modern dams were constructed, the Nile River flooded its banks nearly every year, covering the farmland of Egypt.

45:1 [a]Literally *from Jeremiah's mouth*
46:14 [a]That is, ancient Memphis

They did not stand
Because the LORD drove them away.
16He made many fall;
Yes, one fell upon another.
And they said, 'Arise!
Let us go back to our own people
And to the land of our nativity
From the oppressing sword.'
17They cried there,
'Pharaoh, king of Egypt, *is but* a noise.
He has passed by the appointed time!'

18"*As* I live," says the King,
Whose name *is* the LORD of hosts,
"Surely as Tabor *is* among the mountains
And as Carmel by the sea, *so* he shall come.
19O you daughter dwelling in Egypt,
Prepare yourself to go into captivity!
For Noph[a] shall be waste and desolate,
without inhabitant.

20"Egypt *is* a very pretty heifer,
But destruction comes, it comes from the north.
21Also her mercenaries are in her midst like fat bulls,
For they also are turned back,
They have fled away together.
They did not stand,
For the day of their calamity had come upon them,
The time of their punishment.
22Her noise shall go like a serpent,
For they shall march with an army
And come against her with axes,
Like those who chop wood.

23"They shall cut down her forest," says the LORD,
"Though it cannot be searched,
Because they *are* innumerable,
And more numerous than grasshoppers.
24The daughter of Egypt shall be ashamed;
She shall be delivered into the hand
Of the people of the north."

25The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, says: "Behold, I will bring punishment on Amon[a] of No,[b] and Pharaoh and Egypt, with their gods and their kings—Pharaoh and those who trust in him. 26And I will deliver them into the hand of those who seek their lives, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of his servants. Afterward it shall be inhabited as in the days of old," says the LORD.

GOD WILL PRESERVE ISRAEL

27"But do not fear, O My servant Jacob,
And do not be dismayed, O Israel!
For behold, I will save you from afar,
And your offspring from the land of their captivity;
Jacob shall return, have rest and be at ease;
No one shall make *him* afraid.

FEAR
Who can conquer our fears?
Jeremiah 46:27

28Do not fear, O Jacob My servant," says the LORD,
"For I *am* with you;
For I will make a complete end of all the nations
To which I have driven you,
But I will not make a complete end of you.
I will rightly correct you,
For I will not leave you wholly unpunished."

JUDGMENT ON PHILISTIA

47 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before Pharaoh attacked Gaza.
2Thus says the LORD:

"Behold, waters rise out of the north,
And shall be an overflowing flood;
They shall overflow the land and all that is in it,
The city and those who dwell within;
Then the men shall cry,
And all the inhabitants of the land shall wail.
3At the noise of the stamping hooves of his strong horses,

46:19 [a]That is, ancient Memphis **46:25** [a]A sun god [b]That is, ancient Thebes

At the rushing of his chariots,
At the rumbling of his wheels,
The fathers will not look back for *their* children,
Lacking courage,
4Because of the day that comes to plunder all the Philistines,
To cut off from Tyre and Sidon every helper who remains;
For the LORD shall plunder the Philistines,
The remnant of the country of Caphtor.
5Baldness has come upon Gaza,
Ashkelon is cut off
With the remnant of their valley.
How long will you cut yourself?

6"O you sword of the LORD,
How long until you are quiet?
Put yourself up into your scabbard,
Rest and be still!
7How can it be quiet,
Seeing the LORD has given it a charge
Against Ashkelon and against the seashore?
There He has appointed it."

JUDGMENT ON MOAB

48 Against Moab.
Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:

"Woe to Nebo!
For it is plundered,
Kirjathaim is shamed *and* taken;
The high stronghold[a] is shamed and dismayed—
2No more praise of Moab.
In Heshbon they have devised evil against her:
'Come, and let us cut her off as a nation.'
You also shall be cut down, O Madmen![a]
The sword shall pursue you;
3A voice of crying *shall be* from Horonaim:
'Plundering and great destruction!'

4"Moab is destroyed;
Her little ones have caused a cry to be heard;[a]
5For in the Ascent of Luhith they ascend with continual weeping;
For in the descent of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.

6"Flee, save your lives!
And be like the juniper[a] in the wilderness.
7For because you have trusted in your works and your treasures,
You also shall be taken.
And Chemosh shall go forth into captivity,
His priests and his princes together.
8And the plunderer shall come against every city;
No one shall escape.
The valley also shall perish,
And the plain shall be destroyed,
As the LORD has spoken.

9"Give wings to Moab,
That she may flee and get away;
For her cities shall be desolate,
Without any to dwell in them.
10Cursed *is* he who does the work of the LORD deceitfully,
And cursed *is* he who keeps back his sword from blood.

Jeremiah 48:11

In ancient times, newly bottled wine was left untouched until the grape juice had time to ferment and the sediment had settled to the bottom of the bottle. The wine was not considered fit for drinking until it had been poured through a strainer to remove the sediment.

11"Moab has been at ease from his[a] youth;
He has settled on his dregs,
And has not been emptied from vessel to vessel,
Nor has he gone into captivity.
Therefore his taste remained in him,
And his scent has not changed.

48:1 [a]Hebrew *Misgab* **48:2** [a]A city of Moab **48:4** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Proclaim it in Zoar*. **48:6** [a]Or *Aroer,* a city of Moab **48:11** [a]The Hebrew uses masculine and feminine pronouns interchangeably in this chapter.

12 "Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD,
"That I shall send him wine-workers
Who will tip him over
And empty his vessels
And break the bottles.
13 Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh,
As the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel, their confidence.

14 "How can you say, 'We *are* mighty
And strong men for the war'?
15 Moab is plundered and gone up *from* her cities;
Her chosen young men have gone down to the slaughter," says the King,
Whose name *is* the LORD of hosts.

16 "The calamity of Moab *is* near at hand,
And his affliction comes quickly.
17 Bemoan him, all you who are around him;
And all you who know his name,
Say, 'How the strong staff is broken,
The beautiful rod!'

18 "O daughter inhabiting Dibon,
Come down from *your* glory,
And sit in thirst;
For the plunderer of Moab has come against you,
He has destroyed your strongholds.
19 O inhabitant of Aroer,
Stand by the way and watch;
Ask him who flees
And her who escapes;
Say, 'What has happened?'
20 Moab is shamed, for he is broken down.
Wail and cry!
Tell it in Arnon, that Moab is plundered.

21 "And judgment has come on the plain country:
On Holon and Jahzah and Mephaath,
22 On Dibon and Nebo and Beth Diblathaim,
23 On Kirjathaim and Beth Gamul and Beth Meon,
24 On Kerioth and Bozrah,
On all the cities of the land of Moab,
Far or near.

25 The horn of Moab is cut off,
And his arm is broken," says the LORD.

26 "Make him drunk,
Because he exalted *himself* against the LORD.
Moab shall wallow in his vomit,
And he shall also be in derision.
27 For was not Israel a derision to you?
Was he found among thieves?
For whenever you speak of him,
You shake *your head in scorn.*
28 You who dwell in Moab,
Leave the cities and dwell in the rock,
And be like the dove *which* makes her nest
In the sides of the cave's mouth.

29 "We have heard the pride of Moab
(He *is* exceedingly proud),
Of his loftiness and arrogance and pride,
And of the haughtiness of his heart."

30 "I know his wrath," says the LORD,
"But it *is* not right;
His lies have made nothing right.
31 Therefore I will wail for Moab,
And I will cry out for all Moab;
I[a] will mourn for the men of Kir Heres.
32 O vine of Sibmah! I will weep for you with the weeping of Jazer.
Your plants have gone over the sea,
They reach to the sea of Jazer.
The plunderer has fallen on your summer fruit and your vintage.
33 Joy and gladness are taken
From the plentiful field
And from the land of Moab;
I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses;
No one will tread with joyous shouting—
Not joyous shouting!

34 "From the cry of Heshbon to Elealeh and to Jahaz
They have uttered their voice,
From Zoar to Horonaim,
Like a three-year-old heifer;[a]

48:31 [a]Following Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *He.*
48:34 [a]Or *The Third Eglath,* an unknown city (compare Isaiah 15:5)

For the waters of Nimrim also shall be
desolate.

35"Moreover," says the LORD,
"I will cause to cease in Moab
The one who offers *sacrifices* in the
high places
And burns incense to his gods.
36Therefore My heart shall wail like
flutes for Moab,
And like flutes My heart shall wail
For the men of Kir Heres.
Therefore the riches they have
acquired have perished.

37"For every head *shall be* bald, and every
beard clipped;
On all the hands *shall be* cuts, and on
the loins sackcloth—
38A general lamentation
On all the housetops of Moab,
And in its streets;
For I have broken Moab like a vessel
in which *is* no pleasure," says the
LORD.
39"They shall wail:
'How she is broken down!
How Moab has turned her back with
shame!'
So Moab shall be a derision
And a dismay to all those about her."

40For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, one shall fly like an eagle,
And spread his wings over Moab.
41Kerioth is taken,
And the strongholds are surprised;
The mighty men's hearts in Moab on
that day shall be
Like the heart of a woman in birth
pangs.
42And Moab shall be destroyed as a
people,
Because he exalted *himself* against the
LORD.
43Fear and the pit and the snare *shall be*
upon you,
O inhabitant of Moab," says the
LORD.
44"He who flees from the fear shall fall
into the pit,
And he who gets out of the pit shall be
caught in the snare.
For upon Moab, upon it I will bring
The year of their punishment," says the
LORD.

45"Those who fled stood under the
shadow of Heshbon
Because of exhaustion.
But a fire shall come out of Heshbon,
A flame from the midst of Sihon,
And shall devour the brow of Moab,
The crown of the head of the sons of
tumult.
46Woe to you, O Moab!
The people of Chemosh perish;
For your sons have been taken captive,
And your daughters captive.

47"Yet I will bring back the captives of
Moab
In the latter days," says the LORD.

Thus far *is* the judgment of Moab.

JUDGMENT ON AMMON

49 Against the Ammonites.
Thus says the LORD:

"Has Israel no sons?
Has he no heir?
Why *then* does Milcom[a] inherit Gad,
And his people dwell in its cities?
2Therefore behold, the days are
coming," says the LORD,
"That I will cause to be heard an alarm
of war
In Rabbah of the Ammonites;
It shall be a desolate mound,
And her villages shall be burned with
fire.
Then Israel shall take possession of his
inheritance," says the LORD.

3"Wail, O Heshbon, for Ai is plundered!
Cry, you daughters of Rabbah,
Gird yourselves with sackcloth!
Lament and run to and fro by the
walls;
For Milcom shall go into captivity
With his priests and his princes
together.
4Why do you boast in the valleys,

49:1 [a]Hebrew *Malcam,* literally *their king,* a god of the Ammonites; also called *Molech* (compare verse 3)

Your flowing valley, O backsliding
daughter?
Who trusted in her treasures, *saying,*
'Who will come against me?'
5Behold, I will bring fear upon you,"
Says the Lord GOD of hosts,
"From all those who are around you;
You shall be driven out, everyone
headlong,
And no one will gather those who
wander off.
6But afterward I will bring back
The captives of the people of Ammon,"
says the LORD.

JUDGMENT ON EDOM

7Against Edom.
Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"*Is* wisdom no more in Teman?
Has counsel perished from the
prudent?
Has their wisdom vanished?
8Flee, turn back, dwell in the depths,
O inhabitants of Dedan!
For I will bring the calamity of Esau
upon him,
The time *that* I will punish him.
9If grape-gatherers came to you,
Would they not leave *some* gleaning
grapes?
If thieves by night,
Would they not destroy until they have
enough?
10But I have made Esau bare;
I have uncovered his secret places,[a]
And he shall not be able to hide
himself.
His descendants are plundered,
His brethren and his neighbors,
And he *is* no more.
11Leave your fatherless children,
I will preserve *them* alive;
And let your widows trust in Me."

12For thus says the LORD: "Behold, those whose judgment *was* not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunk. And *are* you the one who will altogether go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, but you shall surely drink *of it.* 13For I have sworn by Myself," says the LORD, "that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse. And all its cities shall be perpetual wastes."

14I have heard a message from the LORD,
And an ambassador has been sent to
the nations:
"Gather together, come against her,
And rise up to battle!

15"For indeed, I will make you small
among nations,
Despised among men.
16Your fierceness has deceived you,
The pride of your heart,
O you who dwell in the clefts of the
rock,
Who hold the height of the hill!
Though you make your nest as high as
the eagle,
I will bring you down from there," says
the LORD.[a]

17"Edom also shall be an astonishment;
Everyone who goes by it will be
astonished
And will hiss at all its plagues.
18As in the overthrow of Sodom and
Gomorrah
And their neighbors," says the LORD,
"No one shall remain there,
Nor shall a son of man dwell in it.

19"Behold, he shall come up like a lion
from the floodplain[a] of the Jordan
Against the dwelling place of the
strong;
But I will suddenly make him run away
from her.
And who *is* a chosen *man that* I may
appoint over her?
For who *is* like Me?
Who will arraign Me?
And who *is* that shepherd
Who will withstand Me?"

20Therefore hear the counsel of the
LORD that He has taken against
Edom,
And His purposes that He has
proposed against the inhabitants
of Teman:
Surely the least of the flock shall draw
them out;
Surely He shall make their dwelling
places desolate with them.

49:10 [a]Compare Obadiah 5, 6 **49:16** [a]Compare Obadiah 3, 4 **49:19** [a]Or *thicket*

21 The earth shakes at the noise of their fall;
At the cry its noise is heard at the Red Sea.
22 Behold, He shall come up and fly like the eagle,
And spread His wings over Bozrah;
The heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be
Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs.

JUDGMENT ON DAMASCUS

23 Against Damascus.

"Hamath and Arpad are shamed,
For they have heard bad news.
They are fainthearted;
There is trouble on the sea;
It cannot be quiet.
24 Damascus has grown feeble;
She turns to flee,
And fear has seized *her.*
Anguish and sorrows have taken her like a woman in labor.
25 Why is the city of praise not deserted,
the city of My joy?
26 Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets,
And all the men of war shall be cut off in that day," says the LORD of hosts.
27 "I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus,
And it shall consume the palaces of Ben-Hadad."[a]

JUDGMENT ON KEDAR AND HAZOR

28 Against Kedar and against the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon shall strike.
Thus says the LORD:

"Arise, go up to Kedar,
And devastate the men of the East!
29 Their tents and their flocks they shall take away.
They shall take for themselves their curtains,
All their vessels and their camels;
And they shall cry out to them,
'Fear *is* on every side!'

30 "Flee, get far away! Dwell in the depths,
O inhabitants of Hazor!" says the LORD.
"For Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has taken counsel against you,
And has conceived a plan against you.

31 "Arise, go up to the wealthy nation that dwells securely," says the LORD,
"Which has neither gates nor bars,
Dwelling alone.
32 Their camels shall be for booty,
And the multitude of their cattle for plunder.
I will scatter to all winds those in the farthest corners,
And I will bring their calamity from all its sides," says the LORD.
33 "Hazor shall be a dwelling for jackals, a desolation forever;
No one shall reside there,
Nor son of man dwell in it."

JUDGMENT ON ELAM

34 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, 35 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Behold, I will break the bow of Elam,
The foremost of their might.
36 Against Elam I will bring the four winds
From the four quarters of heaven,
And scatter them toward all those winds;
There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go.
37 For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies
And before those who seek their life.
I will bring disaster upon them,
My fierce anger,' says the LORD;
'And I will send the sword after them
Until I have consumed them.
38 I will set My throne in Elam,
And will destroy from there the king and the princes,' says the LORD.

39 'But it shall come to pass in the latter days:
I will bring back the captives of Elam,'
says the LORD."

49:27 [a] Compare Amos 1:4

JUDGMENT ON BABYLON AND BABYLONIA

50 The word that the LORD spoke against Babylon *and* against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet.

2 "Declare among the nations,
Proclaim, and set up a standard;
Proclaim—do not conceal *it*—
Say, 'Babylon is taken, Bel is shamed.
Merodach[a] is broken in pieces;
Her idols are humiliated,
Her images are broken in pieces.'

Jeremiah 50:2

Merodach was another name for Marduk, the chief god of the Babylonians. The people of Babylon believed that Marduk created the world, and they looked to him to protect their kingdom.

3 For out of the north a nation comes up against her,
Which shall make her land desolate,
And no one shall dwell therein.
They shall move, they shall depart,
Both man and beast.

4 "In those days and in that time," says the LORD,
"The children of Israel shall come,
They and the children of Judah together;
With continual weeping they shall come,
And seek the LORD their God.
5 They shall ask the way to Zion,
With their faces toward it, *saying,*
'Come and let us join ourselves to the LORD
In a perpetual covenant
That will not be forgotten.'

6 "My people have been lost sheep.
Their shepherds have led them astray;
They have turned them away *on* the mountains.
They have gone from mountain to hill;
They have forgotten their resting place.
7 All who found them have devoured them;
And their adversaries said, 'We have not offended,
Because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice,
The LORD, the hope of their fathers.'

8 "Move from the midst of Babylon,
Go out of the land of the Chaldeans;
And be like the rams before the flocks.
9 For behold, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon
An assembly of great nations from the north country,
And they shall array themselves against her;
From there she shall be captured.
Their arrows *shall be* like *those* of an expert warrior;[a]
None shall return in vain.
10 And Chaldea shall become plunder;
All who plunder her shall be satisfied," says the LORD.

11 "Because you were glad, because you rejoiced,
You destroyers of My heritage,
Because you have grown fat like a heifer threshing grain,
And you bellow like bulls,
12 Your mother shall be deeply ashamed;
She who bore you shall be ashamed.
Behold, the least of the nations *shall be* a wilderness,
A dry land and a desert.
13 Because of the wrath of the LORD
She shall not be inhabited,
But she shall be wholly desolate.
Everyone who goes by Babylon shall be horrified
And hiss at all her plagues.

14 "Put yourselves in array against Babylon all around,
All you who bend the bow;
Shoot at her, spare no arrows,
For she has sinned against the LORD.
15 Shout against her all around;
She has given her hand,
Her foundations have fallen,
Her walls are thrown down;

50:2 [a]A Babylonian god; sometimes spelled *Marduk* **50:9** [a]Following some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Syriac; Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate read *a warrior who makes childless.*

For it *is* the vengeance of the LORD.
Take vengeance on her.
As she has done, so do to her.
16 Cut off the sower from Babylon,
And him who handles the sickle at harvest time.
For fear of the oppressing sword
Everyone shall turn to his own people,
And everyone shall flee to his own land.

17 "Israel *is* like scattered sheep;
The lions have driven *him* away.
First the king of Assyria devoured him;
Now at last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has broken his bones."

18 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:

"Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land,
As I have punished the king of Assyria.
19 But I will bring back Israel to his home,
And he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan;
His soul shall be satisfied on Mount Ephraim and Gilead.
20 In those days and in that time," says the LORD,
"The iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but *there shall be* none;
And the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found;
For I will pardon those whom I preserve.

21 "Go up against the land of Merathaim, against it,
And against the inhabitants of Pekod.
Waste and utterly destroy them," says the LORD,
"And do according to all that I have commanded you.
22 A sound of battle *is* in the land,
And of great destruction.
23 How the hammer of the whole earth has been cut apart and broken!
How Babylon has become a desolation among the nations!
24 I have laid a snare for you;
You have indeed been trapped, O Babylon,
And you were not aware;
You have been found and also caught,
Because you have contended against the LORD.
25 The LORD has opened His armory,
And has brought out the weapons of His indignation;
For this *is* the work of the Lord GOD of hosts
In the land of the Chaldeans.
26 Come against her from the farthest border;
Open her storehouses;
Cast her up as heaps of ruins,
And destroy her utterly;
Let nothing of her be left.
27 Slay all her bulls,
Let them go down to the slaughter.
Woe to them!
For their day has come, the time of their punishment.
28 The voice of those who flee and escape from the land of Babylon
Declares in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God,
The vengeance of His temple.

29 "Call together the archers against Babylon.
All you who bend the bow, encamp against it all around;
Let none of them escape.[a]
Repay her according to her work;
According to all she has done, do to her;
For she has been proud against the LORD,
Against the Holy One of Israel.
30 Therefore her young men shall fall in the streets,
And all her men of war shall be cut off in that day," says the LORD.
31 "Behold, I *am* against you,
O most haughty one!" says the Lord GOD of hosts;
"For your day has come,
The time *that* I will punish you.[a]
32 The most proud shall stumble and fall,
And no one will raise him up;
I will kindle a fire in his cities,
And it will devour all around him."

50:29 [a]Qere, some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Targum add *to her*.
50:31 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint and Vulgate read *The time of your punishment*.

PRIDE
What is the reward of arrogant people?
Jeremiah 50:32

33 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"The children of Israel *were* oppressed,
Along with the children of Judah;
All who took them captive have held them fast;
They have refused to let them go.
34 Their Redeemer *is* strong;
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.
He will thoroughly plead their case,
That He may give rest to the land,
And disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.

35 "A sword *is* against the Chaldeans," says the LORD,
"Against the inhabitants of Babylon,
And against her princes and her wise men.
36 A sword *is* against the soothsayers, and they will be fools.
A sword *is* against her mighty men, and they will be dismayed.
37 A sword *is* against their horses,
Against their chariots,
And against all the mixed peoples who *are* in her midst;
And they will become like women.
A sword *is* against her treasures, and they will be robbed.
38 A drought[a] *is* against her waters, and they will be dried up.
For it *is* the land of carved images,
And they are insane with *their* idols.

39 "Therefore the wild desert beasts shall dwell *there* with the jackals,
And the ostriches shall dwell in it.
It shall be inhabited no more forever,
Nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.
40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah
And their neighbors," says the LORD,
"*So* no one shall reside there,
Nor son of man dwell in it.

41 "Behold, a people shall come from the north,
And a great nation and many kings
Shall be raised up from the ends of the earth.
42 They shall hold the bow and the lance;
They *are* cruel and shall not show mercy.
Their voice shall roar like the sea;
They shall ride on horses,
Set in array, like a man for the battle,
Against you, O daughter of Babylon.

43 "The king of Babylon has heard the report about them,
And his hands grow feeble;
Anguish has taken hold of him,
Pangs as of a woman in childbirth.

44 "Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the floodplain[a] of the Jordan
Against the dwelling place of the strong;
But I will make them suddenly run away from her.
And who *is* a chosen *man that* I may appoint over her?
For who *is* like Me?
Who will arraign Me?
And who *is* that shepherd
Who will withstand Me?"

45 Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD that He has taken against Babylon,
And His purposes that He has proposed against the land of the Chaldeans:
Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out;
Surely He will make their dwelling place desolate with them.
46 At the noise of the taking of Babylon
The earth trembles,
And the cry is heard among the nations.

THE UTTER DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON

51 Thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will raise up against Babylon,

50:38 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Syriac reads *sword;* Septuagint omits *A drought is.* **50:44** [a]Or *thicket*

Against those who dwell in Leb Kamai,[a]
A destroying wind.
2 And I will send winnowers to Babylon,
Who shall winnow her and empty her land.
For in the day of doom
They shall be against her all around.
3 Against *her* let the archer bend his bow,
And lift himself up against *her* in his armor.
Do not spare her young men;
Utterly destroy all her army.
4 Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans,
And *those* thrust through in her streets.
5 For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah,
By his God, the LORD of hosts,
Though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel."

6 Flee from the midst of Babylon,
And every one save his life!
Do not be cut off in her iniquity,
For this *is* the time of the LORD's vengeance;
He shall recompense her.
7 Babylon *was* a golden cup in the LORD's hand,
That made all the earth drunk.
The nations drank her wine;
Therefore the nations are deranged.
8 Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed.
Wail for her!
Take balm for her pain;
Perhaps she may be healed.

9 We would have healed Babylon,
But she is not healed.
Forsake her, and let us go everyone to his own country;
For her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies.
10 The LORD has revealed our righteousness.
Come and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.

11 Make the arrows bright!
Gather the shields!
The LORD has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes.
For His plan *is* against Babylon to destroy it,
Because it *is* the vengeance of the LORD,
The vengeance for His temple.
12 Set up the standard on the walls of Babylon;
Make the guard strong,
Set up the watchmen,
Prepare the ambushes.
For the LORD has both devised and done
What He spoke against the inhabitants of Babylon.
13 O you who dwell by many waters,
Abundant in treasures,
Your end has come,
The measure of your covetousness.
14 The LORD of hosts has sworn by Himself:
"Surely I will fill you with men, as with locusts,
And they shall lift up a shout against you."

15 He has made the earth by His power;
He has established the world by His wisdom,
And stretched out the heaven by His understanding.
16 When He utters *His* voice—
There is a multitude of waters in the heavens:
"He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth;
He makes lightnings for the rain;
He brings the wind out of His treasuries."[a]

17 Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge;
Every metalsmith is put to shame by the carved image;
For his molded image *is* falsehood,
And *there is* no breath in them.
18 They *are* futile, a work of errors;
In the time of their punishment they shall perish.
19 The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them,
For He *is* the Maker of all things;
And *Israel is* the tribe of His inheritance.
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.

51:1 [a]A code word for Chaldea (Babylonia); may be translated *The Midst of Those Who Rise Up Against Me* **51:16** [a]Psalm 135:7

20"You *are* My battle-ax *and* weapons of war:
For with you I will break the nation in pieces;
With you I will destroy kingdoms;
21With you I will break in pieces the horse and its rider;
With you I will break in pieces the chariot and its rider;
22With you also I will break in pieces man and woman;
With you I will break in pieces old and young;
With you I will break in pieces the young man and the maiden;
23With you also I will break in pieces the shepherd and his flock;
With you I will break in pieces the farmer and his yoke of oxen;
And with you I will break in pieces governors and rulers.

24"And I will repay Babylon
And all the inhabitants of Chaldea
For all the evil they have done
In Zion in your sight," says the LORD.

25"Behold, I *am* against you, O destroying mountain,
Who destroys all the earth," says the LORD.
"And I will stretch out My hand against you,
Roll you down from the rocks,
And make you a burnt mountain.
26They shall not take from you a stone for a corner
Nor a stone for a foundation,
But you shall be desolate forever," says the LORD.

27Set up a banner in the land,
Blow the trumpet among the nations!
Prepare the nations against her,
Call the kingdoms together against her:
Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.
Appoint a general against her;
Cause the horses to come up like the bristling locusts.
28Prepare against her the nations,
With the kings of the Medes,
Its governors and all its rulers,
All the land of his dominion.
29And the land will tremble and sorrow;
For every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon,
To make the land of Babylon a desolation without inhabitant.
30The mighty men of Babylon have ceased fighting,
They have remained in their strongholds;
Their might has failed,
They became *like* women;
They have burned her dwelling places,
The bars of her *gate* are broken.
31One runner will run to meet another,
And one messenger to meet another,
To show the king of Babylon that his city is taken on *all* sides;
32The passages are blocked,
The reeds they have burned with fire,
And the men of war are terrified.

33For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:

"The daughter of Babylon *is* like a threshing floor
When it is time to thresh her;
Yet a little while
And the time of her harvest will come."

34"Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon
Has devoured me, he has crushed me;
He has made me an empty vessel,
He has swallowed me up like a monster;
He has filled his stomach with my delicacies,
He has spit me out.
35Let the violence *done* to me and my flesh *be* upon Babylon,"
The inhabitant of Zion will say;
"And my blood be upon the inhabitants of Chaldea!"
Jerusalem will say.

36Therefore thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will plead your case and take vengeance for you.
I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry.
37Babylon shall become a heap,
A dwelling place for jackals,
An astonishment and a hissing,
Without an inhabitant.

38 They shall roar together like lions,
They shall growl like lions' whelps.
39 In their excitement I will prepare their feasts;
I will make them drunk,
That they may rejoice,
And sleep a perpetual sleep
And not awake," says the LORD.
40 "I will bring them down
Like lambs to the slaughter,
Like rams with male goats.

41 "Oh, how Sheshach[a] is taken!
Oh, how the praise of the whole earth is seized!
How Babylon has become desolate among the nations!
42 The sea has come up over Babylon;
She is covered with the multitude of its waves.
43 Her cities are a desolation,
A dry land and a wilderness,
A land where no one dwells,
Through which no son of man passes.
44 I will punish Bel in Babylon,
And I will bring out of his mouth what he has swallowed;
And the nations shall not stream to him anymore.
Yes, the wall of Babylon shall fall.

45 "My people, go out of the midst of her!
And let everyone deliver himself from the fierce anger of the LORD.
46 And lest your heart faint,
And you fear for the rumor that *will be* heard in the land
(A rumor will come *one* year,
And after that, in *another* year
A rumor *will come,*
And violence in the land,
Ruler against ruler),
47 Therefore behold, the days are coming
That I will bring judgment on the carved images of Babylon;
Her whole land shall be ashamed,
And all her slain shall fall in her midst.
48 Then the heavens and the earth and all that *is* in them
Shall sing joyously over Babylon;
For the plunderers shall come to her from the north," says the LORD.

49 As Babylon *has caused* the slain of Israel to fall,
So at Babylon the slain of all the earth shall fall.
50 You who have escaped the sword,
Get away! Do not stand still!
Remember the LORD afar off,
And let Jerusalem come to your mind.

51 We are ashamed because we have heard reproach.
Shame has covered our faces,
For strangers have come into the sanctuaries of the LORD's house.

52 "Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD,
"That I will bring judgment on her carved images,
And throughout all her land the wounded shall groan.
53 Though Babylon were to mount up to heaven,
And though she were to fortify the height of her strength,
Yet from Me plunderers would come to her," says the LORD.

54 The sound of a cry *comes* from Babylon,
And great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans,
55 Because the LORD is plundering Babylon
And silencing her loud voice,
Though her waves roar like great waters,
And the noise of their voice is uttered,
56 Because the plunderer comes against her, against Babylon,
And her mighty men are taken.
Every one of their bows is broken;
For the LORD *is* the God of recompense,
He will surely repay.

57 "And I will make drunk
Her princes and wise men,
Her governors, her deputies, and her mighty men.
And they shall sleep a perpetual sleep
And not awake," says the King,
Whose name *is* the LORD of hosts.

58 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

51:41 [a]A code word for Babylon (compare Jeremiah 25:26)

"The broad walls of Babylon shall be
utterly broken,
And her high gates shall be burned
with fire;
The people will labor in vain,
And the nations, because of the fire;
And they shall be weary."

JEREMIAH'S COMMAND TO SERAIAH

59The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And Seraiah *was* the quartermaster. 60So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon. 61And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, 62then you shall say, 'O LORD, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.' 63Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, *that* you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates. 64Then you shall say, 'Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And they shall be weary.'"

Thus far *are* the words of Jeremiah.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM REVIEWED

52 Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 2He also did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 3For because of the anger of the LORD *this* happened in Jerusalem and Judah, till He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

4Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and *they* built a siege wall against it all around. 5So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. 6By the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. 7Then the city *wall* was broken through, and all the men of war fled and went out of the city at night by way of the gate between the two walls, which *was* by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans *were* near the city all around. And they went by way of the plain.[a]

8But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. 9So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he pronounced judgment on him. 10Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. And he killed all the princes of Judah in Riblah. 11He also put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in bronze fetters, took him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

THE TEMPLE AND CITY PLUNDERED AND BURNED

12Now in the fifth month, on the tenth *day* of the month (which *was* the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, *who* served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 13He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. 14And all the army of the Chaldeans who *were* with the captain of the guard broke down all the walls of Jerusalem all around. 15Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive *some* of the poor people, the rest of the people who remained in the city, the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the craftsmen. 16But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left *some* of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.

17The bronze pillars that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the carts and the bronze Sea that *were* in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried all their bronze to Babylon.

52:7 [a]Or *the Arabah,* that is, the Jordan Valley

18They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the bowls, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the *priests* ministered. 19The basins, the firepans, the bowls, the pots, the lampstands, the spoons, and the cups, whatever *was* solid gold and whatever *was* solid silver, the captain of the guard took away. 20The two pillars, one Sea, the twelve bronze bulls which *were* under *it, and* the carts, which King Solomon had made for the house of the LORD—the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. 21Now *concerning* the pillars: the height of one pillar *was* eighteen cubits, a measuring line of twelve cubits could measure its circumference, and its thickness *was* four fingers; *it was* hollow. 22A capital of bronze *was* on it; and the height of one capital *was* five cubits, with a network and pomegranates all around the capital, all of bronze. The second pillar, with pomegranates was the same. 23There were ninety-six pomegranates on the sides; all the pomegranates, all around on the network, *were* one hundred.

THE PEOPLE TAKEN CAPTIVE TO BABYLONIA

24The captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. 25He also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, seven men of the king's close associates who were found in the city, the principal scribe of the army who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the midst of the city. 26And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 27Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.

28These *are* the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, three thousand and twenty-three Jews; 29in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred and thirty-two persons; 30in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred and forty-five persons. All the persons *were* four thousand six hundred.

JEHOIACHIN RELEASED FROM PRISON

31Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth *day* of the month, *that* Evil-Merodach[a] king of Babylon, in the *first* year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison. 32And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon. 33So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the *king* all the days of his life. 34And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king of Babylon, a portion for each day until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

52:31 [a]Or *Awil-Marduk*

Lamentations

DATE OF WRITING: 586–584 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET JEREMIAH
THEME: SUFFERING AS PUNISHMENT FOR SIN
PURPOSE: PERSISTENT SIN BRINGS JUDGMENT THAT CRUSHES THE SPIRIT.

OUTLINE

1:1–22 ..... First Lament: The Sorrows of Captive Jerusalem
2:1–22 ..... Second Lament: The Lord's Anger with Jerusalem
3:1–66 ..... Third Lament: Hope Through God's Mercy
4:1–22 ..... Fourth Lament: Jerusalem Punished
5:1–22 ..... Fifth Lament: A Prayer for Restoration

KEY VERSE:

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22, 23).

THEN /// You might remember the prophet, Jeremiah, who wrote the book named after him. He talked and preached and cried and warned his people that if they didn't straighten up something bad was going to happen. Something bad *did* happen. His people were taken away from their land and held captive in a pagan nation. It was during this time that Jeremiah wrote Lamentations.

The name *Lamentations* comes from the word *lament*. A lament is a mournful cry. The whole Book of Lamentations is a mournful cry about the horrible situation the Hebrews got into because they didn't pay attention to the way God wanted them to live their lives.

NOW /// Lamentations is actually a book of five songs. In Jeremiah's day, these songs were sung as funeral dirges, which would be an appropriate thing to sing if the life of your whole nation was falling apart. You can think of Lamentations as being like somebody singing the blues. The music we call "the blues" is music about the most difficult parts of life. It originated from a people and in a time that was hopeless and hard. When these people put music to their sorrow, it gave them a way to express their feelings. That's what the Lamentations did for the Hebrews.

REALITY CHECK /// Have you ever refused to listen when someone warned you of danger? Have you ever found yourself suffering bad consequences because you wouldn't pay attention when others tried to tell you that your bad choices could lead to some real trouble?

We can be pretty sure that Jeremiah's people said, "I wish I would have listened." It's like God actually gave them a road map and told them exactly where the road they were on would lead. But their stubborn pride and willful behavior kept them from paying attention when they were warned.

Unfortunately, we often act just as they did. We ignore the warnings from people who are older and wiser and find ourselves lost in the consequences of our prideful, willful, poor choices.

JERUSALEM IN AFFLICTION

How lonely sits the city
That was full of people!
How like a widow is she,
Who *was* great among the nations!
The princess among the provinces
Has become a slave!

2 She weeps bitterly in the night,
Her tears *are* on her cheeks;
Among all her lovers
She has none to comfort *her.*
All her friends have dealt
treacherously with her;
They have become her enemies.

3 Judah has gone into captivity,
Under affliction and hard servitude;
She dwells among the nations,
She finds no rest;
All her persecutors overtake her in
dire straits.

4 The roads to Zion mourn
Because no one comes to the set
feasts.
All her gates are desolate;
Her priests sigh,
Her virgins are afflicted,
And she *is* in bitterness.

Lamentations 1:4

The gates of ancient cities were normally crowded with people. In addition to being the entrance for a constant flow of traffic in and out of the city, the gates were where most business and legal transactions took place.

5 Her adversaries have become the
master,
Her enemies prosper;
For the LORD has afflicted her

Because of the multitude of her
transgressions.
Her children have gone into captivity
before the enemy.

6 And from the daughter of Zion
All her splendor has departed.
Her princes have become like deer
That find no pasture,
That flee without strength
Before the pursuer.

7 In the days of her affliction and
roaming,
Jerusalem remembers all her pleasant
things
That she had in the days of old.
When her people fell into the hand of
the enemy,
With no one to help her,
The adversaries saw her
And mocked at her downfall.[a]

8 Jerusalem has sinned gravely,
Therefore she has become vile.[a]
All who honored her despise her
Because they have seen her nakedness;
Yes, she sighs and turns away.

9 Her uncleanness *is* in her skirts;
She did not consider her destiny;
Therefore her collapse was awesome;
She had no comforter.
"O LORD, behold my affliction,
For *the* enemy is exalted!"

10 The adversary has spread his hand
Over all her pleasant things;
For she has seen the nations enter her
sanctuary,
Those whom You commanded
Not to enter Your assembly.

11 All her people sigh,
They seek bread;
They have given their valuables for
food to restore life.
"See, O LORD, and consider,
For I am scorned."

12 "*Is it* nothing to you, all you who
pass by?
Behold and see
If there is any sorrow like my sorrow,
Which has been brought on me,
Which the LORD has inflicted
In the day of His fierce anger.

13 "From above He has sent fire into my
bones,
And it overpowered them;
He has spread a net for my feet
And turned me back;
He has made me desolate
And faint all the day.

14 "The yoke of my transgressions was
bound;[a]
They were woven together by His
hands,
And thrust upon my neck.
He made my strength fail;
The Lord delivered me into the hands
of *those whom* I am not able to
withstand.

15 "The Lord has trampled underfoot all
my mighty *men* in my midst;
He has called an assembly against me
To crush my young men;
The Lord trampled *as* in a winepress
The virgin daughter of Judah.

16 "For these *things* I weep;
My eye, my eye overflows with water;
Because the comforter, who should
restore my life,
Is far from me.
My children are desolate
Because the enemy prevailed."

17 Zion spreads out her hands,
But no one comforts her;
The LORD has commanded concerning
Jacob
That those around him *become* his
adversaries;
Jerusalem has become an unclean
thing among them.

18 "The LORD is righteous,
For I rebelled against His
commandment.
Hear now, all peoples,
And behold my sorrow;

1:7 [a]Vulgate reads *her Sabbaths.*
1:8 [a]Septuagint and Vulgate read *moved* or *removed.* **1:14** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *watched over.*

My virgins and my young men
Have gone into captivity.

SIN
Is God right to punish the disobedient?
Lamentations 1:18

19"I called for my lovers,
But they deceived me;
My priests and my elders
Breathed their last in the city,
While they sought food
To restore their life.

20"See, O LORD, that I *am* in distress;
My soul is troubled;
My heart is overturned within me,
For I have been very rebellious.
Outside the sword bereaves,
At home *it is* like death.

21"They have heard that I sigh,
But no one comforts me.
All my enemies have heard of my trouble;
They are glad that You have done *it.*
Bring on the day You have announced,
That they may become like me.

22"Let all their wickedness come before You,
And do to them as You have done to me
For all my transgressions;
For my sighs *are* many,
And my heart *is* faint."

GOD'S ANGER WITH JERUSALEM

2 How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion
With a cloud in His anger!
He cast down from heaven to the earth
The beauty of Israel,
And did not remember His footstool
In the day of His anger.

2The Lord has swallowed up and has not pitied
All the dwelling places of Jacob.
He has thrown down in His wrath
The strongholds of the daughter of Judah;
He has brought *them* down to the ground;
He has profaned the kingdom and its princes.

3He has cut off in fierce anger
Every horn of Israel;
He has drawn back His right hand
From before the enemy.
He has blazed against Jacob like a flaming fire
Devouring all around.

4Standing like an enemy, He has bent His bow;
With His right hand, like an adversary,
He has slain all *who were* pleasing to His eye;
On the tent of the daughter of Zion,
He has poured out His fury like fire.

5The Lord was like an enemy.
He has swallowed up Israel,
He has swallowed up all her palaces;
He has destroyed her strongholds,
And has increased mourning and lamentation
In the daughter of Judah.

6He has done violence to His tabernacle,
As if it were a garden;
He has destroyed His place of assembly;
The LORD has caused
The appointed feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion.
In His burning indignation He has spurned the king and the priest.

7The Lord has spurned His altar,
He has abandoned His sanctuary;
He has given up the walls of her palaces
Into the hand of the enemy.
They have made a noise in the house of the LORD
As on the day of a set feast.

8The LORD has purposed to destroy
The wall of the daughter of Zion.
He has stretched out a line;

He has not withdrawn His hand from
destroying;
Therefore He has caused the rampart
and wall to lament;
They languished together.

9 Her gates have sunk into the ground;
He has destroyed and broken her bars.
Her king and her princes *are* among
the nations;
The Law *is* no *more,*
And her prophets find no vision from
the LORD.

10 The elders of the daughter of Zion
Sit on the ground *and* keep silence;
They throw dust on their heads
And gird themselves with sackcloth.
The virgins of Jerusalem
Bow their heads to the ground.

11 My eyes fail with tears,
My heart is troubled;
My bile is poured on the ground
Because of the destruction of the
daughter of my people,
Because the children and the infants
Faint in the streets of the city.

12 They say to their mothers,
"Where *is* grain and wine?"
As they swoon like the wounded
In the streets of the city,
As their life is poured out
In their mothers' bosom.

13 How shall I console you?
To what shall I liken you,
O daughter of Jerusalem?
What shall I compare with you, that I
may comfort you,
O virgin daughter of Zion?
For your ruin *is* spread wide as the sea;
Who can heal you?

14 Your prophets have seen for you
False and deceptive visions;
They have not uncovered your iniquity,
To bring back your captives,
But have envisioned for you false
prophecies and delusions.

15 All who pass by clap *their* hands at
you;
They hiss and shake their heads
At the daughter of Jerusalem:
"*Is* this the city that is called
'The perfection of beauty,
The joy of the whole earth'?"

16 All your enemies have opened their
mouth against you;
They hiss and gnash *their* teeth.
They say, "We have swallowed *her* up!
Surely this *is* the day we have waited
for;
We have found *it,* we have seen *it!*"

17 The LORD has done what He purposed;
He has fulfilled His word
Which He commanded in days of old.
He has thrown down and has not
pitied,
And He has caused an enemy to
rejoice over you;
He has exalted the horn of your
adversaries.

GOD
Does God accomplish His plans?
Lamentations 2:17

18 Their heart cried out to the Lord,
"O wall of the daughter of Zion,
Let tears run down like a river day and
night;
Give yourself no relief;
Give your eyes no rest.

19 "Arise, cry out in the night,
At the beginning of the watches;
Pour out your heart like water before
the face of the Lord.
Lift your hands toward Him
For the life of your young children,
Who faint from hunger at the head of
every street."

20 "See, O LORD, and consider!
To whom have You done this?
Should the women eat their offspring,
The children they have cuddled?[a]
Should the priest and prophet be
slain
In the sanctuary of the Lord?

2:20 [a]Vulgate reads *a span long.*

21 "Young and old lie
On the ground in the streets;
My virgins and my young men
Have fallen by the sword;
You have slain *them* in the day of Your anger,
You have slaughtered *and* not pitied.

22 "You have invited as to a feast day
The terrors that surround me.
In the day of the LORD's anger
There was no refugee or survivor.
Those whom I have borne and brought up
My enemies have destroyed."

THE PROPHET'S ANGUISH AND HOPE

3 I *am* the man *who* has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.
2 He has led me and made *me* walk
In darkness and not *in* light.
3 Surely He has turned His hand against me
Time and time again throughout the day.

4 He has aged my flesh and my skin,
And broken my bones.
5 He has besieged me
And surrounded *me* with bitterness and woe.
6 He has set me in dark places
Like the dead of long ago.

7 He has hedged me in so that I cannot get out;
He has made my chain heavy.
8 Even when I cry and shout,
He shuts out my prayer.
9 He has blocked my ways with hewn stone;
He has made my paths crooked.

10 He *has been* to me a bear lying in wait,
Like a lion in ambush.
11 He has turned aside my ways and torn me in pieces;
He has made me desolate.
12 He has bent His bow
And set me up as a target for the arrow.

13 He has caused the arrows of His quiver
To pierce my loins.[a]
14 I have become the ridicule of all my people—
Their taunting song all the day.
15 He has filled me with bitterness,
He has made me drink wormwood.

16 He has also broken my teeth with gravel,
And covered me with ashes.

Lamentations 3:16

Some tribes in the ancient Near East used to mix sand, gravel, and other solid substances in the food they gave to prisoners. The hard objects wore down and broke the prisoners' teeth and caused horrible intestinal problems; both resulted in tremendous pain.

17 You have moved my soul far from peace;
I have forgotten prosperity.
18 And I said, "My strength and my hope
Have perished from the LORD."

19 Remember my affliction and roaming,
The wormwood and the gall.
20 My soul still remembers
And sinks within me.
21 This I recall to my mind,
Therefore I have hope.

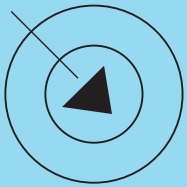
22 *Through* the LORD's mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not.

HOPE
Can we have hope in bad situations?
Lamentations 3:21, 22

23 *They are* new every morning;
Great *is* Your faithfulness.
24 "The LORD *is* my portion," says my soul,
"Therefore I hope in Him!"

25 The LORD *is* good to those who wait for Him,
To the soul *who* seeks Him.

3:13 [a]Literally *kidneys*



PROMISE

God promises to always be compassionate with you.

[God's] compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness (Lam. 3:22b, 23).

Have you ever gone to bed at night filled with guilt over what happened during the day? Maybe you seemed to lose all your self-control and let sin get the best of you. When that happens, guilt and shame can really mess with your mind and make you feel far away from God. *He must really be disappointed, you think.* All you want to do is hide—hide from your friends and yourself, but mostly from God. But the right thing to do is to run to Him. He is tender and loving. His forgiveness is pure and cleansing. His compassion brings comfort. His mercy grants freedom, His lovingkindness lets you open your eyes in the morning and be glad for the new day. It's a start-over day. It's a clean-slate day. It's a new day, with new compassion from the God of new beginnings.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 90:14; 118:1–4; 2 Corinthians 1:3



26 *It is* good that *one* should hope and wait quietly
For the salvation of the LORD.
27 *It is* good for a man to bear
The yoke in his youth.

28 Let him sit alone and keep silent,
Because *God* has laid *it* on him;
29 Let him put his mouth in the dust—
There may yet be hope.
30 Let him give *his* cheek to the one who strikes him,
And be full of reproach.

31 For the Lord will not cast off forever.
32 Though He causes grief,
Yet He will show compassion
According to the multitude of His mercies.
33 For He does not afflict willingly,
Nor grieve the children of men.

34 To crush under one's feet
All the prisoners of the earth,
35 To turn aside the justice *due* a man
Before the face of the Most High,
36 Or subvert a man in his cause—
The Lord does not approve.

37 Who *is* he *who* speaks and it comes to pass,
When the Lord has not commanded *it?*
38 *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most High
That woe and well-being proceed?
39 Why should a living man complain,
A man for the punishment of his sins?

40 Let us search out and examine our ways,
And turn back to the LORD;
41 Let us lift our hearts and hands
To God in heaven.
42 We have transgressed and rebelled;
You have not pardoned.

43 You have covered *Yourself* with anger
And pursued us;
You have slain *and* not pitied.
44 You have covered Yourself with a cloud,
That prayer should not pass through.
45 You have made us an offscouring and refuse
In the midst of the peoples.

46 All our enemies
Have opened their mouths against us.
47 Fear and a snare have come upon us,
Desolation and destruction.
48 My eyes overflow with rivers of water
For the destruction of the daughter of my people.

49 My eyes flow and do not cease,
Without interruption,
50 Till the LORD from heaven
Looks down and sees.
51 My eyes bring suffering to my soul
Because of all the daughters of my city.

52 My enemies without cause
Hunted me down like a bird.
53 They silenced[a] my life in the pit
And threw stones at me.
54 The waters flowed over my head;
I said, "I am cut off!"

55 I called on Your name, O LORD,
From the lowest pit.
56 You have heard my voice:
"Do not hide Your ear
From my sighing, from my cry for help."
57 You drew near on the day I called on You,
And said, "Do not fear!"

58 O Lord, You have pleaded the case for my soul;
You have redeemed my life.
59 O LORD, You have seen *how* I am wronged;
Judge my case.
60 You have seen all their vengeance,
All their schemes against me.

61 You have heard their reproach, O LORD,
All their schemes against me,
62 The lips of my enemies
And their whispering against me all the day.
63 Look at their sitting down and their rising up;
I *am* their taunting song.

64 Repay them, O LORD,
According to the work of their hands.
65 Give them a veiled[a] heart;
Your curse *be* upon them!
66 In Your anger,
Pursue and destroy them
From under the heavens of the LORD.

THE DEGRADATION OF ZION

4 How the gold has become dim!
How changed the fine gold!
The stones of the sanctuary are scattered
At the head of every street.

2 The precious sons of Zion,
Valuable as fine gold,
How they are regarded as clay pots,
The work of the hands of the potter!

3 Even the jackals present their breasts
To nurse their young;
But the daughter of my people *is* cruel,
Like ostriches in the wilderness.

Lamentations 4:3

A mother ostrich simply drops her eggs in the sand and takes off, letting the heat of the sun warm them. After the eggs have hatched, if she feels threatened, she won't hesitate to abandon her young ones to save her own skin.

4 The tongue of the infant clings
To the roof of its mouth for thirst;
The young children ask for bread,
But no one breaks *it* for them.

5 Those who ate delicacies
Are desolate in the streets;
Those who were brought up in scarlet
Embrace ash heaps.

6 The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people
Is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom,
Which was overthrown in a moment,
With no hand to help her!

7 Her Nazirites[a] were brighter than snow
And whiter than milk;
They were more ruddy in body than rubies,
Like sapphire in their appearance.

8 *Now* their appearance is blacker than soot;
They go unrecognized in the streets;
Their skin clings to their bones,
It has become as dry as wood.

9 *Those* slain by the sword are better off
Than *those* who die of hunger;
For these pine away,

3:53 [a]Septuagint reads *put to death.* **3:65** [a]A Jewish tradition reads *sorrow of.* **4:7** [a]Or *nobles*

Stricken *for lack* of the fruits of the
field.

10 The hands of the compassionate
women
Have cooked their own children;
They became food for them
In the destruction of the daughter of
my people.

11 The LORD has fulfilled His fury,
He has poured out His fierce anger.
He kindled a fire in Zion,
And it has devoured its foundations.

12 The kings of the earth,
And all inhabitants of the world,
Would not have believed
That the adversary and the enemy
Could enter the gates of Jerusalem—

13 Because of the sins of her prophets
And the iniquities of her priests,
Who shed in her midst
The blood of the just.

14 They wandered blind in the streets;
They have defiled themselves with
blood,
So that no one would touch their
garments.

15 They cried out to them,
"Go away, unclean!
Go away, go away,
Do not touch us!"
When they fled and wandered,
Those among the nations said,
"They shall no longer dwell *here*."

16 The face[a] of the LORD scattered them;
He no longer regards them.
The people do not respect the priests
Nor show favor to the elders.

17 Still our eyes failed us,
Watching vainly for our help;
In our watching we watched
For a nation *that* could not save *us*.

18 They tracked our steps
So that we could not walk in our
streets.
Our end was near;
Our days were over,
For our end had come.

19 Our pursuers were swifter
Than the eagles of the heavens.
They pursued us on the mountains
And lay in wait for us in the
wilderness.

20 The breath of our nostrils, the
anointed of the LORD,
Was caught in their pits,
Of whom we said, "Under his shadow
We shall live among the nations."

21 Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of
Edom,
You who dwell in the land of Uz!
The cup shall also pass over to you
And you shall become drunk and
make yourself naked.

22 *The punishment of* your iniquity is
accomplished,
O daughter of Zion;
He will no longer send you into
captivity.
He will punish your iniquity,
O daughter of Edom;
He will uncover your sins!

A PRAYER FOR RESTORATION

5 Remember, O LORD, what has come
upon us;
Look, and behold our reproach!
2 Our inheritance has been turned over
to aliens,
And our houses to foreigners.
3 We have become orphans and waifs,
Our mothers *are* like widows.

4 We pay for the water we drink,
And our wood comes at a price.
5 *They* pursue at our heels;[a]
We labor *and* have no rest.
6 We have given our hand *to* the
Egyptians
And the Assyrians, to be satisfied with
bread.

7 Our fathers sinned *and are* no more,
But we bear their iniquities.
8 Servants rule over us;
There is none to deliver *us* from their
hand.

4:16 [a]Targum reads *anger*. **5:5** [a]Literally *necks*

9 We get our bread *at the risk* of our
lives,
Because of the sword in the
wilderness.

10 Our skin is hot as an oven,
Because of the fever of famine.
11 They ravished the women in Zion,
The maidens in the cities of Judah.
12 Princes were hung up by their hands,
And elders were not respected.
13 Young men ground at the millstones;
Boys staggered under *loads of* wood.
14 The elders have ceased *gathering at*
the gate,
And the young men from their music.

15 The joy of our heart has ceased;
Our dance has turned into mourning.
16 The crown has fallen *from* our head.
Woe to us, for we have sinned!
17 Because of this our heart is faint;

TRIALS
What causes some trials?
Lamentations 5:16

Because of these *things* our eyes grow
dim;
18 Because of Mount Zion which is
desolate,
With foxes walking about on it.

19 You, O LORD, remain forever;
Your throne from generation to
generation.
20 Why do You forget us forever,
And forsake us for so long a time?
21 Turn us back to You, O LORD, and we
will be restored;
Renew our days as of old,
22 Unless You have utterly rejected us,
And are very angry with us!

Ezekiel

DATE OF WRITING: 593–571 B.C.
AUTHOR: EZEKIEL, PROPHET AND PRIEST
THEME: DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND ITS RESTORATION
PURPOSE: COUNT ON GOD TO JUDGE SIN AS WELL AS TO BLESS.

OUTLINE

1:1—3:27 ..... Ezekiel Sees the Lord's Glory and Is Chosen to Be His Prophet
4:1—5:17 ..... Ezekiel Acts Out the Coming Destruction of Judah and Jerusalem
6:1—7:27 ..... Disaster Is Near
8:1—11:25 ..... The Lord's Glory Leaves Sinful Jerusalem
12:1—24:27 ..... Messages of Doom for Judah and Jerusalem
25:1—32:32 ..... Judgment on Foreign Nations
33:1–20 ..... Ezekiel Must Warn the People to Turn from Their Sinful Ways
33:21–33 ..... The Fall of Jerusalem and Judah
34:1—37:28 ..... The Lord Promises to Bring the People Home and to Restore Judah
38:1—39:29 ..... Gog Will Be Defeated, and Israel Will Be Restored
40:1—46:24 ..... Ezekiel Sees the Future Temple in Jerusalem
47:1–12 ..... The Stream Flowing from the Temple
47:13—48:35 ..... The Borders of the Restored Land and Its Division Among the Tribes

KEY VERSE:

"You are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God," says the Lord GOD (Ezekiel 34:31).

THEN /// Ezekiel preached his message while his people were being held captive in Babylon. For years, other prophets had told these people that if they didn't change their ways they would self-destruct as a culture. These stubborn people faced that very destruction and were *still* disregarding God. It was at this point that God called Ezekiel to give them one more chance to repent.

Ezekiel was preaching to people who were in a mess. He encouraged them by reminding them that there was a brighter future waiting. He also confronted their sin, which was the reason for the mess in the first place.

NOW /// One of the most famous visions of Ezekiel is his vision of a whole valley full of skeletons. They are sometimes referred to as "dry bones." It must have looked like something out of a Sci-Fi movie! But as weird as it must have been for Ezekiel to see that valley of skeletons, imagine how amazing it must have been to see them reconnect and be brought back to life: a whole valley of old bones suddenly rattling together, gathering some skin on them, and becoming an army.

God's point in giving Ezekiel this vision was to communicate to him and to us that we are never so far gone that God can't give us new life if we'll just turn to Him and repent. That's good news, isn't it? No matter where we are or what a mess we've made, we are never too far gone.

REALITY CHECK /// When you review the history of the Hebrew people, it's sort of exasperating that they never seemed to learn to trust God and obey Him. God had worked miracles among these people for centuries. He had saved this nation from death time after time. God had proven Himself. What made these people keep missing the point and turning from God?

We can't really know the answer to that question. But if we look at our own lives, we can get a big clue as to what the answer might be. It seems to be our human nature to choose our own way rather than God's way. We do it today, just as they did then. When we look at ourselves and our own stubborn, willful behavior, the Hebrews aren't so hard to understand.

EZEKIEL'S VISION OF GOD

1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth
year, in the fourth *month,* on the fifth
day of the month, as I *was* among the
captives by the River Chebar, *that* the heav-
ens were opened and I saw visions[a] of God.
2On the fifth *day* of the month, which *was*
in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captiv-
ity, 3the word of the LORD came expressly
to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in
the land of the Chaldeans[a] by the River
Chebar; and the hand of the LORD was
upon him there.

4Then I looked, and behold, a whirl-
wind was coming out of the north, a great
cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and
brightness *was* all around it and radiating
out of its midst like the color of amber, out

1:1 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Syriac and Targum read *a vision.*
1:3 [a]Or *Babylonians,* and so elsewhere in this book

of the midst of the fire. 5Also from within it *came* the likeness of four living creatures. And this *was* their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. 6Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. 7Their legs *were* straight, and the soles of their feet *were* like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. 8The hands of a man *were* under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. 9Their wings touched one another. *The creatures* did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward.

10As for the likeness of their faces, *each* had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. 11Thus *were* their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two *wings* of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies. 12And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went.

13As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. 14And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.

15Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, a wheel *was* on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces. 16The appearance of the wheels and their workings *was* like the color of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. The appearance of their workings *was,* as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. 17When they moved, they went toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went. 18As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and their rims *were* full of eyes, all around the four of them. 19When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. 20Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, *because* there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures[a] *was* in the wheels. 21When those went, *these* went; when those stood, *these* stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures[a] *was* in the wheels.

22The likeness of the firmament above the heads of the living creatures[a] *was* like the color of an awesome crystal, stretched out over their heads. 23And under the firmament their wings *spread out* straight, one toward another. Each one had two which covered one side, and each one had two which covered the other side of the body. 24When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings. 25A voice came from above the firmament that *was* over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings.

26And above the firmament over their heads *was* the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne *was* a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. 27Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. 28Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so *was* the appearance of the brightness all around it. This *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

EZEKIEL SENT TO REBELLIOUS ISRAEL

So when I saw *it,* I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.

2 And He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you." 2Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my

1:20 [a]Literally *living creature;* Septuagint and Vulgate read *spirit of life;* Targum reads *creatures.* **1:21** [a]Literally *living creature;* Septuagint and Vulgate read *spirit of life;* Targum reads *creatures.* **1:22** [a]Following Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *living creature.*

feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me.
3And He said to me: "Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. 4For *they are* impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' 5As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse—for they *are* a rebellious house—yet they will know that a prophet has been among them.

6"And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns *are* with you and you dwell among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, though they *are* a rebellious house. 7You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they *are* rebellious. 8But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you."

Ezekiel 2:9

Ancient documents were written on long pieces of paper or leather called scrolls. Since scrolls could be thirty-five feet or more, the best way to store them was to roll them up on a short rod.

9Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book *was* in it. 10Then He spread it before me; and *there was* writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it *were* lamentations and mourning and woe.

3 Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." 2So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.

3And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.

4Then He said to me: "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them. 5For you *are* not sent to a people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, *but* to the house of Israel, 6not to many people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, had I sent you to them, they would have listened to you. 7But the house of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me; for all the house of Israel *are* impudent and hard-hearted. 8Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads. 9Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they *are* a rebellious house."

CHARACTER

Where can we get strength of character?

Ezekiel 3:8

10Moreover He said to me: "Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears. 11And go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' whether they hear, or whether they refuse."

12Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a great thunderous voice: "Blessed *is* the glory of the LORD from His place!" 13*I* also *heard* the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, and a great thunderous noise. 14So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me. 15Then I came to the captives at Tel Abib, who dwelt by the River Chebar; and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

EZEKIEL IS A WATCHMAN

16Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 17"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: 18When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you

give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 19Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

Ezekiel 3:17

City watchmen were the security guards of ancient cities. They kept a lookout from city walls for any danger. They were responsible for the safety of the citizens and were held personally responsible if their failure to do their job resulted in lost lives or damaged property.

20"Again, when a righteous *man* turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. 21Nevertheless if you warn the righteous *man* that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul."

22Then the hand of the LORD was upon me there, and He said to me, "Arise, go out into the plain, and there I shall talk with you."

23So I arose and went out into the plain, and behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, like the glory which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. 24Then the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet, and spoke with me and said to me: "Go, shut yourself inside your house. 25And you, O son of man, surely they will put ropes on you and bind you with them, so that you cannot go out among them. 26I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth, so that you shall be mute and not be one to rebuke them, for they *are* a rebellious house. 27But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they *are* a rebellious house.

THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM PORTRAYED

4 "You also, son of man, take a clay tablet and lay it before you, and portray on it a city, Jerusalem. 2Lay siege against it, build a siege wall against it, and heap up a mound against it; set camps against it also, and place battering rams against it all around. 3Moreover take for yourself an iron plate, and set it *as* an iron wall between you and the city. Set your face against it, and it shall be besieged, and you shall lay siege against it. This *will be* a sign to the house of Israel.

4"Lie also on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. *According* to the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity. 5For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. 6And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year.

7"Therefore you shall set your face toward the siege of Jerusalem; your arm *shall be* uncovered, and you shall prophesy against it. 8And surely I will restrain you so that you cannot turn from one side to another till you have ended the days of your siege.

9"Also take for yourself wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt; put them into one vessel, and make bread of them for yourself. *During* the number of days that you lie on your side, three hundred and ninety days, you shall eat it. 10And your food which you eat *shall be* by weight, twenty shekels a day; from time to time you shall eat it. 11You shall also drink water by measure, one-sixth of a hin; from time to time you shall drink. 12And you shall eat it *as* barley cakes; and bake it using fuel of human waste in their sight."

13Then the LORD said, "So shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, where I will drive them."

14So I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Indeed I have never defiled myself from my youth till now; I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has abominable flesh ever come into my mouth."

15Then He said to me, "See, I am giving

you cow dung instead of human waste, and you shall prepare your bread over it."

16Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, surely I will cut off the supply of bread in Jerusalem; they shall eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and shall drink water by measure and with dread, 17that they may lack bread and water, and be dismayed with one another, and waste away because of their iniquity.

A SWORD AGAINST JERUSALEM

5 "And you, son of man, take a sharp sword, take it as a barber's razor, and pass *it* over your head and your beard; then take scales to weigh and divide the *hair*. 2You shall burn with fire one-third in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are finished; then you shall take one-third and strike around *it* with the sword, and one-third you shall scatter in the wind: I will draw out a sword after them. 3You shall also take a small number of them and bind them in the edge of your *garment.* 4Then take some of them again and throw them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire. From there a fire will go out into all the house of Israel.

Ezekiel 5:10

During such a siege, an attacking army would keep food and water from entering a city, causing the people inside to die of hunger and thirst. Some sieges lasted months—even years.

5"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'This *is* Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her. 6She has rebelled against My judgments by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against My statutes more than the countries that *are* all around her; for they have refused My judgments, and they have not walked in My statutes.' 7Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have multiplied *disobedience* more than the nations that *are* all around you, have not walked in My statutes nor kept My judgments, nor even done[a] according to the judgments of the nations that *are* all around you'— 8therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Indeed I, even I, *am* against you and will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations. 9And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations. 10Therefore fathers shall eat *their* sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments among you, and all of you who remain I will scatter to all the winds.

WORSHIP
Is pure worship important?
Ezekiel 5:11

11"Therefore, *as* I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will also diminish *you;* My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity. 12One-third of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst; and one-third shall fall by the sword all around you; and I will scatter another third to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.

13"Thus shall My anger be spent, and I will cause My fury to rest upon them, and I will be avenged; and they shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* in My zeal, when I have spent My fury upon them. 14Moreover I will make you a waste and a reproach among the nations that *are* all around you, in the sight of all who pass by.

15"So it[a] shall be a reproach, a taunt, a lesson, and an astonishment to the nations that *are* all around you, when I execute judgments among you in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I, the LORD, have spoken. 16When I send against them the terrible arrows of famine which shall be for destruction, which I will send to destroy you, I will increase the famine upon you and cut off your supply of bread. 17So I will send against you famine and wild beasts, and they will bereave you. Pestilence and blood shall pass through you, and I will

5:7 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *but have done* (compare 11:12). **5:15** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *you*.

bring the sword against you. I, the LORD, have spoken.'"

JUDGMENT ON IDOLATROUS ISRAEL

6 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 2"Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, 3and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains, to the hills, to the ravines, and to the valleys: "Indeed I, *even* I, will bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. 4Then your altars shall be desolate, your incense altars shall be broken, and I will cast down your slain *men* before your idols. 5And I will lay the corpses of the children of Israel before their idols, and I will scatter your bones all around your altars. 6In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate, so that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, your idols may be broken and made to cease, your incense altars may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. 7The slain shall fall in your midst, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

Ezekiel 6:5

Even touching a dead body was enough to disqualify a person from taking part in a religious ceremony. Dead bodies were considered extremely unclean, so a ritual or sacrifice was required before the person who touched a corpse was considered clean again.

8"Yet I will leave a remnant, so that you may have *some* who escape the sword among the nations, when you are scattered through the countries. 9Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations where they are carried captive, because I was crushed by their adulterous heart which has departed from Me, and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols; they will loathe themselves for the evils which they committed in all their abominations. 10And they shall know that I *am* the LORD; I have not said in vain that I would bring this calamity upon them."

11"Thus says the Lord GOD: "Pound your fists and stamp your feet, and say, 'Alas, for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! For they shall fall by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. 12He who is far off shall die by the pestilence, he who is near shall fall by the sword, and he who remains and is besieged shall die by the famine. Thus will I spend My fury upon them. 13Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when their slain are among their idols all around their altars, on every high hill, on all the mountaintops, under every green tree, and under every thick oak, wherever they offered sweet incense to all their idols. 14So I will stretch out My hand against them and make the land desolate, yes, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblah, in all their dwelling places. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.'"'"

JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL IS NEAR

7 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"And you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD to the land of Israel:

'An end! The end has come upon the
four corners of the land.
3Now the end *has come* upon you,
And I will send My anger against you;
I will judge you according to your
ways,
And I will repay you for all your
abominations.
4My eye will not spare you,
Nor will I have pity;
But I will repay your ways,
And your abominations will be in your
midst;
Then you shall know that I *am* the
LORD!'

JUDGMENT
Who will judge us?
Ezekiel 7:3, 4

5"Thus says the Lord GOD:

'A disaster, a singular disaster;
Behold, it has come!

6 An end has come,
The end has come;
It has dawned for you;
Behold, it has come!
7 Doom has come to you, you who dwell
in the land;
The time has come,
A day of trouble *is* near,
And not of rejoicing in the mountains.
8 Now upon you I will soon pour out
My fury,
And spend My anger upon you;
I will judge you according to your
ways,
And I will repay you for all your
abominations.

9 'My eye will not spare,
Nor will I have pity;
I will repay you according to your
ways,
And your abominations will be in your
midst.
Then you shall know that I *am* the
LORD who strikes.

10 'Behold, the day!
Behold, it has come!
Doom has gone out;
The rod has blossomed,
Pride has budded.
11 Violence has risen up into a rod of
wickedness;
None of them *shall remain,*
None of their multitude,
None of them;
Nor *shall there be* wailing for them.
12 The time has come,
The day draws near.

'Let not the buyer rejoice,
Nor the seller mourn,
For wrath *is* on their whole multitude.
13 For the seller shall not return to what
has been sold,
Though he may still be alive;
For the vision concerns the whole
multitude,
And it shall not turn back;
No one will strengthen himself
Who lives in iniquity.

14 'They have blown the trumpet and
made everyone ready,
But no one goes to battle;
For My wrath *is* on all their multitude.
15 The sword *is* outside,
And the pestilence and famine within.
Whoever *is* in the field
Will die by the sword;
And whoever *is* in the city,
Famine and pestilence will devour
him.

16 'Those who survive will escape and be
on the mountains
Like doves of the valleys,
All of them mourning,
Each for his iniquity.
17 Every hand will be feeble,
And every knee will be *as* weak *as*
water.

Ezekiel 7:18
The only time an Israelite man would have considered shaving his head was in severe distress or sorrow.

18 They will also be girded with
sackcloth;
Horror will cover them;
Shame *will be* on every face,
Baldness on all their heads.

19 'They will throw their silver into the
streets,
And their gold will be like refuse;
Their silver and their gold will not be
able to deliver them
In the day of the wrath of the LORD;
They will not satisfy their souls,
Nor fill their stomachs,
Because it became their stumbling
block of iniquity.

20 'As for the beauty of his ornaments,
He set it in majesty;
But they made from it
The images of their abominations—
Their detestable things;
Therefore I have made it
Like refuse to them.
21 I will give it as plunder
Into the hands of strangers,
And to the wicked of the earth as spoil;
And they shall defile it.
22 I will turn My face from them,
And they will defile My secret place;
For robbers shall enter it and defile it.

23 "Make a chain,
For the land is filled with crimes of blood,
And the city is full of violence.
24 Therefore I will bring the worst of the Gentiles,
And they will possess their houses;
I will cause the pomp of the strong to cease,
And their holy places shall be defiled.
25 Destruction comes;
They will seek peace, but *there shall be* none.
26 Disaster will come upon disaster,
And rumor will be upon rumor.
Then they will seek a vision from a prophet;
But the law will perish from the priest,
And counsel from the elders.

27 "The king will mourn,
The prince will be clothed with desolation,
And the hands of the common people will tremble.
I will do to them according to their way,
And according to what they deserve I will judge them;
Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD!' "

ABOMINATIONS IN THE TEMPLE

8 And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth *month,* on the fifth *day* of the month, as I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell upon me there. 2 Then I looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire—from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the color of amber. 3 He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner *court,* where the seat of the image of jealousy *was,* which provokes to jealousy. 4 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel *was* there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

5 Then He said to me, "Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north." So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance.

6 Furthermore He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations." 7 So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. 8 Then He said to me, "Son of man, dig into the wall"; and when I dug into the wall, there was a door.

9 And He said to me, "Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there." 10 So I went in and saw, and there—every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls. 11 And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. 12 Then He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, 'The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.' "

Ezekiel 8:10

The Lord identified certain animals as clean and others as unclean. Clean animals included: cattle, goats, sheep, fish with scales, and many kinds of birds. Animals considered unclean included snails, pigs, vultures, shellfish, and dogs.

13 And He said to me, "Turn again, *and* you will see greater abominations that they are doing." 14 So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the LORD's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.

15 Then He said to me, "Have you seen *this,* O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these." 16 So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about twenty-five men with

their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east.

17And He said to me, "Have you seen *this,* O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. 18Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."

THE WICKED ARE SLAIN

9 Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each *with* a deadly weapon in his hand." 2And suddenly six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his battle-ax in his hand. One man among them *was* clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

Ezekiel 9:2

Linen was a fabric hand-woven from the fibers of the hemp plant. Considered to be the highest-quality fabric in the ancient world, it was worn mostly by people of great wealth or power. Yet priests and temple workers wore linen robes designed according to God's instructions in the Law of Moses.

3Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple.[a] And He called to the man clothed with linen, who *had* the writer's inkhorn at his side; 4and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

5To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. 6Utterly slay old *and* young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom *is* the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who *were* before the temple. 7Then He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city.

8So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left *alone;* and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?"

9Then He said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah *is* exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see!' 10And as for Me also, My eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, *but* I will recompense their deeds on their own head."

RESPONSIBILITY
What are we responsible for?
Ezekiel 9:9, 10

11Just then, the man clothed with linen, who *had* the inkhorn at his side, reported back and said, "I have done as You commanded me."

THE GLORY DEPARTS FROM THE TEMPLE

10 And I looked, and there in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared something like a sapphire stone, having the appearance of the likeness of a throne. 2Then He spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, "Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter *them* over the city." And he went in as I watched.

3Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple[a] when the man went in, and the cloud filled the inner court. 4Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, *and paused* over the threshold of the temple; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full

9:3 [a]Literally *house* **10:3** [a]Literally *house,* also in verses 4 and 18

of the brightness of the LORD's glory. 5And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard *even* in the outer court, like the voice of Almighty God when He speaks.

6Then it happened, when He commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, "Take fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim," that he went in and stood beside the wheels. 7And the cherub stretched out his hand from among the cherubim to the fire that *was* among the cherubim, and took *some of it* and put *it* into the hands of the *man* clothed with linen, who took *it* and went out. 8The cherubim appeared to have the form of a man's hand under their wings.

9And when I looked, there were four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel by one cherub and another wheel by each other cherub; the wheels appeared *to have* the color of a beryl stone. 10*As for* their appearance, all four looked alike—as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. 11When they went, they went toward *any of* their four directions; they did not turn aside when they went, but followed in the direction the head was facing. They did not turn aside when they went. 12And their whole body, with their back, their hands, their wings, and the wheels that the four had, *were* full of eyes all around. 13As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing, "Wheel."

14Each one had four faces: the first face *was* the face of a cherub, the second face the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. 15And the cherubim were lifted up. This *was* the living creature I saw by the River Chebar. 16When the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them; and when the cherubim lifted their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also did not turn from beside them. 17When *the cherubim*[a] stood still, *the wheels* stood still, and when *one*[b] was lifted up, *the other*[c] lifted itself up, for the spirit of the living creature *was* in them.

18Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. 19And the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels *were* beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD's house, and the glory of the God of Israel *was* above them.

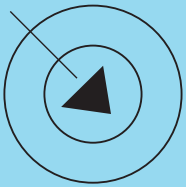
20This *is* the living creature I saw under the God of Israel by the River Chebar, and I knew they *were* cherubim. 21Each one had four faces and each one four wings, and the likeness of the hands of a man *was* under their wings. 22And the likeness of their faces *was* the same *as* the faces which I had seen by the River Chebar, their appearance and their persons. They each went straight forward.

JUDGMENT ON WICKED COUNSELORS

11 Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the East Gate of the LORD's house, which faces eastward; and there at the door of the gate were twenty-five men, among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. 2And He said to me: "Son of man, these *are* the men who devise iniquity and give wicked counsel in this city, 3who say, '*The time is* not near to build houses; this *city is* the caldron, and we *are* the meat.' 4Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man!"

5Then the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said to me, "Speak! 'Thus says the LORD: "Thus you have said, O house of Israel; for I know the things that come into your mind. 6You have multiplied your slain in this city, and you have filled its streets with the slain." 7Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Your slain whom you have laid in its midst, they *are* the meat, and this *city is* the caldron; but I shall bring you out of the midst of it. 8You have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you," says the Lord GOD. 9"And I will bring you out of its midst, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and execute judgments on you. 10You shall fall by the sword. I will judge you at the border of Israel. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD. 11This *city* shall not be your caldron, nor shall you be the meat in its midst. I will judge you at the border of Israel. 12And you shall know that I *am* the LORD; for you have not walked in My statutes nor executed My judgments,

10:17 [a]Literally *they* [b]Literally *they* [c]Literally *they*



PROMISE

God promises to be your home away from home.

Therefore say, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.'" Therefore say, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel'" (Ezek. 11:16, 17).

Around 600 B.C., an enemy king took the prophet Daniel and many other men away from their home in Jerusalem, where God's temple was, to the city of Babylon. But Daniel was faithful to God, and God showed that He was with Daniel by protecting him and allowing the king to notice him and give him authority.

Ezekiel was one of the men taken to Babylon with Daniel. The people who were left in Jerusalem believed God had not gone to Babylon with Daniel and the others. But the things that happened to the captives in Babylon proved they were wrong. And so did God's words to Ezekiel: "I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone." In other words, God will go wherever His people go. He will never leave them alone.

As you follow God's plan for your life, you may find yourself in a place that seems really far from Him—a state university, a job you can't stand, maybe even a city or country where people don't seem to care about God. But God will never leave you on your own. There is no place you can go in life where God is not. He promises to stay close to you wherever you are. The very Spirit of God lives inside of you, He can't get any closer than that.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Exodus 33:14; Leviticus 26:12; Deuteronomy 31:8; Matthew 28:19, 20

but have done according to the customs of the Gentiles which *are* all around you.'"'

DECISIONS

When is peer pressure bad?

Ezekiel 11:12

[13]Now it happened, while I was prophesying, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then I fell on my face and cried with a loud voice, and said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Will You make a complete end of the remnant of Israel?"

GOD WILL RESTORE ISRAEL

[14]Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [15]"Son of man, your brethren, your relatives, your countrymen, and all the house of Israel in its entirety, *are* those about whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'Get far away from the LORD; this land has been given to us as a possession.' [16]Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone."' [17]Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel."' [18]And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. [19]Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them,[a] and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, [20]that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people,

11:19 [a]Literally *you*

and I will be their God. 21But *as for those* whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

FOLLOWING GOD
How can we have a changed life?
Ezekiel 11:19, 20

22So the cherubim lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel *was* high above them. 23And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which *is* on the east side of the city.

24Then the Spirit took me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea,[a] to those in captivity. And the vision that I had seen went up from me. 25So I spoke to those in captivity of all the things the LORD had shown me.

JUDAH'S CAPTIVITY PORTRAYED

12 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 2"Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear; for they *are* a rebellious house.

3"Therefore, son of man, prepare your belongings for captivity, and go into captivity by day in their sight. You shall go from your place into captivity to another place in their sight. It may be that they will consider, though they *are* a rebellious house. 4By day you shall bring out your belongings in their sight, as though going into captivity; and at evening you shall go in their sight, like those who go into captivity. 5Dig through the wall in their sight, and carry *your belongings* out through it. 6In their sight you shall bear *them* on *your* shoulders *and* carry *them* out at twilight; you shall cover your face, so that you cannot see the ground, for I have made you a sign to the house of Israel."

7So I did as I was commanded. I brought out my belongings by day, as though going into captivity, and at evening I dug through the wall with my hand. I brought *them* out at twilight, *and* I bore *them* on *my* shoulder in their sight.

8And in the morning the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9"Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, 'What are you doing?' 10Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "This burden *concerns* the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are among them."' 11Say, 'I *am* a sign to you. As I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall be carried away into captivity.' 12And the prince who *is* among them shall bear *his belongings* on *his* shoulder at twilight and go out. They shall dig through the wall to carry *them* out through it. He shall cover his face, so that he cannot see the ground with *his* eyes. 13I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, *to* the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there. 14I will scatter to every wind all who *are* around him to help him, and all his troops; and I will draw out the sword after them.

Ezekiel 12:14
Zedekiah was forced to watch while his sons were put to death. It would be the last thing he ever saw. His eyes were then poked out, and he was led away to Babylon as a blind captive.

15"Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. 16But I will spare a few of their men from the sword, from famine, and from pestilence, that they may declare all their abominations among the Gentiles wherever they go. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD."

JUDGMENT NOT POSTPONED

17Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 18"Son of man, eat your bread with quaking, and drink your water with trembling and anxiety. 19And say to the people of the land, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the inhabitants of Jerusalem *and* to the land of Israel: "They shall eat their bread

11:24 [a]Or *Babylon,* and so elsewhere in this book

with anxiety, and drink their water with dread, so that her land may be emptied of all who are in it, because of the violence of all those who dwell in it. 20Then the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall become desolate; and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.'"'

21And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 22"Son of man, what *is* this proverb *that* you *people* have about the land of Israel, which says, 'The days are prolonged, and every vision fails'? 23Tell them therefore, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will lay this proverb to rest, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel."' But say to them, '"The days are at hand, and the fulfillment of every vision. 24For no more shall there be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. 25For I *am* the LORD. I speak, and the word which I speak will come to pass; it will no more be postponed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and perform it," says the Lord GOD.'"

26Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 27"Son of man, look, the house of Israel is saying, 'The vision that he sees *is* for many days *from now,* and he prophesies of times far off.' 28Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "None of My words will be postponed any more, but the word which I speak will be done," says the Lord GOD.'"

WOE TO FOOLISH PROPHETS

13 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy out of their own heart, 'Hear the word of the LORD!'"

3Thus says the Lord GOD: "Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! 4O Israel, your prophets are like foxes in the deserts. 5You have not gone up into the gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the LORD. 6They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, 'Thus says the LORD!' But the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope that the word may be confirmed. 7Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, 'The LORD says,' but I have not spoken."

CULT
Why are cults dangerous?
Ezekiel 13:3–7

8Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I *am* indeed against you," says the Lord GOD. 9"My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.

10"Because, indeed, because they have seduced My people, saying, 'Peace!' when *there is* no peace—and one builds a wall, and they plaster it with untempered *mortar*— 11say to those who plaster *it* with untempered *mortar,* that it will fall. There will be flooding rain, and you, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall tear *it* down. 12Surely, when the wall has fallen, will it not be said to you, 'Where *is* the mortar with which you plastered *it?*'"

13Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I will cause a stormy wind to break forth in My fury; and there shall be a flooding rain in My anger, and great hailstones in fury to consume *it.* 14So I will break down the wall you have plastered with untempered *mortar,* and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be uncovered; it will fall, and you shall be consumed in the midst of it. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

15"Thus will I accomplish My wrath on the wall and on those who have plastered it with untempered *mortar;* and I will say to you, 'The wall *is* no *more,* nor those who plastered it, 16*that is,* the prophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her when *there is* no peace,'" says the Lord GOD.

17"Likewise, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people, who prophesy out of their own heart; prophesy against them, 18and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Woe to the *women* who sew *magic* charms on their sleeves[a] and make

13:18 [a]Literally *over all the joints of My hands;* Vulgate reads *under every elbow;* Septuagint and Targum read *on all elbows of the hands.*

veils for the heads of people of every height to hunt souls! Will you hunt the souls of My people, and keep yourselves alive? 19And will you profane Me among My people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies?"

Ezekiel 13:18

These so-called "magic charms" were pieces of jewelry that had spells and chants written on them. Some people believed these charms protected them from sickness, evil spirits, and other dangers. Today, such charms, often called amulets, are still very popular in some parts of the world.

20"'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* against your *magic* charms by which you hunt souls there like birds. I will tear them from your arms, and let the souls go, the souls you hunt like birds. 21I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people out of your hand, and they shall no longer be as prey in your hand. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

22"Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life. 23Therefore you shall no longer envision futility nor practice divination; for I will deliver My people out of your hand, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD."'"

IDOLATRY WILL BE PUNISHED

14 Now some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. 2And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 3"Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?

4"'Therefore speak to them, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols, 5that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols."'

6"'Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations. 7For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, then comes to a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I the LORD will answer him by Myself. 8I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of My people. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

9"And if the prophet is induced to speak anything, I the LORD have induced that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from among My people Israel. 10And they shall bear their iniquity; the punishment of the prophet shall be the same as the punishment of the one who inquired, 11that the house of Israel may no longer stray from Me, nor be profaned anymore with all their transgressions, but that they may be My people and I may be their God," says the Lord GOD.'"

JUDGMENT ON PERSISTENT UNFAITHFULNESS

12The word of the LORD came again to me, saying: 13"Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. 14Even *if* these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver *only* themselves by their righteousness," says the Lord GOD.

15"If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they empty it, and make it so desolate that no man may pass through because of the beasts, 16*even though* these three men *were* in it, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "they would deliver neither sons nor daughters; only they would be delivered, and the land would be desolate.

17"Or *if* I bring a sword on that land, and say, 'Sword, go through the land,' and I cut

off man and beast from it, 18even *though* these three men *were* in it, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but only they themselves would be delivered.

19"Or *if* I send a pestilence into that land and pour out My fury on it in blood, and cut off from it man and beast, 20even *though* Noah, Daniel, and Job *were* in it, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver *only* themselves by their righteousness."

21For thus says the Lord GOD: "How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence—to cut off man and beast from it? 22Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, *both* sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and you will see their ways and their doings. Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it. 23And they will comfort you, when you see their ways and their doings; and you shall know that I have done nothing without cause that I have done in it," says the Lord GOD.

THE OUTCAST VINE

15 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 2"Son of man, how is the wood of the vine *better* than any other wood, the vine branch which is among the trees of the forest? 3Is wood taken from it to make any object? Or can *men* make a peg from it to hang any vessel on? 4Instead, it is thrown into the fire for fuel; the fire devours both ends of it, and its middle is burned. Is it useful for *any* work? 5Indeed, when it was whole, no object could be made from it. How much less will it be useful for *any* work when the fire has devoured it, and it is burned?

6"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so I will give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 7and I will set My face against them. They will go out from *one* fire, but *another* fire shall devour them. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I set My face against them. 8Thus I will make the land desolate, because they have persisted in unfaithfulness,' says the Lord GOD."

GOD'S LOVE FOR JERUSALEM

16 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, 3and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: "Your birth and your nativity *are* from the land of Canaan; your father *was* an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. 4*As for* your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse *you;* you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. 5No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born.

Ezekiel 16:3

The Hittites and Amorites built Jerusalem long before the Israelites arrived in Canaan. When Solomon completed construction of the temple, the city became the center of Israel's religious life.

6"And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' 7I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. *Your* breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you *were* naked and bare.

8"When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time *was* the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD.

9"Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. 10I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 11I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your

wrists, and a chain on your neck. 12And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 13Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing *was of* fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate *pastry of* fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. 14Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it *was* perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord GOD.

JERUSALEM'S HARLOTRY

15"But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who *would have* it. 16You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. *Such* things should not happen, nor be. 17You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them. 18You took your embroidered garments and covered them, and you set My oil and My incense before them. 19Also My food which I gave you—the pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey *which* I fed you—you set it before them as sweet incense; and *so* it was," says the Lord GOD.

20"Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. *Were* your *acts* of harlotry a small matter, 21that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through *the fire?* 22And in all your abominations and acts of harlotry you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood.

23"Then it was so, after all your wickedness—'Woe, woe to you!' says the Lord GOD— 24*that* you also built for yourself a shrine, and made a high place for yourself in every street. 25You built your high places at the head of every road, and made your beauty to be abhorred. You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry. 26You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke Me to anger.

27"Behold, therefore, I stretched out My hand against you, diminished your allotment, and gave you up to the will of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior. 28You also played the harlot with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; indeed you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. 29Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea; and even then you were not satisfied.

30"How degenerate is your heart!" says the Lord GOD, "seeing you do all these *things,* the deeds of a brazen harlot.

JERUSALEM'S ADULTERY

31"You erected your shrine at the head of every road, and built your high place in every street. Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned payment. 32*You are* an adulterous wife, *who* takes strangers instead of her husband. 33Men make payment to all harlots, but you made your payments to all your lovers, and hired them to come to you from all around for your harlotry. 34You are the opposite of *other* women in your harlotry, because no one solicited you to be a harlot. In that you gave payment but no payment was given you, therefore you are the opposite."

JERUSALEM'S LOVERS WILL ABUSE HER

35"Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD! 36Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children which you gave to them, 37surely, therefore, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved, *and* all those you hated; I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness. 38And I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy. 39I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw down your shrines

and break down your high places. They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare.

40"They shall also bring up an assembly against you, and they shall stone you with stones and thrust you through with their swords. 41They shall burn your houses with fire, and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women; and I will make you cease playing the harlot, and you shall no longer hire lovers. 42So I will lay to rest My fury toward you, and My jealousy shall depart from you. I will be quiet, and be angry no more. 43Because you did not remember the days of your youth, but agitated Me[a] with all these *things,* surely I will also recompense your deeds on *your own* head," says the Lord GOD. "And you shall not commit lewdness in addition to all your abominations.

MORE WICKED THAN SAMARIA AND SODOM

44"Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use *this* proverb against you: 'Like mother, like daughter!' 45You *are* your mother's daughter, loathing husband and children; and you *are* the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; your mother *was* a Hittite and your father an Amorite.

46"Your elder sister *is* Samaria, who dwells with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who dwells to the south of you, *is* Sodom and her daughters. 47You did not walk in their ways nor act according to their abominations; but, as *if that were* too little, you became more corrupt than they in all your ways.

PRIDE
Does God condemn arrogance?
Ezekiel 16:49

48"*As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. 49Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw *fit.*[a]

51"Samaria did not commit half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they, and have justified your sisters by all the abominations which you have done. 52You who judged your sisters, bear your own shame also, because the sins which you committed were more abominable than theirs; they are more righteous than you. Yes, be disgraced also, and bear your own shame, because you justified your sisters.

53"When I bring back their captives, the captives of Sodom and her daughters, and the captives of Samaria and her daughters, then *I will also bring back* the captives of your captivity among them, 54that you may bear your own shame and be disgraced by all that you did when you comforted them. 55When your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters return to their former state, then you and your daughters will return to your former state. 56For your sister Sodom was not a byword in your mouth in the days of your pride, 57before your wickedness was uncovered. It was like the time of the reproach of the daughters of Syria[a] and all *those* around her, and of the daughters of the Philistines, who despise you everywhere. 58You have paid for your lewdness and your abominations," says the LORD. 59For thus says the Lord GOD: "I will deal with you as you have done, who despised the oath by breaking the covenant.

AN EVERLASTING COVENANT

60"Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. 61Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed, when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I

16:43 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *were agitated with Me.* **16:50** [a]Vulgate reads *you saw;* Septuagint reads *he saw;* Targum reads *as was revealed to Me.* **16:57** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate; many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *Edom.*

will give them to you for daughters, but not because of My covenant with you. 62And I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, 63that you may remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I provide you an atonement for all you have done," says the Lord GOD.'"

THE EAGLES AND THE VINE

17 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel, 3and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"A great eagle with large wings and
long pinions,
Full of feathers of various colors,
Came to Lebanon
And took from the cedar the highest
branch.
4He cropped off its topmost young
twig
And carried it to a land of trade;
He set it in a city of merchants.
5Then he took some of the seed of the
land
And planted it in a fertile field;
He placed *it* by abundant waters
And set it like a willow tree.
6And it grew and became a spreading
vine of low stature;
Its branches turned toward him,
But its roots were under it.
So it became a vine,
Brought forth branches,
And put forth shoots.

7"But there was another[a] great eagle
with large wings and many
feathers;
And behold, this vine bent its roots
toward him,
And stretched its branches toward
him,
From the garden terrace where it had
been planted,
That he might water it.
8It was planted in good soil by many
waters,
To bring forth branches, bear fruit,
And become a majestic vine."'

9"Say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Will it thrive?
Will he not pull up its roots,
Cut off its fruit,
And leave it to wither?
All of its spring leaves will wither,
And no great power or many people
Will be needed to pluck it up by its
roots.
10Behold, *it is* planted,
Will it thrive?
Will it not utterly wither when the east
wind touches it?
It will wither in the garden terrace
where it grew."'"

11Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 12"Say now to the rebellious house: 'Do you not know what these *things mean?*' Tell *them,* 'Indeed the king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and took its king and princes, and led them with him to Babylon. 13And he took the king's offspring, made a covenant with him, and put him under oath. He also took away the mighty of the land, 14that the kingdom might be brought low and not lift itself up, *but* that by keeping his covenant it might stand. 15But he rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt, that they might give him horses and many people. Will he prosper? Will he who does such *things* escape? Can he break a covenant and still be delivered?

16'*As* I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely in the place *where* the king *dwells* who made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke—with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. 17Nor will Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company do anything in the war, when they heap up a siege mound and build a wall to cut off many persons. 18Since he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, and in fact gave his hand and still did all these *things,* he shall not escape.'"

19Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "*As* I live, surely My oath which he despised, and My covenant which he broke, I will recompense on his own head. 20I will spread My net over him, and he shall be taken in My

17:7 [a]Following Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text and Targum read *one.*

snare. I will bring him to Babylon and try him there for the treason which he committed against Me. 21All his fugitives[a] with all his troops shall fall by the sword, and those who remain shall be scattered to every wind; and you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken."

Ezekiel 17:22

A cedar tree can grow as high as one hundred feet and as wide as fifty feet.

ISRAEL EXALTED AT LAST

22Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will take also *one* of the highest branches of the high cedar and set *it* out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant *it* on a high and prominent mountain. 23On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell. 24And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; I, the LORD, have spoken and have done *it*."

A FALSE PROVERB REFUTED

18 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, 2"What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying:

'The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge'?

3"*As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel.

4"Behold, all souls are Mine;
The soul of the father
As well as the soul of the son is Mine;
The soul who sins shall die.
5But if a man is just
And does what is lawful and right;
6If he has not eaten on the mountains,
Nor lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel,
Nor defiled his neighbor's wife,
Nor approached a woman during her impurity;
7If he has not oppressed anyone,
But has restored to the debtor his pledge;
Has robbed no one by violence,
But has given his bread to the hungry
And covered the naked with clothing;
8If he has not exacted usury
Nor taken any increase,
But has withdrawn his hand from iniquity
And executed true judgment between man and man;
9*If* he has walked in My statutes
And kept My judgments faithfully—
He *is* just;
He shall surely live!"
Says the Lord GOD.

10"If he begets a son *who is* a robber
Or a shedder of blood,
Who does any of these *things*
11And does none of those *duties,*
But has eaten on the mountains
Or defiled his neighbor's wife;
12If he has oppressed the poor and needy,
Robbed by violence,
Not restored the pledge,
Lifted his eyes to the idols,
Or committed abomination;
13If he has exacted usury
Or taken increase—
Shall he then live?
He shall not live!
If he has done any of these abominations,
He shall surely die;
His blood shall be upon him.

14"*If,* however, he begets a son
Who sees all the sins which his father has done,
And considers but does not do likewise;
15*Who* has not eaten on the mountains,
Nor lifted his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel,
Nor defiled his neighbor's wife;

17:21 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac read *choice men;* Targum reads *mighty men;* Septuagint omits *All his fugitives.*

FAMILY
Can children break the chain of sin and disobedience in a family?
Ezekiel 18:14–19

16 Has not oppressed anyone,
Nor withheld a pledge,
Nor robbed by violence,
But has given his bread to the hungry
And covered the naked with clothing;
17 *Who* has withdrawn his hand from the poor[a]
And not received usury or increase,
But has executed My judgments
And walked in My statutes—
He shall not die for the iniquity of his father;
He shall surely live!

18 "*As for* his father,
Because he cruelly oppressed,
Robbed his brother by violence,
And did what *is* not good among his people,
Behold, he shall die for his iniquity.

TURN AND LIVE

19 "Yet you say, 'Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?' Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live. 20 The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

21 "But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 22 None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. 23 Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord GOD, "*and* not that he should turn from his ways and live?

24 "But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.

25 "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? 26 When a righteous *man* turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies. 27 Again, when a wicked *man* turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive. 28 Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 29 Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, is it not My ways which are fair, and your ways which are not fair?

30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!"

ISRAEL DEGRADED

19 "Moreover take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel, 2 and say:

'What *is* your mother? A lioness:
She lay down among the lions;
Among the young lions she nourished her cubs.
3 She brought up one of her cubs,
And he became a young lion;
He learned to catch prey,
And he devoured men.
4 The nations also heard of him;
He was trapped in their pit,

18:17 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *iniquity* (compare verse 8).

And they brought him with chains to
the land of Egypt.

5 ‘When she saw that she waited, *that*
her hope was lost,
She took another of her cubs *and*
made him a young lion.
6 He roved among the lions,
And became a young lion;
He learned to catch prey;
He devoured men.
7 He knew their desolate places,[a]
And laid waste their cities;
The land with its fullness was
desolated
By the noise of his roaring.
8 Then the nations set against him from
the provinces on every side,
And spread their net over him;
He was trapped in their pit.
9 They put him in a cage with chains,
And brought him to the king of
Babylon;
They brought him in nets,
That his voice should no longer be
heard on the mountains of Israel.

10 ‘Your mother *was* like a vine in your
bloodline,[a]
Planted by the waters,
Fruitful and full of branches
Because of many waters.
11 She had strong branches for scepters
of rulers.
She towered in stature above the thick
branches,
And was seen in her height amid the
dense foliage.
12 But she was plucked up in fury,
She was cast down to the ground,
And the east wind dried her fruit.
Her strong branches were broken and
withered;
The fire consumed them.
13 And now she *is* planted in the
wilderness,
In a dry and thirsty land.
14 Fire has come out from a rod of her
branches
And devoured her fruit,
So that she has no strong branch—
a scepter for ruling.’ ”

This *is* a lamentation, and has become a lamentation.

THE REBELLIONS OF ISRAEL

20 It came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth *month,* on the tenth *day* of the month, *that* certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat before me. 2 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 3 “Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Have you come to inquire of Me? *As* I live,” says the Lord GOD, “I will not be inquired of by you.” ’ 4 Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge *them?* Then make known to them the abominations of their fathers.

5 “Say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “On the day when I chose Israel and raised My hand in an oath to the descendants of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised My hand in an oath to them, saying, ‘I *am* the LORD your God.’ 6 On that day I raised My hand in an oath to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, ‘flowing with milk and honey,’[a] the glory of all lands. 7 Then I said to them, ‘Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I *am* the LORD your God.’ 8 But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, ‘I will pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.’ 9 But I acted for My name’s sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles among whom they *were,* in whose sight I had made Myself known to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

10 “ ‘Therefore I made them go out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. 11 And I gave them My statutes and showed them My judgments, ‘which, *if* a man does, he shall live by them.’[a] 12 Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a

19:7 [a]Septuagint reads *He stood in insolence;* Targum reads *He destroyed its palaces;* Vulgate reads *He learned to make widows.*
19:10 [a]Literally *blood,* following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *like a flower on a pomegranate tree;* Targum reads *in your likeness.* **20:6** [a]Exodus 3:8
20:11 [a]Leviticus 18:5

sign between them and Me, that they might know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies them. 13Yet the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, 'which, *if* a man does, he shall live by them';[a] and they greatly defiled My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them in the wilderness, to consume them. 14But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. 15So I also raised My hand in an oath to them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given *them,* 'flowing with milk and honey,'[a] the glory of all lands, 16because they despised My judgments and did not walk in My statutes, but profaned My Sabbaths; for their heart went after their idols. 17Nevertheless My eye spared them from destruction. I did not make an end of them in the wilderness.

18"But I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. 19I *am* the LORD your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; 20hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God.'

21"Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, and were not careful to observe My judgments, 'which, *if* a man does, he shall live by them';[a] but they profaned My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness. 22Nevertheless I withdrew My hand and acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. 23Also I raised My hand in an oath to those in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the Gentiles and disperse them throughout the countries, 24because they had not executed My judgments, but had despised My statutes, profaned My Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols.

25"Therefore I also gave them up to statutes *that were* not good, and judgments by which they could not live; 26and I pronounced them unclean because of their ritual gifts, in that they caused all their firstborn to pass through *the fire,* that I might make them desolate and that they might know that I am the LORD."'

27"Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "In this too your fathers have blasphemed Me, by being unfaithful to Me. 28When I brought them into the land *concerning* which I had raised My hand in an oath to give them, and they saw all the high hills and all the thick trees, there they offered their sacrifices and provoked Me with their offerings. There they also sent up their sweet aroma and poured out their drink offerings. 29Then I said to them, 'What *is* this high place to which you go?' So its name is called Bamah[a] to this day."' 30Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Are you defiling yourselves in the manner of your fathers, and committing harlotry according to their abominations? 31For when you offer your gifts and make your sons pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols, even to this day. So shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? *As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "I will not be inquired of by you. 32What you have in your mind shall never be, when you say, 'We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone.'

GOD WILL RESTORE ISRAEL

33"*As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. 34I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. 35And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. 36Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you," says the Lord GOD.

37"I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; 38I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where

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20:13 [a]Leviticus 18:5 **20:15** [a]Exodus 3:8
20:21 [a]Leviticus 18:5 **20:29** [a]Literally *High Place*

they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I *am* the LORD.

39"As for you, O house of Israel," thus says the Lord GOD: "Go, serve every one of you his idols—and hereafter—if you will not obey Me; but profane My holy name no more with your gifts and your idols. 40For on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the firstfruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things. 41I will accept you as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles. 42Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country *for* which I raised My hand in an oath to give to your fathers. 43And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed. 44Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel," says the Lord GOD.'"

FIRE IN THE FOREST

45Furthermore the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 46"Son of man, set your face toward the south; preach against the south and prophesy against the forest land, the South,[a] 47and say to the forest of the South, 'Hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree and every dry tree in you; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be scorched by it. 48All flesh shall see that I, the LORD, have kindled it; it shall not be quenched."'"

49Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! They say of me, 'Does he not speak parables?'"

BABYLON, THE SWORD OF GOD

21 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem, preach against the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel; 3and say to the land of Israel, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I *am* against you, and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off both righteous and wicked from you. 4Because I will cut off both righteous and wicked from you, therefore My sword shall go out of its sheath against all flesh from south *to* north, 5that all flesh may know that I, the LORD, have drawn My sword out of its sheath; it shall not return anymore."' 6Sigh therefore, son of man, with a breaking heart, and sigh with bitterness before their eyes. 7And it shall be when they say to you, 'Why are you sighing?' that you shall answer, 'Because of the news; when it comes, every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak *as* water. Behold, it is coming and shall be brought to pass,' says the Lord GOD."

8Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9"Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD!' Say:

'A sword, a sword is sharpened
And also polished!
10Sharpened to make a dreadful slaughter,
Polished to flash like lightning!
Should we then make mirth?
It despises the scepter of My son,
As it does all wood.
11And He has given it to be polished,
That it may be handled;
This sword is sharpened, and it is polished
To be given into the hand of the slayer.'

12"Cry and wail, son of man;
For it will be against My people,
Against all the princes of Israel.
Terrors including the sword will be against My people;
Therefore strike *your* thigh.

13"Because *it is* a testing,
And what if *the sword* despises even the scepter?
The scepter shall be no *more,*"

says the Lord GOD.

20:46 [a]Hebrew *Negev*

14 "You therefore, son of man, prophesy,
And strike *your* hands together.
The third time let the sword do double *damage.*
It *is* the sword *that* slays,
The sword that slays the great *men,*
That enters their private chambers.
15 I have set the point of the sword against all their gates,
That the heart may melt and many may stumble.
Ah! *It is* made bright;
It is grasped for slaughter:

16 "Swords at the ready!
Thrust right!
Set your blade!
Thrust left—
Wherever your edge is ordered!

17 "I also will beat My fists together,
And I will cause My fury to rest;
I, the LORD, have spoken."

18 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying: 19 "And son of man, appoint for yourself two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to go; both of them shall go from the same land. Make a sign; put *it* at the head of the road to the city. 20 Appoint a road for the sword to go to Rabbah of the Ammonites, and to Judah, into fortified Jerusalem. 21 For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver. 22 In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem: to set up battering rams, to call for a slaughter, to lift the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to heap up a *siege* mound, and to build a wall. 23 And it will be to them like a false divination in the eyes of those who have sworn oaths with them; but he will bring their iniquity to remembrance, that they may be taken.

24 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your doings your sins appear—because you have come to remembrance, you shall be taken in hand.

25 'Now to you, O profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose iniquity *shall* end, 26 thus says the Lord GOD:

"Remove the turban, and take off the crown;
Nothing *shall remain* the same.
Exalt the humble, and humble the exalted.
27 Overthrown, overthrown,
I will make it overthrown!
It shall be no *longer,*
Until He comes whose right it is,
And I will give it *to Him.*" '

A SWORD AGAINST THE AMMONITES

28 "And you, son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD concerning the Ammonites and concerning their reproach,' and say:

'A sword, a sword *is* drawn,
Polished for slaughter,
For consuming, for flashing—
29 While they see false visions for you,
While they divine a lie to you,
To bring you on the necks of the wicked, the slain
Whose day has come,
Whose iniquity *shall* end.

30 'Return *it* to its sheath.
I will judge you
In the place where you were created,
In the land of your nativity.
31 I will pour out My indignation on you;
I will blow against you with the fire of My wrath,
And deliver you into the hands of brutal men *who are* skillful to destroy.

Ezekiel 21:21

The Babylonians used all sorts of rituals to determine their strategies. They planned military strategy based on the way arrows landed when dropped; they tried to consult the dead using idols; they cut open sheep livers and predicted the future based on the shape and condition of the animals' internal organs.

32 You shall be fuel for the fire;
Your blood shall be in the midst of the land.
You shall not be remembered,
For I the LORD have spoken.'"

SINS OF JERUSALEM

22 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Now, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Yes, show her all her abominations! 3 Then say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "The city sheds blood in her own midst, that her time may come; and she makes idols within herself to defile herself. 4 You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed, and have defiled yourself with the idols which you have made. You have caused your days to draw near, and have come to *the end of* your years; therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations, and a mockery to all countries. 5 *Those* near and *those* far from you will mock you as infamous *and* full of tumult.

6 "Look, the princes of Israel: each one has used his power to shed blood in you. 7 In you they have made light of father and mother; in your midst they have oppressed the stranger; in you they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow. 8 You have despised My holy things and profaned My Sabbaths. 9 In you are men who slander to cause bloodshed; in you are those who eat on the mountains; in your midst they commit lewdness. 10 In you men uncover their fathers' nakedness; in you they violate women who are set apart during their impurity. 11 One commits abomination with his neighbor's wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; and another in you violates his sister, his father's daughter. 12 In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take usury and increase; you have made profit from your neighbors by extortion, and have forgotten Me," says the Lord GOD.

SEX
Does God care about sex?
Ezekiel 22:10–12

13 "Behold, therefore, I beat My fists at the dishonest profit which you have made, and at the bloodshed which has been in your midst. 14 Can your heart endure, or can your hands remain strong, in the days when I shall deal with you? I, the LORD, have spoken, and will do *it.* 15 I will scatter you among the nations, disperse you throughout the countries, and remove your filthiness completely from you. 16 You shall defile yourself in the sight of the nations; then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.'"

ISRAEL IN THE FURNACE

17 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 18 "Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they *are* all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver. 19 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have all become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 20 *As men* gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to melt *it;* so I will gather *you* in My anger and in My fury, and I will leave *you there* and melt you. 21 Yes, I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst. 22 As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have poured out My fury on you.'"

ISRAEL'S WICKED LEADERS

23 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 24 "Son of man, say to her: 'You *are* a land that is not cleansed[a] or rained on in the day of indignation.' 25 The conspiracy of her prophets[a] in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured people; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. 26 Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known *the difference* between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. 27 Her princes in her midst *are* like

22:24 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *showered upon.*
22:25 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *princes;* Targum reads *scribes.*

wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood,
to destroy people, and to get dishonest
gain. 28Her prophets plastered them with
untempered *mortar,* seeing false visions,
and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus
says the Lord GOD,' when the LORD had
not spoken. 29The people of the land have
used oppressions, committed robbery,
and mistreated the poor and needy; and
they wrongfully oppress the stranger. 30So
I sought for a man among them who would
make a wall, and stand in the gap before
Me on behalf of the land, that I should not
destroy it; but I found no one. 31Therefore I
have poured out My indignation on them;
I have consumed them with the fire of My
wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds
on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

TWO HARLOT SISTERS

23 The word of the LORD came
again to me, saying:

2"Son of man, there were two
women,
The daughters of one mother.
3They committed harlotry in Egypt,
They committed harlotry in their
youth;
Their breasts were there embraced,
Their virgin bosom was there pressed.
4Their names: Oholah[a] the elder and
Oholibah[b] her sister;
They were Mine,
And they bore sons and daughters.
As for their names,
Samaria *is* Oholah, and Jerusalem *is*
Oholibah.

THE OLDER SISTER, SAMARIA

5"Oholah played the harlot even though
she was Mine;
And she lusted for her lovers, the
neighboring Assyrians,
6*Who were* clothed in purple,
Captains and rulers,
All of them desirable young men,
Horsemen riding on horses.
7Thus she committed her harlotry with
them,
All of them choice men of Assyria;
And with all for whom she lusted,
With all their idols, she defiled
herself.
8She has never given up her harlotry
brought from Egypt,
For in her youth they had lain with her,
Pressed her virgin bosom,
And poured out their immorality upon
her.

9"Therefore I have delivered her
Into the hand of her lovers,
Into the hand of the Assyrians,
For whom she lusted.
10They uncovered her nakedness,
Took away her sons and daughters,
And slew her with the sword;
She became a byword among women,
For they had executed judgment on
her.

THE YOUNGER SISTER, JERUSALEM

11"Now although her sister Oholibah saw
this, she became more corrupt in her lust
than she, and in her harlotry more corrupt
than her sister's harlotry.

12"She lusted for the neighboring
Assyrians,
Captains and rulers,
Clothed most gorgeously,
Horsemen riding on horses,
All of them desirable young men.
13Then I saw that she was defiled;
Both *took* the same way.
14But she increased her harlotry;
She looked at men portrayed on the
wall,
Images of Chaldeans portrayed in
vermilion,
15Girded with belts around their waists,
Flowing turbans on their heads,
All of them looking like captains,
In the manner of the Babylonians of
Chaldea,
The land of their nativity.
16As soon as her eyes saw them,
She lusted for them
And sent messengers to them in
Chaldea.

17"Then the Babylonians came to her,
into the bed of love,
And they defiled her with their
immorality;

23:4 [a]Literally *Her Own Tabernacle* [b]Literally *My Tabernacle Is in Her*

So she was defiled by them, and
alienated herself from them.
18 She revealed her harlotry and
uncovered her nakedness.
Then I alienated Myself from her,
As I had alienated Myself from her
sister.

19 "Yet she multiplied her harlotry
In calling to remembrance the days of
her youth,
When she had played the harlot in the
land of Egypt.
20 For she lusted for her paramours,
Whose flesh *is like* the flesh of donkeys,
And whose issue *is like* the issue of
horses.
21 Thus you called to remembrance the
lewdness of your youth,
When the Egyptians pressed your
bosom
Because of your youthful breasts.

JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM

22 "Therefore, Oholibah, thus says the Lord GOD:

'Behold, I will stir up your lovers
against you,
From whom you have alienated
yourself,
And I will bring them against you from
every side:
23 The Babylonians,
All the Chaldeans,
Pekod, Shoa, Koa,
All the Assyrians with them,
All of them desirable young men,
Governors and rulers,
Captains and men of renown,
All of them riding on horses.
24 And they shall come against you
With chariots, wagons, and war-
horses,
With a horde of people.
They shall array against you
Buckler, shield, and helmet all around.

'I will delegate judgment to them,
And they shall judge you according to
their judgments.
25 I will set My jealousy against you,
And they shall deal furiously with you;
They shall remove your nose and your
ears,
And your remnant shall fall by the
sword;
They shall take your sons and your
daughters,
And your remnant shall be devoured
by fire.
26 They shall also strip you of your
clothes
And take away your beautiful
jewelry.

27 'Thus I will make you cease your
lewdness and your harlotry
Brought from the land of Egypt,
So that you will not lift your eyes to
them,
Nor remember Egypt anymore.'

28 "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will deliver you into the hand of those you hate, into the hand *of those* from whom you alienated yourself. 29 They will deal hatefully with you, take away all you have worked for, and leave you naked and bare. The nakedness of your harlotry shall be uncovered, both your lewdness and your harlotry. 30 I will do these *things* to you because you have gone as a harlot after the Gentiles, because you have become defiled by their idols. 31 You have walked in the way of your sister; therefore I will put her cup in your hand.'

32 "Thus says the Lord GOD:

'You shall drink of your sister's cup,
The deep and wide one;
You shall be laughed to scorn
And held in derision;
It contains much.
33 You will be filled with drunkenness
and sorrow,
The cup of horror and desolation,
The cup of your sister Samaria.
34 You shall drink and drain it,
You shall break its shards,
And tear at your own breasts;
For I have spoken,'
Says the Lord GOD.

35 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

'Because you have forgotten Me and
cast Me behind your back,
Therefore you shall bear the *penalty*
Of your lewdness and your harlotry.'"

BOTH SISTERS JUDGED

36The LORD also said to me: "Son of man,
will you judge Oholah and Oholibah?
Then declare to them their abominations.
37For they have committed adultery, and
blood *is* on their hands. They have com-
mitted adultery with their idols, and even
sacrificed their sons whom they bore to
Me, passing them through *the fire,* to de-
vour *them.* 38Moreover they have done this
to Me: They have defiled My sanctuary on
the same day and profaned My Sabbaths.
39For after they had slain their children
for their idols, on the same day they came
into My sanctuary to profane it; and in-
deed thus they have done in the midst of
My house.

40"Furthermore you sent for men to
come from afar, to whom a messenger
was sent; and there they came. And you
washed yourself for them, painted your
eyes, and adorned yourself with orna-
ments. 41You sat on a stately couch, with a
table prepared before it, on which you had
set My incense and My oil. 42The sound
of a carefree multitude *was* with her, and
Sabeans *were* brought from the wilder-
ness with men of the common sort, who
put bracelets on their wrists and beauti-
ful crowns on their heads. 43Then I said
concerning *her who had grown* old in adul-
teries, 'Will they commit harlotry with
her now, and she *with them?*' 44Yet they
went in to her, as men go in to a woman
who plays the harlot; thus they went in to
Oholah and Oholibah, the lewd women.
45But righteous men will judge them after
the manner of adulteresses, and after the
manner of women who shed blood, be-
cause they *are* adulteresses, and blood *is*
on their hands.

46"For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Bring up
an assembly against them, give them up to
trouble and plunder. 47The assembly shall
stone them with stones and execute them
with their swords; they shall slay their sons
and their daughters, and burn their houses
with fire. 48Thus I will cause lewdness to
cease from the land, that all women may
be taught not to practice your lewdness.
49They shall repay you for your lewdness,
and you shall pay for your idolatrous sins.
Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord
GOD.'"

SYMBOL OF THE COOKING POT

24 Again, in the ninth year, in the
tenth month, on the tenth *day*
of the month, the word of the
LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man,
write down the name of the day, this very
day—the king of Babylon started his siege
against Jerusalem this very day. 3And utter
a parable to the rebellious house, and say
to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Put on a pot, set *it* on,
And also pour water into it.
4Gather pieces *of meat* in it,
Every good piece,
The thigh and the shoulder.
Fill *it* with choice cuts;
5Take the choice of the flock.
Also pile *fuel* bones under it,
Make it boil well,
And let the cuts simmer in it."

6'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Woe to the bloody city,
To the pot whose scum *is* in it,
And whose scum is not gone from it!
Bring it out piece by piece,
On which no lot has fallen.
7For her blood is in her midst;
She set it on top of a rock;
She did not pour it on the ground,
To cover it with dust.
8That it may raise up fury and take
vengeance,
I have set her blood on top of a rock,
That it may not be covered."

9'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Woe to the bloody city!
I too will make the pyre great.
10Heap on the wood,
Kindle the fire;
Cook the meat well,
Mix in the spices,
And let the cuts be burned up.

11"Then set the pot empty on the coals,
That it may become hot and its bronze
may burn,
That its filthiness may be melted in it,
That its scum may be consumed.
12She has grown weary with lies,

And her great scum has not gone from
her.
Let her scum *be* in the fire!
13In your filthiness *is* lewdness.
Because I have cleansed you, and you
were not cleansed,
You will not be cleansed of your
filthiness anymore,
Till I have caused My fury to rest upon
you.
14I, the LORD, have spoken *it;*
It shall come to pass, and I will do *it;*
I will not hold back,
Nor will I spare,
Nor will I relent;
According to your ways
And according to your deeds
They[a] will judge you,"
Says the Lord GOD.'"

THE PROPHET'S WIFE DIES

15Also the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 16"Son of man, behold, I take away from you the desire of your eyes with one stroke; yet you shall neither mourn nor weep, nor shall your tears run down. 17Sigh in silence, make no mourning for the dead; bind your turban on your head, and put your sandals on your feet; do not cover *your* lips, and do not eat man's bread *of sorrow.*"

18So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died; and the next morning I did as I was commanded.

19And the people said to me, "Will you not tell us what these *things signify* to us, that you behave so?"

20Then I answered them, "The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 21'Speak to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I will profane My sanctuary, your arrogant boast, the desire of your eyes, the delight of your soul; and your sons and daughters whom you left behind shall fall by the sword. 22And you shall do as I have done; you shall not cover *your* lips nor eat man's bread *of sorrow.* 23Your turbans shall be on your heads and your sandals on your feet; you shall neither mourn nor weep, but you shall pine away in your iniquities and mourn with one another. 24Thus Ezekiel is a sign to you; according to all that he has done you shall do; and when this comes, you shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.'"

25'And you, son of man—*will it* not *be* in the day when I take from them their stronghold, their joy and their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that on which they set their minds, their sons and their daughters: 26*that* on that day one who escapes will come to you to let *you* hear *it* with *your* ears? 27On that day your mouth will be opened to him who has escaped; you shall speak and no longer be mute. Thus you will be a sign to them, and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.'"

PROCLAMATION AGAINST AMMON

25 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, set your face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them. 3Say to the Ammonites, 'Hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you said, 'Aha!' against My sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into captivity, 4indeed, therefore, I will deliver you as a possession to the men of the East, and they shall set their encampments among you and make their dwellings among you; they shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk. 5And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels and Ammon a resting place for flocks. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD."

6'For thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you clapped *your* hands, stamped your feet, and rejoiced in heart with all your disdain for the land of Israel, 7indeed, therefore, I will stretch out My hand against you, and give you as plunder to the nations; I will cut you off from the peoples, and I will cause you to perish from the countries; I will destroy you, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD."

PROCLAMATION AGAINST MOAB

8'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because Moab and Seir say, 'Look! The house of Judah *is* like all the nations,' 9therefore, behold, I will clear the territory of Moab of cities, of the cities on its frontier, the glory of the country, Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon, and Kirjathaim. 10To the men of the East I will

24:14 [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *I.*

give it as a possession, together with the Ammonites, that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations. 11And I will execute judgments upon Moab, and they shall know that I *am* the LORD."

PROCLAMATION AGAINST EDOM

12"Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because of what Edom did against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has greatly offended by avenging itself on them," 13therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I will also stretch out My hand against Edom, cut off man and beast from it, and make it desolate from Teman; Dedan shall fall by the sword. 14I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel, that they may do in Edom according to My anger and according to My fury; and they shall know My vengeance," says the Lord GOD.

PROCLAMATION AGAINST PHILISTIA

15"Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because the Philistines dealt vengefully and took vengeance with a spiteful heart, to destroy because of the old hatred," 16therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I will stretch out My hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethites and destroy the remnant of the seacoast. 17I will execute great vengeance on them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I lay My vengeance upon them."'"

Ezekiel 26:2

With Israel out of the way, Tyre was free to expand its control over the caravans that passed through the area and boost its already successful trade business.

PROCLAMATION AGAINST TYRE

26 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, because Tyre has said against Jerusalem, 'Aha! She is broken who *was* the gateway of the peoples; now she is turned over to me; I shall be filled; she is laid waste.'

3"'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I *am* against you, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up. 4And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. 5It shall be *a place for* spreading nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,' says the Lord GOD; 'it shall become plunder for the nations. 6Also her daughter *villages* which *are* in the fields shall be slain by the sword. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.'

7"For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar[a] king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, with chariots, and with horsemen, and an army with many people. 8He will slay with the sword your daughter *villages* in the fields; he will heap up a siege mound against you, build a wall against you, and raise a defense against you. 9He will direct his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. 10Because of the abundance of his horses, their dust will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen, the wagons, and the chariots, when he enters your gates, as men enter a city that has been breached. 11With the hooves of his horses he will trample all your streets; he will slay your people by the sword, and your strong pillars will fall to the ground. 12They will plunder your riches and pillage your merchandise; they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water. 13I will put an end to the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps shall be heard no more. 14I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be *a place for* spreading nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken,' says the Lord GOD.

15"'Thus says the Lord GOD to Tyre: 'Will the coastlands not shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded cry, when slaughter is made in the midst of you? 16Then all the princes of the sea will come down from their thrones, lay aside their robes, and take off their embroidered garments; they will clothe themselves with

26:7 [a]Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* and so elsewhere in this book

trembling; they will sit on the ground, tremble *every* moment, and be astonished at you. 17And they will take up a lamentation for you, and say to you:

"How you have perished,
O one inhabited by seafaring men,
O renowned city,
Who was strong at sea,
She and her inhabitants,
Who caused their terror *to be* on all her inhabitants!
18Now the coastlands tremble on the day of your fall;
Yes, the coastlands by the sea are troubled at your departure."'

19"For thus says the Lord GOD: 'When I make you a desolate city, like cities that are not inhabited, when I bring the deep upon you, and great waters cover you, 20then I will bring you down with those who descend into the Pit, to the people of old, and I will make you dwell in the lowest part of the earth, in places desolate from antiquity, with those who go down to the Pit, so that you may never be inhabited; and I shall establish glory in the land of the living. 21I will make you a terror, and you *shall be* no *more;* though you are sought for, you will never be found again,' says the Lord GOD."

LAMENTATION FOR TYRE

27 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, 2"Now, son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyre, 3and say to Tyre, 'You who are situated at the entrance of the sea, merchant of the peoples on many coastlands, thus says the Lord GOD:

"O Tyre, you have said,
'I *am* perfect in beauty.'
4Your borders *are* in the midst of the seas.
Your builders have perfected your beauty.
5They made all *your* planks of fir trees from Senir;
They took a cedar from Lebanon to make you a mast.
6*Of* oaks from Bashan they made your oars;
The company of Ashurites have inlaid your planks
With ivory from the coasts of Cyprus.[a]
7Fine embroidered linen from Egypt was what you spread for your sail;
Blue and purple from the coasts of Elishah was what covered you.

8"'Inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad were your oarsmen;
Your wise men, O Tyre, were in you;
They became your pilots.
9Elders of Gebal and its wise men
Were in you to caulk your seams;
All the ships of the sea
And their oarsmen were in you
To market your merchandise.

10"'Those from Persia, Lydia,[a] and Libya[b]
Were in your army as men of war;
They hung shield and helmet in you;
They gave splendor to you.
11Men of Arvad with your army *were* on your walls *all* around,
And the men of Gammad were in your towers;
They hung their shields on your walls *all* around;
They made your beauty perfect.

12"'Tarshish *was* your merchant because of your many luxury goods. They gave you silver, iron, tin, and lead for your goods. 13Javan, Tubal, and Meshech *were* your traders. They bartered human lives and vessels of bronze for your merchandise. 14Those from the house of Togarmah traded for your wares with horses, steeds, and mules. 15The men of Dedan *were* your traders; many isles *were* the market of your hand. They brought you ivory tusks and ebony as payment. 16Syria *was* your merchant because of the abundance of goods you made. They gave you for your wares emeralds, purple, embroidery, fine linen, corals, and rubies. 17Judah and the land of Israel *were* your traders. They traded for your merchandise wheat of Minnith, millet, honey, oil, and balm. 18Damascus *was* your merchant because of the abundance of goods you made, because of your many luxury items, with the wine of Helbon and with white wool. 19Dan and Javan paid for your wares, traversing back and

27:6 [a]Hebrew *Kittim,* western lands, especially Cyprus **27:10** [a]Hebrew *Lud* [b]Hebrew *Put*

forth. Wrought iron, cassia, and cane were
among your merchandise. 20Dedan *was*
your merchant in saddlecloths for riding.
21Arabia and all the princes of Kedar *were*
your regular merchants. They traded with
you in lambs, rams, and goats. 22The mer-
chants of Sheba and Raamah *were* your
merchants. They traded for your wares
the choicest spices, all kinds of precious
stones, and gold. 23Haran, Canneh, Eden,
the merchants of Sheba, Assyria, *and*
Chilmad *were* your merchants. 24These
were your merchants in choice items—in
purple clothes, in embroidered garments,
in chests of multicolored apparel, in sturdy
woven cords, which were in your market-
place.

25"The ships of Tarshish were carriers of
your merchandise.
You were filled and very glorious in the
midst of the seas.
26Your oarsmen brought you into many
waters,
But the east wind broke you in the
midst of the seas.

27"Your riches, wares, and
merchandise,
Your mariners and pilots,
Your caulkers and merchandisers,
All your men of war who *are* in you,
And the entire company which *is* in
your midst,
Will fall into the midst of the seas on
the day of your ruin.
28The common-land will shake at the
sound of the cry of your pilots.

29"All who handle the oar,
The mariners,
All the pilots of the sea
Will come down from their ships *and*
stand on the shore.
30They will make their voice heard
because of you;
They will cry bitterly and cast dust on
their heads;
They will roll about in ashes;
31They will shave themselves completely
bald because of you,
Gird themselves with sackcloth,
And weep for you
With bitterness of heart *and* bitter
wailing.
32In their wailing for you
They will take up a lamentation,
And lament for you:
'What *city is* like Tyre,
Destroyed in the midst of the sea?

33"When your wares went out by sea,
You satisfied many people;
You enriched the kings of the earth
With your many luxury goods and
your merchandise.
34But you are broken by the seas in the
depths of the waters;
Your merchandise and the entire
company will fall in your midst.
35All the inhabitants of the isles will be
astonished at you;
Their kings will be greatly afraid,
And *their* countenance will be
troubled.
36The merchants among the peoples will
hiss at you;
You will become a horror, and *be* no
more forever.'"'"

PROCLAMATION AGAINST THE KING OF TYRE

28 The word of the LORD came to
me again, saying, 2"Son of man,
say to the prince of Tyre, 'Thus
says the Lord GOD:

"Because your heart *is* lifted up,
And you say, 'I *am* a god,
I sit *in* the seat of gods,
In the midst of the seas,'
Yet you *are* a man, and not a god,
Though you set your heart as the heart
of a god

Ezekiel 28:3

Daniel, a captive Jew in Babylon, had the God-given ability to explain dreams (often without even hearing them described first) and, in some cases, to predict the future based on those dreams. Because of his ability, he was made an advisor to the king of Babylon.

3(Behold, you *are* wiser than Daniel!
There is no secret that can be hidden
from you!

4 With your wisdom and your
understanding
You have gained riches for yourself,
And gathered gold and silver into your
treasuries;

TALENTS
How can our gifts work against us?
Ezekiel 28:5

5 By your great wisdom in trade you
have increased your riches,
And your heart is lifted up because of
your riches),"

6 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Because you have set your heart as the
heart of a god,
7 Behold, therefore, I will bring
strangers against you,
The most terrible of the nations;
And they shall draw their swords
against the beauty of your
wisdom,
And defile your splendor.
8 They shall throw you down into the
Pit,
And you shall die the death of the
slain
In the midst of the seas.

9 "Will you still say before him who slays
you,
'I *am* a god'?
But you *shall be* a man, and not a god,
In the hand of him who slays you.
10 You shall die the death of the
uncircumcised
By the hand of aliens;
For I have spoken," says the Lord
GOD.'"

LAMENTATION FOR THE KING OF TYRE

11 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 12 "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"You *were* the seal of perfection,
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

13 You were in Eden, the garden of God;
Every precious stone *was* your
covering:
The sardius, topaz, and diamond,
Beryl, onyx, and jasper,
Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with
gold.
The workmanship of your timbrels
and pipes
Was prepared for you on the day you
were created.

14 "You *were* the anointed cherub who
covers;
I established you;
You were on the holy mountain of
God;
You walked back and forth in the
midst of fiery stones.
15 You *were* perfect in your ways from the
day you were created,
Till iniquity was found in you.

16 "By the abundance of your trading
You became filled with violence
within,
And you sinned;
Therefore I cast you as a profane
thing
Out of the mountain of God;
And I destroyed you, O covering
cherub,
From the midst of the fiery stones.

17 "Your heart was lifted up because of
your beauty;
You corrupted your wisdom for the
sake of your splendor;
I cast you to the ground,
I laid you before kings,
That they might gaze at you.

18 "You defiled your sanctuaries
By the multitude of your iniquities,
By the iniquity of your trading;
Therefore I brought fire from your
midst;
It devoured you,
And I turned you to ashes upon the
earth
In the sight of all who saw you.
19 All who knew you among the peoples
are astonished at you;
You have become a horror,
And *shall be* no more forever."'"

PROCLAMATION AGAINST SIDON

20Then the word of the LORD came to me,
saying, 21"Son of man, set your face toward
Sidon, and prophesy against her, 22and say,
'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, I *am* against you, O Sidon;
I will be glorified in your midst;
And they shall know that I *am* the
LORD,
When I execute judgments in her and
am hallowed in her.
23For I will send pestilence upon her,
And blood in her streets;
The wounded shall be judged in her
midst
By the sword against her on every side;
Then they shall know that I *am* the
LORD.

24"And there shall no longer be a pricking
brier or a painful thorn for the house of Is-
rael from among all *who are* around them,
who despise them. Then they shall know
that I *am* the Lord GOD."

ISRAEL'S FUTURE BLESSING

25'Thus says the Lord GOD: "When I have
gathered the house of Israel from the
peoples among whom they are scattered,
and am hallowed in them in the sight of
the Gentiles, then they will dwell in their
own land which I gave to My servant Jacob.
26And they will dwell safely there, build
houses, and plant vineyards; yes, they will
dwell securely, when I execute judgments
on all those around them who despise
them. Then they shall know that I *am* the
LORD their God."'"

PROCLAMATION AGAINST EGYPT

29 In the tenth year, in the tenth
month, on the twelfth *day* of
the month, the word of the
LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, set
your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt,
and prophesy against him, and against all
Egypt. 3Speak, and say, 'Thus says the Lord
GOD:

"Behold, I *am* against you,
O Pharaoh king of Egypt,
O great monster who lies in the midst
of his rivers,
Who has said, 'My River[a] *is* my own;
I have made *it* for myself.'
4But I will put hooks in your jaws,
And cause the fish of your rivers to
stick to your scales;
I will bring you up out of the midst of
your rivers,
And all the fish in your rivers will stick
to your scales.
5I will leave you in the wilderness,
You and all the fish of your rivers;
You shall fall on the open field;
You shall not be picked up or
gathered.[a]
I have given you as food
To the beasts of the field
And to the birds of the heavens.

6"Then all the inhabitants of Egypt
Shall know that I *am* the LORD,
Because they have been a staff of reed
to the house of Israel.
7When they took hold of you with the
hand,
You broke and tore all their shoulders;[a]
When they leaned on you,
You broke and made all their backs
quiver."

8'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
"Surely I will bring a sword upon you and
cut off from you man and beast. 9And the
land of Egypt shall become desolate and
waste; then they will know that I *am* the
LORD, because he said, 'The River *is* mine,
and I have made *it*.' 10Indeed, therefore, I
am against you and against your rivers,
and I will make the land of Egypt utterly
waste and desolate, from Migdol[a] *to* Syene,
as far as the border of Ethiopia. 11Neither
foot of man shall pass through it nor foot
of beast pass through it, and it shall be un-
inhabited forty years. 12I will make the land
of Egypt desolate in the midst of the coun-
tries *that are* desolate; and among the cit-
ies *that are* laid waste, her cities shall be
desolate forty years; and I will scatter the
Egyptians among the nations and disperse
them throughout the countries."

29:3 [a]That is, the Nile **29:5** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; some Hebrew manuscripts and Targum read *buried.* **29:7** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *hand.* **29:10** [a]Or *tower*

13'Yet, thus says the Lord GOD: "At the
end of forty years I will gather the Egyp-
tians from the peoples among whom they
were scattered. 14I will bring back the cap-
tives of Egypt and cause them to return
to the land of Pathros, to the land of their
origin, and there they shall be a lowly king-
dom. 15It shall be the lowliest of kingdoms;
it shall never again exalt itself above the
nations, for I will diminish them so that
they will not rule over the nations any-
more. 16No longer shall it be the confidence
of the house of Israel, but will remind them
of *their* iniquity when they turned to follow
them. Then they shall know that I *am* the
Lord GOD.'"'

BABYLONIA WILL PLUNDER EGYPT

17And it came to pass in the twenty-seventh
year, in the first *month,* on the first *day* of
the month, *that* the word of the LORD came
to me, saying, 18"Son of man, Nebuchad-
nezzar king of Babylon caused his army to
labor strenuously against Tyre; every head
was made bald, and every shoulder rubbed
raw; yet neither he nor his army received
wages from Tyre, for the labor which they
expended on it. 19Therefore thus says the
Lord GOD: 'Surely I will give the land of
Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon;
he shall take away her wealth, carry off her
spoil, and remove her pillage; and that will
be the wages for his army. 20I have given
him the land of Egypt *for* his labor, because
they worked for Me,' says the Lord GOD.
21'In that day I will cause the horn of the
house of Israel to spring forth, and I will
open your mouth to speak in their midst.
Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.'"

EGYPT AND HER ALLIES WILL FALL

30 The word of the LORD came to
me again, saying, 2"Son of man,
prophesy and say, 'Thus says
the Lord GOD:

"Wail, 'Woe to the day!'
3For the day *is* near,
Even the day of the LORD *is* near;
It will be a day of clouds, the time of
the Gentiles.
4'The sword shall come upon Egypt,
And great anguish shall be in
Ethiopia,
When the slain fall in Egypt,
And they take away her wealth,
And her foundations are broken down.

5"Ethiopia, Libya,[a] Lydia,[b] all the min-
gled people, Chub, and the men of the
lands who are allied, shall fall with them by
the sword."
6'Thus says the LORD:

"Those who uphold Egypt shall fall,
And the pride of her power shall come
down.
From Migdol *to* Syene
Those within her shall fall by the
sword,"
Says the Lord GOD.

7"'They shall be desolate in the midst of
the desolate countries,
And her cities shall be in the midst of
the cities *that are* laid waste.
8'Then they will know that I *am* the
LORD,
When I have set a fire in Egypt
And all her helpers are destroyed.
9On that day messengers shall go forth
from Me in ships
To make the careless Ethiopians
afraid,
And great anguish shall come upon
them,
As on the day of Egypt;
For indeed it is coming!"

10'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"I will also make a multitude of Egypt
to cease
By the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king
of Babylon.
11He and his people with him, the most
terrible of the nations,
Shall be brought to destroy the land;
They shall draw their swords against
Egypt,
And fill the land with the slain.
12I will make the rivers dry,
And sell the land into the hand of the
wicked;
I will make the land waste, and all that
is in it,
By the hand of aliens.
I, the LORD, have spoken."

30:5 [a]Hebrew *Put* [b]Hebrew *Lud*

13 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"I will also destroy the idols,
And cause the images to cease from Noph;[a]
There shall no longer be princes from the land of Egypt;
I will put fear in the land of Egypt.
14 I will make Pathros desolate,
Set fire to Zoan,
And execute judgments in No.[a]
15 I will pour My fury on Sin,[a] the strength of Egypt;
I will cut off the multitude of No,
16 And set a fire in Egypt;
Sin shall have great pain,
No shall be split open,
And Noph *shall be in* distress daily.
17 The young men of Aven[a] and Pi Beseth shall fall by the sword,
And these *cities* shall go into captivity.
18 At Tehaphnehes[a] the day shall also be darkened,[b]
When I break the yokes of Egypt there.
And her arrogant strength shall cease in her;
As for her, a cloud shall cover her,
And her daughters shall go into captivity.
19 Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt,
Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD."'"

PROCLAMATION AGAINST PHARAOH

20 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first *month,* on the seventh *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 21 "Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and see, it has not been bandaged for healing, nor a splint put on to bind it, to make it strong enough to hold a sword. 22 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I *am* against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, both the strong one and the one that was broken; and I will make the sword fall out of his hand. 23 I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them throughout the countries. 24 I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword in his hand; but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he will groan before him with the groanings of a mortally wounded *man.* 25 Thus I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I put My sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt. 26 I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.'"

EGYPT CUT DOWN LIKE A GREAT TREE

31 Now it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the third *month,* on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude:

'Whom are you like in your greatness?
3 Indeed Assyria *was* a cedar in Lebanon,
With fine branches that shaded the forest,
And of high stature;
And its top was among the thick boughs.
4 The waters made it grow;
Underground waters gave it height,
With their rivers running around the place where it was planted,
And sent out rivulets to all the trees of the field.

5 'Therefore its height was exalted above all the trees of the field;
Its boughs were multiplied,
And its branches became long because of the abundance of water,
As it sent them out.
6 All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs;
Under its branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young;
And in its shadow all great nations made their home.

30:13 [a]That is, ancient Memphis **30:14** [a]That is, ancient Thebes **30:15** [a]That is, ancient Pelusium **30:17** [a]That is, ancient On (Heliopolis) **30:18** [a]Spelled *Tahpanhes* in Jeremiah 43:7 and elsewhere [b]Following many Hebrew manuscripts, Bomberg, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *refrained.*

7 "Thus it was beautiful in greatness
and in the length of its branches,
Because its roots reached to abundant
waters.
8 The cedars in the garden of God could
not hide it;
The fir trees were not like its boughs,
And the chestnut[a] trees were not like
its branches;
No tree in the garden of God was like it
in beauty.
9 I made it beautiful with a multitude of
branches,
So that all the trees of Eden envied it,
That *were* in the garden of God.'

10 "'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:
'Because you have increased in height,
and it set its top among the thick boughs,
and its heart was lifted up in its height,
11 therefore I will deliver it into the hand of
the mighty one of the nations, and he shall
surely deal with it; I have driven it out for its
wickedness. 12 And aliens, the most terrible
of the nations, have cut it down and left it;
its branches have fallen on the mountains
and in all the valleys; its boughs lie broken
by all the rivers of the land; and all the peo-
ples of the earth have gone from under its
shadow and left it.

13 'On its ruin will remain all the birds of
the heavens,
And all the beasts of the field will
come to its branches—

14 'So that no trees by the waters may ever
again exalt themselves for their height,
nor set their tops among the thick boughs,
that no tree which drinks water may ever
be high enough to reach up to them.

'For they have all been delivered to
death,
To the depths of the earth,
Among the children of men who go
down to the Pit.'

15 "'Thus says the Lord GOD: 'In the
day when it went down to hell, I caused
mourning. I covered the deep because of
it. I restrained its rivers, and the great wa-
ters were held back. I caused Lebanon to
mourn for it, and all the trees of the field
wilted because of it. 16 I made the nations
shake at the sound of its fall, when I cast it
down to hell together with those who de-
scend into the Pit; and all the trees of Eden,
the choice and best of Lebanon, all that
drink water, were comforted in the depths
of the earth. 17 They also went down to hell
with it, with those slain by the sword; and
those who were its *strong* arm dwelt in its
shadows among the nations.

18 "'To which of the trees in Eden will you
then be likened in glory and greatness? Yet
you shall be brought down with the trees of
Eden to the depths of the earth; you shall
lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with
those slain by the sword. This *is* Pharaoh
and all his multitude,' says the Lord GOD."

LAMENTATION FOR PHARAOH AND EGYPT

32 And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth *month,* on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say to him:

'You are like a young lion among the
nations,
And you *are* like a monster in the
seas,
Bursting forth in your rivers,
Troubling the waters with your feet,
And fouling their rivers.

3 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"I will therefore spread My net over you
with a company of many people,
And they will draw you up in My net.
4 Then I will leave you on the land;
I will cast you out on the open fields,
And cause to settle on you all the
birds of the heavens.
And with you I will fill the beasts of the
whole earth.
5 I will lay your flesh on the mountains,
And fill the valleys with your carcass.

6 "I will also water the land with the flow
of your blood,
Even to the mountains;
And the riverbeds will be full of you.

31:8 [a]Hebrew *armon*

7 When *I* put out your light,
I will cover the heavens, and make its
stars dark;
I will cover the sun with a cloud,
And the moon shall not give her light.
8 All the bright lights of the heavens I
will make dark over you,
And bring darkness upon your land,"
Says the Lord GOD.

9 "I will also trouble the hearts of many peoples, when I bring your destruction among the nations, into the countries which you have not known. 10 Yes, I will make many peoples astonished at you, and their kings shall be horribly afraid of you when I brandish My sword before them; and they shall tremble *every* moment, every man for his own life, in the day of your fall.
11 "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you. 12 By the swords of the mighty warriors, all of them the most terrible of the nations, I will cause your multitude to fall.

"They shall plunder the pomp of Egypt,
And all its multitude shall be
destroyed.
13 Also I will destroy all its animals
From beside its great waters;
The foot of man shall muddy them no
more,
Nor shall the hooves of animals muddy
them.
14 Then I will make their waters clear,
And make their rivers run like oil,"
Says the Lord GOD.

15 "When I make the land of Egypt
desolate,
And the country is destitute of all that
once filled it,
When I strike all who dwell in it,
Then they shall know that I *am* the
LORD.

16 "'This *is* the lamentation
With which they shall lament her;
The daughters of the nations shall
lament her;
They shall lament for her, for Egypt,
And for all her multitude,"
Says the Lord GOD.'"

EGYPT AND OTHERS CONSIGNED TO THE PIT

17 It came to pass also in the twelfth year, on the fifteenth *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

18 "Son of man, wail over the multitude
of Egypt,
And cast them down to the depths of
the earth,
Her and the daughters of the famous
nations,
With those who go down to the Pit:
19 'Whom do you surpass in beauty?
Go down, be placed with the
uncircumcised.'

20 "They shall fall in the midst of *those*
slain by the sword;
She is delivered to the sword,
Drawing her and all her multitudes.
21 The strong among the mighty
Shall speak to him out of the midst
of hell
With those who help him:
'They have gone down,
They lie with the uncircumcised, slain
by the sword.'

22 "Assyria *is* there, and all her company,
With their graves all around her,
All of them slain, fallen by the sword.
23 Her graves are set in the recesses of
the Pit,
And her company is all around her
grave,
All of them slain, fallen by the sword,
Who caused terror in the land of the
living.

24 "There *is* Elam and all her multitude,
All around her grave,
All of them slain, fallen by the sword,
Who have gone down uncircumcised
to the lower parts of the earth,
Who caused their terror in the land of
the living;
Now they bear their shame with those
who go down to the Pit.
25 They have set her bed in the midst of
the slain,
With all her multitude,
With her graves all around it,
All of them uncircumcised, slain by
the sword;

Though their terror was caused
In the land of the living,
Yet they bear their shame
With those who go down to the Pit;
It was put in the midst of the slain.

26"There *are* Meshech and Tubal and all
their multitudes,
With all their graves around it,
All of them uncircumcised, slain by
the sword,
Though they caused their terror in the
land of the living.
27They do not lie with the mighty
Who are fallen of the uncircumcised,
Who have gone down to hell with
their weapons of war;
They have laid their swords under
their heads,
But their iniquities will be on their
bones,
Because of the terror of the mighty in
the land of the living.
28Yes, you shall be broken in the midst
of the uncircumcised,
And lie with *those* slain by the sword.

29"There *is* Edom,
Her kings and all her princes,
Who despite their might
Are laid beside *those* slain by the
sword;
They shall lie with the
uncircumcised,
And with those who go down to the
Pit.
30There *are* the princes of the north,
All of them, and all the Sidonians,
Who have gone down with the slain
In shame at the terror which they
caused by their might;
They lie uncircumcised with *those*
slain by the sword,
And bear their shame with those who
go down to the Pit.

31"Pharaoh will see them
And be comforted over all his
multitude,
Pharaoh and all his army,
Slain by the sword,"
Says the Lord GOD.

32"For I have caused My terror in the land
of the living;
And he shall be placed in the midst of
the uncircumcised
With *those* slain by the sword,
Pharaoh and all his multitude,"
Says the Lord GOD.

THE WATCHMAN AND HIS MESSAGE

33 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them: 'When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their watchman, 3when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, 4then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his *own* head. 5He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will save his life. 6But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.'

CARING
Are we responsible to help others?
Ezekiel 33:1–6

7"So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. 8When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked *man,* you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 9Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

10"Therefore you, O son of man, say to the house of Israel: 'Thus you say, "If our transgressions and our sins *lie* upon us,

and we pine away in them, how can we then live?"' 11Say to them: '*As* I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

THE FAIRNESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

12"Therefore you, O son of man, say to the children of your people: 'The righteousness of the righteous man shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the righteous be able to live because of *his righteousness* in the day that he sins.' 13When I say to the righteous *that* he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die. 14Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, 15*if* the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 16None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

17"Yet the children of your people say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' But it is their way which is not fair! 18When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die because of it. 19But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it. 20Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, I will judge every one of you according to his own ways."

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

21And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth *month,* on the fifth *day* of the month, *that* one who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has been captured!"

22Now the hand of the LORD had been upon me the evening before the man came who had escaped. And He had opened my mouth; so when he came to me in the morning, my mouth was opened, and I was no longer mute.

THE CAUSE OF JUDAH'S RUIN

23Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 24"Son of man, they who inhabit those ruins in the land of Israel are saying, 'Abraham was only one, and he inherited the land. But we *are* many; the land has been given to us as a possession.'

Ezekiel 33:25

God's law specifically prohibited the ancient Israelites from eating or drinking blood in any form. All meat had to be drained and thoroughly cooked before it was served. In part, this was because Israel's idol-worshiping neighbors included blood-drinking rituals in their "religious" ceremonies.

25"Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "You eat *meat* with blood, you lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood. Should you then possess the land? 26You rely on your sword, you commit abominations, and you defile one another's wives. Should you then possess the land?"'

27"Say thus to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "*As* I live, surely those who *are* in the ruins shall fall by the sword, and the one who *is* in the open field I will give to the beasts to be devoured, and those who *are* in the strongholds and caves shall die of the pestilence. 28For I will make the land most desolate, her arrogant strength shall cease, and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that no one will pass through. 29Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have made the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed."'

HEARING AND NOT DOING

30"As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, 'Please come and

hear what the word is that comes from the LORD.' 31So they come to you as people do, they sit before you *as* My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, *but* their hearts pursue their *own* gain. 32Indeed you *are* to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them. 33And when this comes to pass—surely it will come—then they will know that a prophet has been among them."

Ezekiel 34:2

Sheep are mentioned in the Bible more often than any other animal and are an especially important part of Israel's history. They provided the Israelites with wool for clothes and meat for food and sacrifices. Sheep are nearly helpless by themselves and need a shepherd to guide and protect them. A good shepherd faithfully cares for his flock and is willing to risk his life for the animals.

IRRESPONSIBLE SHEPHERDS

34 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, *but* you do not feed the flock. 4The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. 5So they were scattered because *there was* no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. 6My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching *for them*."

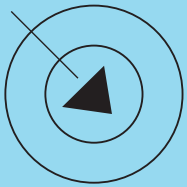
7'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: 8"*As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock"—9therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD! 10Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them."

GOD, THE TRUE SHEPHERD

11'For thus says the Lord GOD: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. 13And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord GOD. 16"I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment."

17'And *as for* you, O My flock, thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats. 18*Is it* too little for you to have eaten up the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the residue of your pasture—and to have drunk of the clear waters, that you must foul the residue with your feet? 19And *as for* My flock, they eat what you have trampled with your feet, and they drink what you have fouled with your feet."

20'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD to them: "Behold, I Myself will judge between



PROMISE

God promises to be your Shepherd.

"I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing. Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid. I will raise up for them a garden of renown, and they shall no longer be consumed with hunger in the land, nor bear the shame of the Gentiles anymore. Thus they shall know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and they, the house of Israel, are My people," says the Lord GOD. "You are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God," says the Lord GOD (Ezek. 34:25–31).

God calls us His flock because sheep are the most helpless of all animals. Sheep don't know how to find new fields to graze or how to locate water to drink. If they get lost, they can't find their way home. When they get hurt or sick, they can't help themselves. They can't protect themselves from wild animals. They are so fearful that they would just huddle together and die if they didn't have a shepherd. The shepherd is the one who keeps them fed and watered and safe.

The Lord promises to be your Shepherd. He will rescue lost people. He will bandage and heal us when we're wounded. He will make sure that we have all we need. He will calm our fears and protect us from our enemies. When you feel like a little lost sheep wandering around aimlessly, remember that the Shepherd is waiting for you. He's calling your name. Run to Him.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 23; Isaiah 53:6; Ezekiel 34:11–15; John 10:11–16

the fat and the lean sheep. 21Because you
have pushed with side and shoulder,
butted all the weak ones with your horns,
and scattered them abroad, 22therefore I
will save My flock, and they shall no longer
be a prey; and I will judge between sheep
and sheep. 23I will establish one shepherd
over them, and he shall feed them—My
servant David. He shall feed them and be
their shepherd. 24And I, the LORD, will be
their God, and My servant David a prince
among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

25"I will make a covenant of peace with
them, and cause wild beasts to cease from
the land; and they will dwell safely in the
wilderness and sleep in the woods. 26I will
make them and the places all around My
hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to
come down in their season; there shall be
showers of blessing. 27Then the trees of the
field shall yield their fruit, and the earth
shall yield her increase. They shall be safe
in their land; and they shall know that I *am*
the LORD, when I have broken the bands
of their yoke and delivered them from the
hand of those who enslaved them. 28And
they shall no longer be a prey for the na-
tions, nor shall beasts of the land devour
them; but they shall dwell safely, and no
one shall make *them* afraid. 29I will raise up
for them a garden of renown, and they shall
no longer be consumed with hunger in the
land, nor bear the shame of the Gentiles
anymore. 30Thus they shall know that I, the
LORD their God, *am* with them, and they,
the house of Israel, *are* My people," says the
Lord GOD.'

31"You are My flock, the flock of My pas-
ture; you *are* men, *and* I *am* your God," says
the Lord GOD.

JUDGMENT ON MOUNT SEIR

35 Moreover the word of the LORD
came to me, saying, 2"Son of
man, set your face against
Mount Seir and prophesy against it, 3and
say to it, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, O Mount Seir, I *am* against
you;
I will stretch out My hand against you,
And make you most desolate;
4I shall lay your cities waste,
And you shall be desolate.
Then you shall know that I *am* the
LORD.

5"Because you have had an ancient hatred, and have shed *the blood of* the children of Israel by the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, when their iniquity *came to an* end, 6therefore, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you; since you have not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue you. 7Thus I will make Mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it the one who leaves and the one who returns. 8And I will fill its mountains with the slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those who are slain by the sword shall fall. 9I will make you perpetually desolate, and your cities shall be uninhabited; then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

SIN
Can words be sinful?
Ezekiel 35:11–13

10"Because you have said, 'These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess them,' although the LORD was there, 11therefore, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "I will do according to your anger and according to the envy which you showed in your hatred against them; and I will make Myself known among them when I judge you. 12Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD. I have heard all your blasphemies which you have spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, 'They are desolate; they are given to us to consume.' 13Thus with your mouth you have boasted against Me and multiplied your words against Me; I have heard *them*."

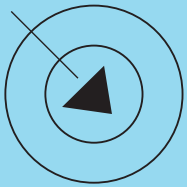
PRIDE
Should we avoid boasting?
Ezekiel 35:13

14"Thus says the Lord GOD: "The whole earth will rejoice when I make you desolate. 15As you rejoiced because the inheritance of the house of Israel was desolate, so I will do to you; you shall be desolate, O Mount Seir, as well as all of Edom—all of it! Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD."'

BLESSING ON ISRAEL

36 "And you, son of man, prophesy
to the mountains of Israel, and
say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear
the word of the LORD! 2Thus says the Lord
GOD: "Because the enemy has said of you,
'Aha! The ancient heights have become
our possession,'"' 3therefore prophesy, and
say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because
they made *you* desolate and swallowed
you up on every side, so that you became
the possession of the rest of the nations,
and you are taken up by the lips of talkers
and slandered by the people"— 4therefore,
O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the
Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD to the
mountains, the hills, the rivers, the valleys,
the desolate wastes, and the cities that
have been forsaken, which became plunder and mockery to the rest of the nations
all around— 5therefore thus says the Lord
GOD: "Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations
and against all Edom, who gave My land to
themselves as a possession, with wholehearted joy *and* spiteful minds, in order to
plunder its open country."'

6"Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains, the hills, the rivers, and the valleys, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and My fury, because you have borne the shame of the nations." 7Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I have raised My hand in an oath that surely the nations that *are* around you shall bear their own shame. 8But you, O mountains of



PROMISE

God promises to give you a new heart.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36:26).

When a doctor determines that a physical heart is beyond repair, the only way for the person to survive is to receive a heart transplant. The same is true spiritually; the only way for us to live life the way God wants us to live it is to get a fresh start.

Before we know the Lord, our spiritual hearts are filled with sin. When sin rules our lives, it's as if our hearts are made of stone—we can't feel the love God pours out toward us, and we aren't capable of loving Him. But when we turn to God and ask Him to give us new life in Jesus, He gives us a brand new heart that is able to receive God's love and reach out in love to Him. It's as if God performs a complete transplant for us, taking our old, hardened heart away and giving us one that is open to Him.

When God gives us a new heart, things don't look the same to us. It's not just a different attitude, but a brand-new life! We don't need to settle for a heart that is incapable of knowing God's love. God has a whole new, wonderful heart and life for each one of us.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 51:10; Jeremiah 32:38, 39; Ezekiel 11:19; John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Revelation 21:5

Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come. 9For indeed I *am* for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. 10I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. 11I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bear young; I will make you inhabited as in former times, and do better *for you* than at your beginnings. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD. 12Yes, I will cause men to walk on you, My people Israel; they shall take possession of you, and you shall be their inheritance; no more shall you bereave them *of children.*"

13"Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because they say to you, 'You devour men and bereave your nation *of children,*' 14therefore you shall devour men no more, nor bereave your nation anymore," says the Lord GOD. 15"Nor will I let you hear the taunts of the nations anymore, nor bear the reproach of the peoples anymore, nor shall you cause your nation to stumble anymore," says the Lord GOD.'"

THE RENEWAL OF ISRAEL

16Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 17"Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. 18Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols *with which* they had defiled it. 19So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. 20When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, 'These *are* the people of the LORD, *and* yet they have gone out of His land.' 21But I had concern for My holy

SIN

Is it wrong to misuse God's name?

Ezekiel 36:20

name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went.

22"'Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do *this* for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. 23And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I *am* the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. 24For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them.* 28Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. 29I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. 30And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. 31Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that *were* not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. 32Not for your sake do I do *this,*" says the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!"

33'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable *you* to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. 34The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. 35So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities *are now* fortified *and* inhabited.' 36Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places *and* planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken *it,* and I will do *it.*"

BIBLE
Is God's Word reliable?
Ezekiel 36:36

37'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will increase their men like a flock. 38Like a flock *offered as* holy *sacrifices,* like the flock at Jerusalem on its feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD."'"

THE DRY BONES LIVE

37 The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it *was* full of bones. 2Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and indeed *they were* very dry. 3And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

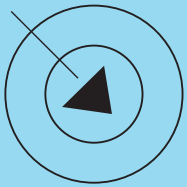
So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know."

4Again He said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! 5Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. 6I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD."'"

7So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but *there was* no breath in them.

9Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live."'" 10So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

11Then He said to me, "Son of man, these



PROMISE

God promises you life.

"I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD*, have spoken it and performed it," says the* LORD (Ezek. 37:14).

How many times have you said, "This is killing me!" Maybe you felt that way because of a term paper, a hard soccer practice in the beating sun, your little brother's trumpet practice, or being grounded when all the best parties are going on. Sometimes there are serious situations that really do "kill" you emotionally or make you feel as if your heart is fatally wounded. When parents get a divorce, or someone you love dies, or a friend stabs you in the back, or you're diagnosed with a chronic disease, or you suffer a major disappointment, it can seem that any chance of real life is over.

But God says, "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live." Hang on to that verse. You *will* live. The Spirit of God breathes new life into you. When you can't go on, He puts fresh life into you. He knows when something is "killing" you. He knows when you've reached the end of what you can handle. The Spirit of God is more powerful than you know. Ask Him, and He'll help you discover how to be truly alive.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// John 10:10

bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' 12Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. 14I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* and performed *it*," says the LORD.'"

ONE KINGDOM, ONE KING

15Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 16"As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel, his companions.' 17Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.

18"And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, 'Will you not show us what you *mean* by these?'— 19say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand."' 20And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes.

FORGIVENESS

Is God's forgiveness possible?

Ezekiel 37:23

21"Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; 22and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. 23They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse

them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

24"David My servant *shall be* king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David *shall be* their prince forever. 26Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 28The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."'"

GOG AND ALLIES ATTACK ISRAEL

38 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2"Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh,[a] Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, 3and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. 4I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company *with* bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. 5Persia, Ethiopia,[a] and Libya[b] are with them, all of them *with* shield and helmet; 6Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah *from* the far north and all its troops—many people *are* with you.

7"Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. 8After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword *and* gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. 9You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you."

10"Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day it shall come to pass *that* thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: 11You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates'— 12to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places *that are again* inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land. 13Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, 'Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?'"'

14"Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know *it?* 15Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. 16You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes." 17Thus says the Lord GOD: "Are *you* he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?

JUDGMENT ON GOG

18"And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "*that* My fury will show in My face. 19For in My jealousy *and* in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, 20so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who *are* on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence.

38:2 [a]Targum, Vulgate, and Aquila read *chief prince of* (also verse 3). **38:5** [a]Hebrew *Cush* [b]Hebrew *Put*

The mountains shall be thrown down, the
steep places shall fall, and every wall shall
fall to the ground.' 21I will call for a sword
against Gog throughout all My mountains,"
says the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword
will be against his brother. 22And I will
bring him to judgment with pestilence and
bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his
troops, and on the many peoples who *are*
with him, flooding rain, great hailstones,
fire, and brimstone. 23Thus I will magnify
Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be
known in the eyes of many nations. Then
they shall know that I *am* the LORD."'

GOD
Will the world ever see God?
Ezekiel 38:23

GOG'S ARMIES DESTROYED

39 "And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh,[a] Meshech, and Tubal; 2and I will turn you around and lead you on, bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel. 3Then I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand. 4You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who *are* with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and *to* the beasts of the field to be devoured. 5You shall fall on the open field; for I have spoken," says the Lord GOD. 6"And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD. 7So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not *let them* profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that *I am* the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. 8Surely it is coming, and it shall be done," says the Lord GOD. "This *is* the day of which I have spoken.

9"Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and bucklers, the bows and arrows, the javelins and spears; and they will make fires with them for seven years. 10They will not take wood from the field nor cut down *any* from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons; and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them," says the Lord GOD.

THE BURIAL OF GOG

11"It will come to pass in that day *that* I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea; and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call *it* the Valley of Hamon Gog.[a] 12For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, in order to cleanse the land. 13Indeed all the people of the land will be burying, and they will gain renown for it on the day that I am glorified," says the Lord GOD. 14"They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of a search party,[a] to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. 15The search party will pass through the land; and *when anyone* sees a man's bone, he shall set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog. 16*The* name of *the* city *will* also *be* Hamonah. Thus they shall cleanse the land."'

A TRIUMPHANT FESTIVAL

17"And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field:

"Assemble yourselves and come;
Gather together from all sides to My sacrificial meal
Which I am sacrificing for you,
A great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel,
That you may eat flesh and drink blood.
18You shall eat the flesh of the mighty,
Drink the blood of the princes of the earth,
Of rams and lambs,
Of goats and bulls,
All of them fatlings of Bashan.

39:1 [a]Targum, Vulgate and Aquila read *chief prince of.* **39:11** [a]Literally *The Multitude of Gog*
39:14 [a]Literally *those who pass through*

19 You shall eat fat till you are full,
And drink blood till you are drunk,
At My sacrificial meal
Which I am sacrificing for you.
20 You shall be filled at My table
With horses and riders,
With mighty men
And with all the men of war," says the
Lord GOD.

ISRAEL RESTORED TO THE LAND

21 "I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and My hand which I have laid on them. 22 So the house of Israel shall know that I *am* the LORD their God from that day forward. 23 The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. 24 According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them." '

25 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name— 26 after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their *own* land and no one made *them* afraid. 27 When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, 28 then they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer. 29 And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,' says the Lord GOD."

A NEW CITY, A NEW TEMPLE

40 In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth *day* of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was captured, on the very same day the hand of the LORD was upon me; and He took me there. 2 In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain; on it toward the south *was* something like the structure of a city. 3 He took me there, and behold, *there was* a man whose appearance *was* like the appearance of bronze. He had a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand, and he stood in the gateway.

4 And the man said to me, "Son of man, look with your eyes and hear with your ears, and fix your mind on everything I show you; for you *were* brought here so that I might show *them* to you. Declare to the house of Israel everything you see." 5 Now there was a wall all around the outside of the temple.[a] In the man's hand was a measuring rod six cubits *long, each being a* cubit and a handbreadth; and he measured the width of the wall structure, one rod; and the height, one rod.

THE EASTERN GATEWAY OF THE TEMPLE

6 Then he went to the gateway which faced east; and he went up its stairs and measured the threshold of the gateway, *which was* one rod wide, and the other threshold *was* one rod wide. 7 Each gate chamber *was* one rod long and one rod wide; between the gate chambers *was a space of* five cubits; and the threshold of the gateway by the vestibule of the inside gate *was* one rod. 8 He also measured the vestibule of the inside gate, one rod. 9 Then he measured the vestibule of the gateway, eight cubits; and the gateposts, two cubits. The vestibule of the gate *was* on the inside. 10 In the eastern gateway *were* three gate chambers on one side and three on the other; the three *were* all the same size; also the gateposts were of the same size on this side and that side.

11 He measured the width of the entrance to the gateway, ten cubits; *and* the length of the gate, thirteen cubits. 12 *There was* a space in front of the gate chambers, one cubit *on this side* and one cubit on that side; the gate chambers *were* six cubits on this side and six cubits on that side. 13 Then he measured the gateway from the roof of *one* gate chamber to the roof of the other; the width *was* twenty-five cubits, as door faces

40:5 [a] Literally *house,* and so elsewhere in this book

door. 14He measured the gateposts, sixty cubits high, and the court all around the gateway *extended* to the gatepost. 15*From* the front of the entrance gate to the front of the vestibule of the inner gate *was* fifty cubits. 16*There were* beveled window *frames* in the gate chambers and in their intervening archways on the inside of the gateway all around, and likewise in the vestibules. *There were* windows all around on the inside. And on each gatepost *were* palm trees.

THE OUTER COURT

17Then he brought me into the outer court; and *there were* chambers and a pavement made all around the court; thirty chambers faced the pavement. 18The pavement was by the side of the gateways, corresponding to the length of the gateways; *this was* the lower pavement. 19Then he measured the width from the front of the lower gateway to the front of the inner court exterior, one hundred cubits toward the east and the north.

THE NORTHERN GATEWAY

20On the outer court was also a gateway facing north, and he measured its length and its width. 21Its gate chambers, three on this side and three on that side, its gateposts and its archways, had the same measurements as the first gate; its length *was* fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. 22Its windows and those of its archways, and also its palm trees, *had* the same measurements as the gateway facing east; it was ascended by seven steps, and its archway *was* in front of it. 23A gate of the inner court was opposite the northern gateway, just as the eastern *gateway;* and he measured from gateway to gateway, one hundred cubits.

THE SOUTHERN GATEWAY

24After that he brought me toward the south, and there a gateway was facing south; and he measured its gateposts and archways according to these same measurements. 25*There were* windows in it and in its archways all around like those windows; its length *was* fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. 26Seven steps led up to it, and its archway *was* in front of them; and it had palm trees on its gateposts, one on this side and one on that side. 27*There was* also a gateway on the inner court, facing south; and he measured from gateway to gateway toward the south, one hundred cubits.

GATEWAYS OF THE INNER COURT

28Then he brought me to the inner court through the southern gateway; he measured the southern gateway according to these same measurements. 29Also its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways *were* according to these same measurements; *there were* windows in it and in its archways all around; *it was* fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. 30*There were* archways all around, twenty-five cubits long and five cubits wide. 31Its archways faced the outer court, palm trees *were* on its gateposts, and going up to it *were* eight steps.

32And he brought me into the inner court facing east; he measured the gateway according to these same measurements. 33Also its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways *were* according to these same measurements; and *there were* windows in it and in its archways all around; *it was* fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. 34Its archways faced the outer court, and palm trees *were* on its gateposts on this side and on that side; and going up to it *were* eight steps.

35Then he brought me to the north gateway and measured *it* according to these same measurements— 36also its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways. It had windows all around; its length *was* fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. 37Its gateposts faced the outer court, palm trees *were* on its gateposts on this side and on that side, and going up to it *were* eight steps.

WHERE SACRIFICES WERE PREPARED

38*There was* a chamber and its entrance by the gateposts of the gateway, where they washed the burnt offering. 39In the vestibule of the gateway *were* two tables on this side and two tables on that side, on which to slay the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. 40At the outer side of the *vestibule*, as one goes up to the entrance of the northern gateway, *were* two

tables; and on the other side of the vestibule of the gateway *were* two tables. 41Four tables *were* on this side and four tables on that side, by the side of the gateway, eight tables on which they slaughtered *the sacrifices.* 42*There were* also four tables of hewn stone for the burnt offering, one cubit and a half long, one cubit and a half wide, and one cubit high; on these they laid the instruments with which they slaughtered the burnt offering and the sacrifice. 43Inside *were* hooks, a handbreadth wide, fastened all around; and the flesh of the sacrifices *was* on the tables.

CHAMBERS FOR SINGERS AND PRIESTS

44Outside the inner gate *were* the chambers for the singers in the inner court, one facing south at the side of the northern gateway, and the other facing north at the side of the southern[a] gateway. 45Then he said to me, "This chamber which faces south *is* for the priests who have charge of the temple. 46The chamber which faces north *is* for the priests who have charge of the altar; these *are* the sons of Zadok, from the sons of Levi, who come near the LORD to minister to Him."

DIMENSIONS OF THE INNER COURT AND VESTIBULE

47And he measured the court, one hundred cubits long and one hundred cubits wide, foursquare. The altar *was* in front of the temple. 48Then he brought me to the vestibule of the temple and measured the doorposts of the vestibule, five cubits on this side and five cubits on that side; and the width of the gateway was three cubits on this side and three cubits on that side. 49The length of the vestibule *was* twenty cubits, and the width eleven cubits; and by the steps which led up to it *there were* pillars by the doorposts, one on this side and another on that side.

DIMENSIONS OF THE SANCTUARY

41 Then he brought me into the sanctuary[a] and measured the doorposts, six cubits wide on one side and six cubits wide on the other side—the width of the tabernacle. 2The width of the entryway *was* ten cubits, and the side walls of the entrance *were* five cubits on this side and five cubits on the other side; and he measured its length, forty cubits, and its width, twenty cubits.

Ezekiel 41:3, 4

The floor plan of the temple Ezekiel saw is similar to the one Solomon used when he built the original temple, and is much like the layout of the tabernacle. The temple in Ezekiel's vision has not yet been built.

3Also he went inside and measured the doorposts, two cubits; and the entrance, six cubits *high;* and the width of the entrance, seven cubits. 4He measured the length, twenty cubits; and the width, twenty cubits, beyond the sanctuary; and he said to me, "This *is* the Most Holy *Place.*"

THE SIDE CHAMBERS ON THE WALL

5Next, he measured the wall of the temple, six cubits. The width of each side chamber all around the temple *was* four cubits on every side. 6The side chambers *were* in three stories, one above the other, thirty chambers in each story; they rested on ledges which *were* for the side chambers all around, that they might be supported, but not fastened to the wall of the temple. 7As one went up from story to story, the side chambers became wider all around, because their supporting ledges in the wall of the temple ascended like steps; therefore the width of the structure increased as one went up *from* the lowest *story* to the highest by way of the middle one. 8I also saw an elevation all around the temple; it was the foundation of the side chambers, a full rod, *that is,* six cubits *high.* 9The thickness of the outer wall of the side chambers *was* five cubits, and so also the remaining terrace by the place of the side chambers of the temple. 10And between *it and* the *wall* chambers was a width of twenty cubits all around the temple on every side. 11The doors of the side chambers opened on the

40:44 [a]Following Septuagint; Masoretic Text and Vulgate read *eastern.* **41:1** [a]Hebrew *heykal,* here the main room of the temple, sometimes called the *holy place* (compare Exodus 26:33)

terrace, one door toward the north and another toward the south; and the width of the terrace *was* five cubits all around.

THE BUILDING AT THE WESTERN END

12 The building that faced the separating courtyard at its western end *was* seventy cubits wide; the wall of the building *was* five cubits thick all around, and its length ninety cubits.

DIMENSIONS AND DESIGN OF THE TEMPLE AREA

13 So he measured the temple, one hundred cubits long; and the separating courtyard with the building and its walls *was* one hundred cubits long; 14 also the width of the eastern face of the temple, including the separating courtyard, *was* one hundred cubits. 15 He measured the length of the building behind it, facing the separating courtyard, with its galleries on the one side and on the other side, one hundred cubits, as well as the inner temple and the porches of the court, 16 their doorposts and the beveled window frames. And the galleries all around their three stories opposite the threshold were paneled with wood from the ground to the windows—the windows were covered— 17 from the space above the door, even to the inner room,[a] as well as outside, and on every wall all around, inside and outside, by measure.

18 And *it was* made with cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. *Each* cherub had two faces, 19 so that the face of a man *was* toward a palm tree on one side, and the face of a young lion toward a palm tree on the other side; thus *it was* made throughout the temple all around. 20 From the floor to the space above the door, and on the wall of the sanctuary, cherubim and palm trees *were* carved.

21 The doorposts of the temple *were* square, *as was* the front of the sanctuary; their appearance was similar. 22 The altar *was* of wood, three cubits high, and its length two cubits. Its corners, its length, and its sides *were* of wood; and he said to me, "This *is* the table that *is* before the LORD."

23 The temple and the sanctuary had two doors. 24 The doors had two panels *apiece,* two folding panels: two *panels* for one door and two panels for the other *door.* 25 Cherubim and palm trees *were* carved on the doors of the temple just as they *were* carved on the walls. A wooden canopy *was* on the front of the vestibule outside. 26 *There were* beveled window *frames* and palm trees on one side and on the other, on the sides of the vestibule—also on the side chambers of the temple and on the canopies.

THE CHAMBERS FOR THE PRIESTS

42 Then he brought me out into the outer court, by the way toward the north; and he brought me into the chamber which *was* opposite the separating courtyard, and which *was* opposite the building toward the north. 2 Facing the length, *which was* one hundred cubits (the width was fifty cubits), was the north door. 3 Opposite the inner court of twenty *cubits,* and opposite the pavement of the outer court, *was* gallery against gallery in three *stories.* 4 In front of the chambers, toward the inside, *was* a walk ten cubits wide, at a distance of one cubit; and their doors faced north. 5 Now the upper chambers *were* shorter, because the galleries took away *space* from them more than from the lower and middle stories of the building. 6 For they *were* in three *stories* and did not have pillars like the pillars of the courts; therefore *the upper level* was shortened more than the lower and middle levels from the ground up. 7 And a wall which *was* outside ran parallel to the chambers, at the front of the chambers, toward the outer court; its length *was* fifty cubits. 8 The length of the chambers toward the outer court *was* fifty cubits, whereas that facing the temple *was* one hundred cubits. 9 At the lower chambers *was* the entrance on the east side, as one goes into them from the outer court.

10 Also *there were* chambers in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, opposite the separating courtyard and opposite the building. 11 *There was* a walk in front of them also, and their appearance *was* like the chambers which *were* toward the north; they *were* as long and as wide as the others, and all their exits and entrances

41:17 [a] Literally *house,* here *the Most Holy Place*

were according to plan. 12And corresponding to the doors of the chambers that *were* facing south, as one enters them, *there was* a door in front of the walk, the way directly in front of the wall toward the east.

13Then he said to me, "The north chambers *and* the south chambers, which *are* opposite the separating courtyard, *are* the holy chambers where the priests who approach the LORD shall eat the most holy offerings. There they shall lay the most holy offerings—the grain offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering—for the place *is* holy. 14When the priests enter them, they shall not go out of the holy *chamber* into the outer court; but there they shall leave their garments in which they minister, for they *are* holy. They shall put on other garments; then they may approach *that* which *is* for the people."

OUTER DIMENSIONS OF THE TEMPLE

15Now when he had finished measuring the inner temple, he brought me out through the gateway that faces toward the east, and measured it all around. 16He measured the east side with the measuring rod,[a] five hundred rods by the measuring rod all around. 17He measured the north side, five hundred rods by the measuring rod all around. 18He measured the south side, five hundred rods by the measuring rod. 19He came around to the west side *and* measured five hundred rods by the measuring rod. 20He measured it on the four sides; it had a wall all around, five hundred *cubits* long and five hundred wide, to separate the holy areas from the common.

THE TEMPLE, THE LORD'S DWELLING PLACE

43 Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate that faces toward the east. 2And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice *was* like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. 3*It was* like the appearance of the vision which I saw—like the vision which I saw when I[a] came to destroy the city. The visions *were* like the vision which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. 4And the glory of the LORD came into the temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. 5The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

6Then I heard *Him* speaking to me from the temple, while a man stood beside me. 7And He said to me, "Son of man, *this is* the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever. No more shall the house of Israel defile My holy name, they nor their kings, by their harlotry or with the carcasses of their kings on their high places. 8When they set their threshold by My threshold, and their doorpost by My doorpost, with a wall between them and Me, they defiled My holy name by the abominations which they committed; therefore I have consumed them in My anger. 9Now let them put their harlotry and the carcasses of their kings far away from Me, and I will dwell in their midst forever.

10"Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. 11And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple and its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, its entire design and all its ordinances, all its forms and all its laws. Write *it* down in their sight, so that they may keep its whole design and all its ordinances, and perform them. 12This *is* the law of the temple: The whole area surrounding the mountaintop *is* most holy. Behold, this *is* the law of the temple.

DIMENSIONS OF THE ALTAR

13"These are the measurements of the altar in cubits (the cubit *is* one cubit and a handbreadth): the base one cubit high and one cubit wide, with a rim all around its edge of one span. This *is* the height of the altar: 14from the base on the ground to the lower ledge, two cubits; the width of the ledge, one cubit; from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge, four cubits; and the width of the ledge, *one* cubit. 15The altar hearth *is* four cubits high, with four horns extending upward from the hearth. 16The altar hearth *is* twelve *cubits* long, twelve wide, square at

42:16 [a]Compare 40:5 **43:3** [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate read *He*.

its four corners; 17the ledge, fourteen *cubits* long and fourteen wide on its four sides, with a rim of half a cubit around it; its base, one cubit all around; and its steps face toward the east."

CONSECRATING THE ALTAR

18And He said to me, "Son of man, thus says the Lord GOD: 'These *are* the ordinances for the altar on the day when it is made, for sacrificing burnt offerings on it, and for sprinkling blood on it. 19You shall give a young bull for a sin offering to the priests, the Levites, who are of the seed of Zadok, who approach Me to minister to Me,' says the Lord GOD. 20'You shall take some of its blood and put *it* on the four horns of the altar, on the four corners of the ledge, and on the rim around it; thus you shall cleanse it and make atonement for it. 21Then you shall also take the bull of the sin offering, and burn it in the appointed place of the temple, outside the sanctuary. 22On the second day you shall offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they cleansed *it* with the bull. 23When you have finished cleansing *it,* you shall offer a young bull without blemish, and a ram from the flock without blemish. 24When you offer them before the LORD, the priests shall throw salt on them, and they will offer them up *as* a burnt offering to the LORD. 25Every day for seven days you shall prepare a goat *for* a sin offering; they shall also prepare a young bull and a ram from the flock, both without blemish. 26Seven days they shall make atonement for the altar and purify it, and so consecrate *it.* 27When these days are over it shall be, on the eighth day and thereafter, that the priests shall offer your burnt offerings and your peace offerings on the altar; and I will accept you,' says the Lord GOD."

THE EAST GATE AND THE PRINCE

44 Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it *was* shut. 2And the LORD said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut. 3*As for* the prince, *because* he *is* the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way."

THOSE ADMITTED TO THE TEMPLE

4Also He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple; so I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD; and I fell on my face. 5And the LORD said to me, "Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears, all that I say to you concerning all the ordinances of the house of the LORD and all its laws. Mark well who may enter the house and all who go out from the sanctuary.

6"Now say to the rebellious, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "O house of Israel, let Us have no more of all your abominations. 7When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it—My house—and when you offered My food, the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all your abominations. 8And you have not kept charge of My holy things, but you have set *others* to keep charge of My sanctuary for you." 9Thus says the Lord GOD: "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who *is* among the children of Israel.

LAWS GOVERNING PRIESTS

10"And the Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity. 11Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, *as* gatekeepers of the house and ministers of the house; they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them. 12Because they ministered to them before their idols and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity, therefore I have raised My hand in an oath against them," says the Lord GOD, "that they shall bear their iniquity. 13And they shall not come near Me to minister to Me as priest, nor come near any of My holy things, nor into the Most Holy *Place;*

but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. 14Nevertheless I will make them keep charge of the temple, for all its work, and for all that has to be done in it.

15"But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood," says the Lord GOD. 16"They shall enter My sanctuary, and they shall come near My table to minister to Me, and they shall keep My charge. 17And it shall be, whenever they enter the gates of the inner court, that they shall put on linen garments; no wool shall come upon them while they minister within the gates of the inner court or within the house. 18They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with *anything that causes* sweat. 19When they go out to the outer court, to the outer court to the people, they shall take off their garments in which they have ministered, leave them in the holy chambers, and put on other garments; and in their holy garments they shall not sanctify the people.

Ezekiel 44:17

Linen cloth was hand-woven from the fibers of the flax plant and bleached snow-white to symbolize innocence and purity. Every part of the priest's uniform, from his headwear to his underwear, was made of white linen.

20"They shall neither shave their heads nor let their hair grow long, but they shall keep their hair well trimmed. 21No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court. 22They shall not take as wife a widow or a divorced woman, but take virgins of the descendants of the house of Israel, or widows of priests.

23"And they shall teach My people *the difference* between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. 24In controversy they shall stand as judges, *and* judge it according to My judgments. They shall keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed meetings, and they shall hallow My Sabbaths.

25"They shall not defile *themselves* by coming near a dead person. Only for father or mother, for son or daughter, for brother or unmarried sister may they defile themselves. 26After he is cleansed, they shall count seven days for him. 27And on the day that he goes to the sanctuary to minister in the sanctuary, he must offer his sin offering in the inner court," says the Lord GOD.

28"It shall be, in regard to their inheritance, *that* I *am* their inheritance. You shall give them no possession in Israel, for I *am* their possession. 29They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering; every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs. 30The best of all firstfruits of any kind, and every sacrifice of any kind from all your sacrifices, shall be the priest's; also you shall give to the priest the first of your ground meal, to cause a blessing to rest on your house. 31The priests shall not eat anything, bird or beast, that died naturally or was torn *by wild beasts.*

THE HOLY DISTRICT

45 "Moreover, when you divide the land by lot into inheritance, you shall set apart a district for the LORD, a holy section of the land; its length *shall be* twenty-five thousand *cubits,* and the width ten thousand. It *shall be* holy throughout its territory all around. 2Of this there shall be a square plot for the sanctuary, five hundred by five hundred *rods,* with fifty cubits around it for an open space. 3So this is the district you shall measure: twenty-five thousand *cubits* long and ten thousand wide; in it shall be the sanctuary, the Most Holy *Place.* 4It shall be a holy *section* of the land, belonging to the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary, who come near to minister to the LORD; it shall be a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary. 5*An area* twenty-five thousand *cubits* long and ten thousand wide shall belong to the Levites, the ministers of the temple; they shall have twenty chambers as a possession.[a]

45:5 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *a possession, cities of dwelling.*

PROPERTIES OF THE CITY AND THE PRINCE

6"You shall appoint as the property of the city *an area* five thousand *cubits* wide and twenty-five thousand long, adjacent to the district of the holy *section;* it shall belong to the whole house of Israel.

7"The prince shall have *a section* on one side and the other of the holy district and the city's property; and bordering on the holy district and the city's property, extending westward on the west side and eastward on the east side, the length *shall be* side by side with one of the *tribal* portions, from the west border to the east border. 8The land shall be his possession in Israel; and My princes shall no more oppress My people, but they shall give *the rest of* the land to the house of Israel, according to their tribes."

LAWS GOVERNING THE PRINCE

9"Thus says the Lord GOD: "Enough, O princes of Israel! Remove violence and plundering, execute justice and righteousness, and stop dispossessing My people," says the Lord GOD. 10"You shall have honest scales, an honest ephah, and an honest bath. 11The ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure, so that the bath contains one-tenth of a homer, and the ephah one-tenth of a homer; their measure shall be according to the homer. 12The shekel *shall be* twenty gerahs; twenty shekels, twenty-five shekels, *and* fifteen shekels shall be your mina.

HONESTY
How does God require us to conduct ourselves?
Ezekiel 45:9–11

13"This *is* the offering which you shall offer: you shall give one-sixth of an ephah from a homer of wheat, and one-sixth of an ephah from a homer of barley. 14The ordinance concerning oil, the bath of oil, *is* one-tenth of a bath from a kor. A *kor is* a homer or ten baths, for ten baths *are* a homer. 15And one lamb shall be given from a flock of two hundred, from the rich pastures of Israel. These shall be for grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to make atonement for them," says the Lord GOD. 16"All the people of the land shall give this offering for the prince in Israel. 17Then it shall be the prince's part *to give* burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, the New Moons, the Sabbaths, and at all the appointed seasons of the house of Israel. He shall prepare the sin offering, the grain offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel."

KEEPING THE FEASTS

18"Thus says the Lord GOD: "In the first *month,* on the first *day* of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish and cleanse the sanctuary. 19The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering and put *it* on the doorposts of the temple, on the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and on the gateposts of the gate of the inner court. 20And so you shall do on the seventh *day* of the month for everyone who has sinned unintentionally or in ignorance. Thus you shall make atonement for the temple.

Ezekiel 45:21
On the day of the first Passover, the angel of death passed through the streets of Egypt, killing the firstborn in every house that was not marked with blood. Because God had warned the Israelites, directing them to smear blood on their doorposts, the death angel "passed over" their homes and their firstborn were spared.

21"In the first *month,* on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall observe the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. 22And on that day the prince shall prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bull *for* a sin offering. 23On the seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the LORD, seven bulls and seven rams without blemish, daily for seven days, and a kid of the goats daily *for* a sin offering. 24And he shall prepare a grain offering of one ephah for each bull and one ephah for each ram, together with a hin of oil for each ephah.

25"In the seventh *month,* on the fifteenth
day of the month, at the feast, he shall do
likewise for seven days, according to the
sin offering, the burnt offering, the grain
offering, and the oil."

THE MANNER OF WORSHIP

46 Thus says the Lord GOD: "The
gateway of the inner court that
faces toward the east shall be
shut the six working days; but on the Sab-
bath it shall be opened, and on the day of
the New Moon it shall be opened. 2The
prince shall enter by way of the vestibule of
the gateway from the outside, and stand by
the gatepost. The priests shall prepare his
burnt offering and his peace offerings. He
shall worship at the threshold of the gate.
Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not
be shut until evening. 3Likewise the people
of the land shall worship at the entrance to
this gateway before the LORD on the Sab-
baths and the New Moons. 4The burnt of-
fering that the prince offers to the LORD on
the Sabbath day *shall be* six lambs without
blemish, and a ram without blemish; 5and
the grain offering *shall be one* ephah for a
ram, and the grain offering for the lambs,
as much as he wants to give, as well as a hin
of oil with every ephah. 6On the day of the
New Moon *it shall be* a young bull without
blemish, six lambs, and a ram; they shall be
without blemish. 7He shall prepare a grain
offering of an ephah for a bull, an ephah for
a ram, as much as he wants to give for the
lambs, and a hin of oil with every ephah.
8When the prince enters, he shall go in by
way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go
out the same way.

9"But when the people of the land come
before the LORD on the appointed feast
days, whoever enters by way of the north
gate to worship shall go out by way of the
south gate; and whoever enters by way of
the south gate shall go out by way of the
north gate. He shall not return by way of
the gate through which he came, but shall
go out through the opposite gate. 10The
prince shall then be in their midst. When
they go in, he shall go in; and when they go
out, he shall go out. 11At the festivals and
the appointed feast days the grain offering
shall be an ephah for a bull, an ephah for
a ram, as much as he wants to give for the
lambs, and a hin of oil with every ephah.

12"Now when the prince makes a vol-
untary burnt offering or voluntary peace
offering to the LORD, the gate that faces to-
ward the east shall then be opened for him;
and he shall prepare his burnt offering and
his peace offerings as he did on the Sab-
bath day. Then he shall go out, and after he
goes out the gate shall be shut.

13"You shall daily make a burnt offer-
ing to the LORD *of* a lamb of the first year
without blemish; you shall prepare it every
morning. 14And you shall prepare a grain
offering with it every morning, a sixth of an
ephah, and a third of a hin of oil to moisten
the fine flour. This grain offering is a per-
petual ordinance, to be made regularly to
the LORD. 15Thus they shall prepare the
lamb, the grain offering, and the oil, *as* a
regular burnt offering every morning."

THE PRINCE AND INHERITANCE LAWS

16Thus says the Lord GOD: "If the prince
gives a gift *of some* of his inheritance to any
of his sons, it shall belong to his sons; it is
their possession by inheritance. 17But if he
gives a gift of some of his inheritance to
one of his servants, it shall be his until the
year of liberty, after which it shall return to
the prince. But his inheritance shall belong
to his sons; it shall become theirs. 18More-
over the prince shall not take any of the
people's inheritance by evicting them from
their property; he shall provide an inheri-
tance for his sons from his own property,
so that none of My people may be scattered
from his property."'"

HOW THE OFFERINGS WERE PREPARED

19Now he brought me through the en-
trance, which *was* at the side of the gate,
into the holy chambers of the priests which
face toward the north; and there a place
was situated at their extreme western
end. 20And he said to me, "This *is* the place
where the priests shall boil the trespass of-
fering and the sin offering, *and* where they
shall bake the grain offering, so that they
do not bring *them* out into the outer court
to sanctify the people."

21Then he brought me out into the outer
court and caused me to pass by the four
corners of the court; and in fact, in every

corner of the court *there was another* court. 22In the four corners of the court *were* enclosed courts, forty *cubits* long and thirty wide; all four corners *were* the same size. 23*There was* a row *of building stones* all around in them, all around the four of them; and cooking hearths were made under the rows of stones all around. 24And he said to me, "These *are* the kitchens where the ministers of the temple shall boil the sacrifices of the people."

THE HEALING WATERS AND TREES

47 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. 2He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side.

3And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my* ankles. 4Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my* knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water *came up to my* waist. 5Again he measured one thousand, *and it was* a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. 6He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen *this?*" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.

Ezekiel 47:8

The Dead Sea is unable to support fish or plant life. Its water is ten times saltier than ocean water. The idea of the Dead Sea one day supporting life is an incredible notion.

7When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, *were* very many trees on one side and the other. 8Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. *When it* reaches the sea, *its* waters are healed. 9And it shall be *that* every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. 10It shall be *that* fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be *places* for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. 11But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. 12Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all *kinds of* trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine."

BORDERS OF THE LAND

13Thus says the Lord GOD: "These *are* the borders by which you shall divide the land as an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph *shall have two* portions. 14You shall inherit it equally with one another; for I raised My hand in an oath to give it to your fathers, and this land shall fall to you as your inheritance.

15"This *shall be* the border of the land on the north: from the Great Sea, *by* the road to Hethlon, as one goes to Zedad, 16Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim (which *is* between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath), to Hazar Hatticon (which *is* on the border of Hauran). 17Thus the boundary shall be from the Sea to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus; and as for the north, northward, it is the border of Hamath. *This is* the north side.

18"On the east side you shall mark out the border from between Hauran and Damascus, and between Gilead and the land of Israel, along the Jordan, and along the eastern side of the sea. *This is* the east side.

19"The south side, toward the South,[a] *shall be* from Tamar to the waters of Meribah by Kadesh, along the brook to the Great Sea. *This is* the south side, toward the South.

20"The west side *shall be* the Great Sea,

47:19 [a]Hebrew *Negev*

from the *southern* boundary until one comes to a point opposite Hamath. This *is* the west side.

21"Thus you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. 22It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. 23And it shall be *that* in whatever tribe the stranger dwells, there you shall give *him* his inheritance," says the Lord GOD.

DIVISION OF THE LAND

48 "Now these *are* the names of the tribes: From the northern border along the road to Hethlon at the entrance of Hamath, to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus northward, in the direction of Hamath, *there shall be* one *section for* Dan from its east to its west side; 2by the border of Dan, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Asher; 3by the border of Asher, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Naphtali; 4by the border of Naphtali, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Manasseh; 5by the border of Manasseh, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Ephraim; 6by the border of Ephraim, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Reuben; 7by the border of Reuben, from the east side to the west, one *section for* Judah; 8by the border of Judah, from the east side to the west, shall be the district which you shall set apart, twenty-five thousand *cubits* in width, and *in* length the same as one of the *other* portions, from the east side to the west, with the sanctuary in the center.

9"The district that you shall set apart for the LORD *shall be* twenty-five thousand *cubits* in length and ten thousand in width. 10To these—to the priests—the holy district shall belong: on the north twenty-five thousand *cubits in length,* on the west ten thousand in width, on the east ten thousand in width, and on the south twenty-five thousand in length. The sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the center. 11*It shall be* for the priests of the sons of Zadok, who are sanctified, who have kept My charge, who did not go astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray. 12And *this* district of land that is set apart shall be to them a thing most holy by the border of the Levites.

13"Opposite the border of the priests, the Levites *shall have an area* twenty-five thousand *cubits* in length and ten thousand in width; its entire length *shall be* twenty-five thousand and its width ten thousand. 14And they shall not sell or exchange any of it; they may not alienate this best *part* of the land, for *it is* holy to the LORD.

15"The five thousand *cubits* in width that remain, along the edge of the twenty-five thousand, shall be for general use by the city, for dwellings and common-land; and the city shall be in the center. 16These *shall be* its measurements: the north side four thousand five hundred *cubits,* the south side four thousand five hundred, the east side four thousand five hundred, and the west side four thousand five hundred. 17The common-land of the city shall be: to the north two hundred and fifty *cubits,* to the south two hundred and fifty, to the east two hundred and fifty, and to the west two hundred and fifty. 18The rest of the length, alongside the district of the holy *section, shall be* ten thousand *cubits* to the east and ten thousand to the west. It shall be adjacent to the district of the holy *section,* and its produce shall be food for the workers of the city. 19The workers of the city, from all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it. 20The entire district *shall be* twenty-five thousand *cubits* by twenty-five thousand *cubits,* foursquare. You shall set apart the holy district with the property of the city.

21"The rest *shall belong* to the prince, on one side and on the other of the holy district and of the city's property, next to the twenty-five thousand *cubits* of the *holy* district as far as the eastern border, and westward next to the twenty-five thousand as far as the western border, adjacent to the *tribal* portions; *it shall belong* to the prince. It shall be the holy district, and the sanctuary of the temple *shall be* in the center. 22Moreover, apart from the possession of the Levites and the possession of the city *which are* in the midst of what *belongs* to the prince, *the area* between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin shall belong to the prince.

23"As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side to the west, Benjamin *shall have*

one *section;* [24]by the border of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, Simeon *shall have* one *section;* [25]by the border of Simeon, from the east side to the west, Issachar *shall have* one *section;* [26]by the border of Issachar, from the east side to the west, Zebulun *shall have* one *section;* [27]by the border of Zebulun, from the east side to the west, Gad *shall have* one *section;* [28]by the border of Gad, on the south side, toward the South,[a] the border shall be from Tamar *to* the waters of Meribah *by* Kadesh, along the brook to the Great Sea. [29]This *is* the land which you shall divide by lot as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, and these *are* their portions," says the Lord GOD.

THE GATES OF THE CITY AND ITS NAME

[30]"These *are* the exits of the city. On the north side, measuring four thousand five hundred *cubits* [31](the gates of the city *shall be* named after the tribes of Israel), the three gates northward: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi; [32]on the east side, four thousand five hundred *cubits,* three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan; [33]on the south side, measuring four thousand five hundred *cubits,* three gates: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun; [34]on the west side, four thousand five hundred *cubits* with their three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali. [35]All the way around *shall be* eighteen thousand *cubits;* and the name of the city from *that* day *shall be:* THE LORD *IS* THERE."[a]

48:28 [a]Hebrew *Negev* **48:35** [a]Hebrew *YHWH Shammah*

Daniel

DATE OF WRITING: 605–530 B.C.
AUTHOR: DANIEL
THEME: GOD CONTROLS THE DESTINY OF ALL NATIONS
PURPOSE: GOD CONTROLS THE FLOW OF HISTORY AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF BELIEVERS IN PAGAN LANDS.

OUTLINE

1:1–21 .....Daniel and His Three Friends
2:1–49 .....King Nebuchadnezzar's Dream
3:1–30 .....God Rescues Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego
4:1–37 .....Nebuchadnezzar Loses His Kingdom for Seven Years
5:1–31 .....King Belshazzar and the Writing on the Wall
6:1–28 .....God Rescues Daniel from the Den of Lions
7:1–28 .....Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts
8:1–27 .....Daniel's Vision of the Ram and Goat
9:1–27 .....Daniel Prays for His People
10:1—12:13 .....Daniel Has a Vision Beside the Tigris River

KEY VERSE:

"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44).

THEN /// Daniel's name means, "God is my judge." As you read this book that includes the story of Daniel's life and his prophecies, you can see why his name fits him. Daniel was committed to doing what was right, no matter whom it displeased, as long as it pleased God. He wasn't worried about being judged by anyone else.

But the Book of Daniel isn't just a listing of true accounts. It is also a book of prophecies. Daniel was an interpreter of dreams. He could see past the reality of this world and sometimes see into the next world, the new heaven and earth.

To this very day, people read Daniel to get clues about how the end of the world as we know it will happen. The hows and whens are not always clear, but we know the event is getting closer every day.

NOW /// We usually think of someone who writes a book of the Bible as somebody like a pastor or a prophet. The truth is that Daniel was a politician. He grew up with a great sense of discernment and a conscience that wouldn't quit. With the opportunities afforded him because of his gifts of interpretation, he got to see the legal system work from inside the king's castle, and that is where he became an influence.

Knowing that about Daniel's life reminds us that God uses people in whatever line of work they pursue. Whether it's a courtroom, a pulpit, or a governor's mansion, God works through us when we are faithful to His call.

REALITY CHECK /// Daniel is a prime example of a creative problem solver. When his story opens, Daniel is faced with a difficult choice. He is being offered the best food in the kingdom, but the food doesn't fit with Daniel's diet (which was prescribed by God in Leviticus). Daniel could have refused to eat, but instead he worked through the channels of authority that were already in place. He proposed a solution and it worked out. On other occasions, though, like when Daniel was supposed to stop praying, he didn't negotiate. He simply refused.

Daniel is a good model for us. It's best to work within the current system; but when the current system leads us in ways contrary to the will of God, a person's got to do what a person's got to do.

DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS OBEY GOD

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon came to Jerusalem
and besieged it. 2And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some
of the articles of the house of God, which he
carried into the land of Shinar to the house
of his god; and he brought the articles into
the treasure house of his god.

3Then the king instructed Ashpenaz,
the master of his eunuchs, to bring some
of the children of Israel and some of the
king's descendants and some of the nobles,
4young men in whom *there was* no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom,
possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who *had* ability to serve in the king's
palace, and whom they might teach the
language and literature of the Chaldeans.
5And the king appointed for them a daily
provision of the king's delicacies and of
the wine which he drank, and three years
of training for them, so that at the end of
that time they might serve before the king.
6Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and
Azariah. 7To them the chief of the eunuchs
gave names: he gave Daniel *the name*
Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to
Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

8But Daniel purposed in his heart that
he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the
wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that
he might not defile himself. 9Now God had
brought Daniel into the favor and good-



PROFILE
DANIEL

A young person with wisdom makes quite an impression because most people don't expect kids to be wise. Daniel made just such an impression, and he did it in a very difficult situation.

Daniel was taken hostage when his nation (Judah) was defeated in war. All the best young men of Judah were taken to Babylon to serve as slaves. But Daniel's behavior and intelligence really impressed his captors. He was placed into the service of the king and sent to the palace for training.

Because Daniel had already dedicated his life to God, he was faced with some tough choices. He had to decide how to serve God without disobeying or angering his captors. For example, he chose not to eat the rich foods provided by the king. He believed that compromising the diet God required for him would lead to other compromises. But he did not act rude or rebellious. He showed great wisdom. He lived his faith but also found a way to honor those to whom he was responsible. As a result, Daniel was admired and trusted by the king.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Like Daniel, refuse to do anything based on the claim that "everybody" is doing it.

People who are not willing be different and stand alone if necessary won't make a difference with their lives. Even decisions about what we eat and how we work with those around us say a lot about how much we really want to honor God in the way we live. Anyone who tells you it doesn't matter how you live doesn't care about what God thinks. It's best to model your life after people who do care about His plans for them. That will help you be a better example, too, for everyone around you.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read more about Daniel's early years in the Book of Daniel 1:1–21.

Daniel stood strong for what he believed and made a real difference in the world around him. You can, too!

will of the chief of the eunuchs. 10And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who *are* your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king."

11So Daniel said to the steward[a] whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12"Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, *so* deal with your servants." 14So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.

15And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies. 16Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

17As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature

1:11 [a]Hebrew *Melzar,* also in verse 16

and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

TALENTS
Who gives us our gifts?
Daniel 1:17

[18]Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. [19]Then the king interviewed[a] them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. [20]And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers who *were* in all his realm. [21]Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

2 Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was *so* troubled that his sleep left him. [2]Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. [3]And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream."

[4]Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic,[a] "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation."

Daniel 2:4

The countries in the ancient Near East needed a common language to simplify business and other aspects of life. Aramaic was the language they chose. By the time Jesus was born, Aramaic had replaced Hebrew as the language spoken by most Jews.

[5]The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. [6]However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation."

[7]They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation."

[8]The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: [9]if you do not make known the dream to me, *there is only* one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation."

[10]The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has *ever* asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. [11]*It is* a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

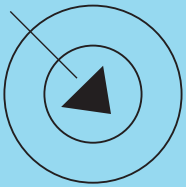
[12]For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. [13]So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise *men;* and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill *them.*

GOD REVEALS NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

[14]Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise *men* of Babylon; [15]he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

[16]So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. [17]Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, [18]that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this

1:19 [a]Literally *talked with them* **2:4** [a]The original language of Daniel 2:4b through 7:28 is Aramaic.



PROMISE

God promises to control human events.

"[God] changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things" (Dan. 2:21, 22a).

Daniel praised God for being the One who both gives rulers their power and takes their power away. It's almost surprising to hear Daniel say that—when you realize the situation he was in. King Nebuchadnezzar had attacked Jerusalem. He had captured the king and taken many valuable things from God's temple. He also captured a lot of able-bodied young men, including Daniel and some of his friends, to serve him in Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar certainly wasn't a godly man, and Daniel could have resented all the things Nebuchadnezzar did. But he realized that the king's power came from God and that God let Nebuchadnezzar defeat Jerusalem for a reason. God had a plan that, for the time being, revolved around Nebuchadnezzar's success.

When you look at the world today, it may be hard for you to believe that God is in control. But, just as He was in Daniel's day, God is the One who puts leaders in their places, and He is able to change their hearts. He has all of the wisdom and knowledge they need to be good leaders. Unfortunately, not all leaders seek Him. Be a person who prays for leaders. Ask God to turn their hearts toward Him. Ask for His wisdom and knowledge on their behalf. God has put them in their positions because He has a plan that's invisible. He *is* in control.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Job 41:11; Ecclesiastes 9:1; Jeremiah 10:23; Daniel 4:35

secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon. 19Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20Daniel answered and said:

"Blessed be the name of God forever
and ever,
For wisdom and might are His.
21And He changes the times and the
seasons;
He removes kings and raises up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise
And knowledge to those who have
understanding.
22He reveals deep and secret things;
He knows what *is* in the darkness,
And light dwells with Him.

23"I thank You and praise You,
O God of my fathers;
You have given me wisdom and might,
And have now made known to me
what we asked of You,
For You have made known to us the
king's demand."

DANIEL EXPLAINS THE DREAM

24Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise *men* of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation."

25Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives[a] of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation."

26The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?"

27Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise *men,* the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers

2:25 [a]Literally *of the sons of the captivity*

cannot declare to the king. 28But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: 29As for you, O king, thoughts came *to* your *mind while* on your bed, *about* what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. 30But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for *our* sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

31"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor *was* excellent, stood before you; and its form *was* awesome. 32This image's head *was* of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs[a] of bronze, 33its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.[a] 34You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

36"This *is* the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37You, O king, *are* a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given *them* into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you *are* this head of gold. 39But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, *that kingdom* will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42And *as* the toes of the feet *were* partly of iron and partly of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS PROMOTED

46Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. 47The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God *is* the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." 48Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise *men* of Babylon. 49Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel *sat* in the gate[a] of the king.

THE IMAGE OF GOLD

3 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* sixty cubits *and* its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2And King Nebuchadnezzar sent *word* to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the

2:32 [a]Or *sides* **2:33** [a]Or *baked clay,* and so in verses 34, 35, and 42 **2:49** [a]That is, the king's court



PROFILE

SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO

You can tell who your real friends are when the heat is on! Standing together with a couple of friends against a death threat takes both courage and confidence in one another. These three friends had each other's backs and made a difference. Their boldness provided an opportunity for God to confront a godless king.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were wise, Jewish men who had been forced into service to the king of a pagan land. They were loyal to the king, but their higher allegiance was to God. There were some people in the pagan land who hated these three for their faith in God. The people maneuvered the king into a prideful act—creating a huge statue, which everyone was required to worship. As expected, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refused. No insult to the king was intended. They simply refused to worship anything or anyone but God.

Whenever individuals take a stand on principle, they can expect resistance. For our three heroes, it came in the form of a death threat: worship the king's statue or die in the depths of a red hot furnace. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came up with one of the finest and boldest statements of faith recorded in Scripture: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up" (Dan. 3:17, 18). They entrusted their lives to God and left the results in God's hands. They stood together—with God. They were thrown into the furnace, but God stood with them. Not even their clothes were burned! Their faith made a difference.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego faced a fiery furnace. And while the challenges we face today may not be literal furnaces, it is not uncommon for us to face the scorching heat of public ridicule or rejection. We are tempted every day to avoid the elevated heat of conflict by compromising our faith as well as God's truth. When we learn God's truth and make it a point to practice faithfulness, even when the heat rises, we will see that God can do amazing things in our lives, too. You most likely won't be able to pick your furnaces; so be sure to pick some good friends who can stand with you and with God.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

You can read about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego's friendship and service to God in the Book of Daniel.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego: real friends in real danger. Their faith made a difference. Yours can, too!

image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 3So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, 5*that* at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; 6and whoever does not fall down

and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

7So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, *and* lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down *and* worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

DANIEL'S FRIENDS DISOBEY THE KING

8Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. 9They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! 10You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; 11and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

13Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. 14Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "*Is it* true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, *that* you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? 15Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, *good!* But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who *is* the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

16Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17If that *is the case,* our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. 18But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

SAVED IN FIERY TRIAL

19Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. 20And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, *and* cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace. 21Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. 23And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste *and* spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?"

They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

25"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."[a]

NEBUCHADNEZZAR PRAISES GOD

26Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace *and* spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come *here.*" Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. 27And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

28Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel[a] and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and

3:25 [a]Or *a son of the gods* **3:28** [a]Or *angel*

they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! 29Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

30Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SECOND DREAM

4 Nebuchadnezzar the king,

To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you.

2I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.

3How great *are* His signs,
And how mighty His wonders!
His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,
And His dominion *is* from generation to generation.

4I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace.
5I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.
6Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream.
7Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation. 8But at last Daniel came before me (his name *is* Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him *is* the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, *saying:* 9"Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God *is* in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.

Daniel 4:8

Belteshazzar means "Bel Will Protect." (Bel, also known as Marduk, was the chief god of Babylon.) Daniel, however, means "God Is My Judge."

10"These *were* the visions of my head *while* on my bed:

I was looking, and behold,
A tree in the midst of the earth,
And its height was great.
11The tree grew and became strong;
Its height reached to the heavens,
And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.
12Its leaves *were* lovely,
Its fruit abundant,
And in it *was* food for all.
The beasts of the field found shade under it,
The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches,
And all flesh was fed from it.

13"I saw in the visions of my head *while* on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven.
14He cried aloud and said thus:

'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,
Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.
Let the beasts get out from under it,
And the birds from its branches.
15Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth,
Bound with a band of iron and bronze,
In the tender grass of the field.
Let it be wet with the dew of heaven,
And *let* him graze with the beasts
On the grass of the earth.
16Let his heart be changed from *that of* a man,
Let him be given the heart of a beast,
And let seven times[a] pass over him.

4:16 [a]Possibly *seven years,* and so in verses 23, 25, and 32

17"This decision *is* by the decree of the
watchers,
And the sentence by the word of the
holy ones,
In order that the living may know
That the Most High rules in the
kingdom of men,
Gives it to whomever He will,
And sets over it the lowest of men.'

18"This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar,
have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar,
declare its interpretation, since all
the wise *men* of my kingdom are
not able to make known to me the
interpretation; but you *are* able, for
the Spirit of the Holy God *is* in you."

DANIEL EXPLAINS THE SECOND DREAM

19Then Daniel, whose name *was*
Belteshazzar, was astonished for
a time, and his thoughts troubled
him. *So* the king spoke, and said,
"Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or
its interpretation trouble you."
Belteshazzar answered and
said, "My lord, *may* the dream
concern those who hate you, and its
interpretation concern your enemies!

20"The tree that you saw, which grew
and became strong, whose height
reached to the heavens and which
could be seen by all the earth,
21whose leaves *were* lovely and its
fruit abundant, in which *was* food
for all, under which the beasts of the
field dwelt, and in whose branches
the birds of the heaven had their
home— 22it *is* you, O king, who have
grown and become strong; for your
greatness has grown and reaches to
the heavens, and your dominion to
the end of the earth.

23"And inasmuch as the king saw a
watcher, a holy one, coming down
from heaven and saying, 'Chop down
the tree and destroy it, but leave its
stump and roots in the earth, *bound*
with a band of iron and bronze in the
tender grass of the field; let it be wet
with the dew of heaven, and let him
graze with the beasts of the field, till
seven times pass over him'; 24this is
the interpretation, O king, and this is
the decree of the Most High, which
has come upon my lord the king:
25They shall drive you from men, your
dwelling shall be with the beasts of the
field, and they shall make you eat grass
like oxen. They shall wet you with
the dew of heaven, and seven times
shall pass over you, till you know that
the Most High rules in the kingdom
of men, and gives it to whomever He
chooses.

26"And inasmuch as they gave the
command to leave the stump *and*
roots of the tree, your kingdom shall
be assured to you, after you come to
know that Heaven rules. 27Therefore,
O king, let my advice be acceptable
to you; break off your sins by *being*
righteous, and your iniquities by
showing mercy to *the* poor. Perhaps
there may be a lengthening of your
prosperity."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S HUMILIATION

28All *this* came upon King
Nebuchadnezzar. 29At the end of the
twelve months he was walking about
the royal palace of Babylon. 30The
king spoke, saying, "Is not this great
Babylon, that I have built for a royal
dwelling by my mighty power and for
the honor of my majesty?"

31While the word *was still* in the king's
mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King
Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken:
the kingdom has departed from you!
32And they shall drive you from men,
and your dwelling *shall be* with the
beasts of the field. They shall make
you eat grass like oxen; and seven
times shall pass over you, until you
know that the Most High rules in
the kingdom of men, and gives it to
whomever He chooses."

33That very hour the word was fulfilled
concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was
driven from men and ate grass like
oxen; his body was wet with the dew
of heaven till his hair had grown like

LIFE APP

Kingdom of God / Daniel 4:34

Throughout the Bible, we read about the kingdom of God. We understand that God is the ultimate King of all Creation. We know that Jesus is the King of kings. But exactly what and where is this kingdom of God?

When Jesus walked the earth, many of His followers knew He had come to bring them the kingdom of God. They expected Jesus to become a powerful, earthly king. They thought He had come to do away with the cruel government of the time and take over as the ultimate Ruler of the land. Just before He was taken to be crucified, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36). The kingdom Jesus came to bring was not a government system; it was the recognition of God's ultimate right to rule.

God's kingdom is not so much a place as it is a way of living. God created everything, so He is King of all and His rightful kingdom is everyone and everywhere. Those who recognize God's authority and willingly choose to serve Him as their King are the members of His kingdom on earth.

One day, Jesus will return and take us with Him to live physically in God's presence. In that place, God will be the absolute, uncontested, unquestioned King. Revelation 21:3, 4, 7 describes it this way: "God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away . . . He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

Until that day arrives, we can live with the knowledge that God's kingdom is here and now for all who love and serve the Lord.

eagles' *feathers* and his nails like birds' *claws.*

NEBUCHADNEZZAR PRAISES GOD

34 And at the end of the time[a] I,
Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes
to heaven, and my understanding
returned to me; and I blessed the Most
High and praised and honored Him
who lives forever:

For His dominion *is* an everlasting
dominion,
And His kingdom *is* from generation
to generation.
35 All the inhabitants of the earth *are*
reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the
army of heaven
And *among* the inhabitants of the
earth.
No one can restrain His hand
Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

36 At the same time my reason returned
to me, and for the glory of my
kingdom, my honor and splendor
returned to me. My counselors and
nobles resorted to me, I was restored
to my kingdom, and excellent
majesty was added to me. 37 Now I,
Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and
honor the King of heaven, all of whose
works *are* truth, and His ways justice.
And those who walk in pride He is able
to put down.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

5 Belshazzar the king made a great
feast for a thousand of his lords,
and drank wine in the presence of
the thousand. 2 While he tasted the wine,
Belshazzar gave the command to bring
the gold and silver vessels which his fa-
ther Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the
temple which *had been* in Jerusalem, that
the king and his lords, his wives, and his
concubines might drink from them. 3 Then
they brought the gold vessels that had been
taken from the temple of the house of God
which *had been* in Jerusalem; and the king
and his lords, his wives, and his concubines
drank from them. 4 They drank wine, and
praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze
and iron, wood and stone.

Daniel 5:1

After Nebuchadnezzar died, his son Evil-Merodach became king. After two years, Evil-Merodach was assassinated by his brother-in-law, Nergal-Sarezer. Nergal-Sarezer died in less than three years and was succeeded by his son, Labashi-Marduk. Labashi-Marduk was assassinated after reigning for only two months. Next came Nabonidus, who may have been Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law. In the third year of his reign, Nabonidus (who suffered from some terrible disease) appointed his son, Belshazzar, as co-ruler of the nation.

5 In the same hour the fingers of a man's
hand appeared and wrote opposite the
lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the
king's palace; and the king saw the part
of the hand that wrote. 6 Then the king's
countenance changed, and his thoughts
troubled him, so that the joints of his hips
were loosened and his knees knocked
against each other. 7 The king cried aloud
to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans,
and the soothsayers. The king spoke, say-
ing to the wise *men* of Babylon, "Whoever
reads this writing, and tells me its inter-
pretation, shall be clothed with purple and
have a chain of gold around his neck; and
he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."
8 Now all the king's wise *men* came, but they
could not read the writing, or make known
to the king its interpretation. 9 Then King
Belshazzar was greatly troubled, his coun-
tenance was changed, and his lords were
astonished.

10 The queen, because of the words of the
king and his lords, came to the banquet
hall. The queen spoke, saying, "O king, live
forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble
you, nor let your countenance change.
11 There is a man in your kingdom in whom
is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the
days of your father, light and understand-
ing and wisdom, like the wisdom of the
gods, were found in him; and King Nebu-
chadnezzar your father—your father the
king—made him chief of the magicians,

4:34 [a]Literally *days*

astrologers, Chaldeans, *and* soothsayers. 12Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas[a] were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation."

THE WRITING ON THE WALL EXPLAINED

13Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, "*Are* you that Daniel who is one of the captives[a] from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? 14I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God *is* in you, and *that* light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. 15Now the wise *men,* the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing. 16And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and explain enigmas. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and *have* a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

17Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation. 18O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. 19And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. 20But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. 21Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling *was* with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.

22"But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. 23And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who *holds* your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified. 24Then the fingers[a] of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written.

25"And this is the inscription that was written:

MENE,[a] MENE, TEKEL,[b] UPHARSIN.[c]

26This *is* the interpretation of *each* word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; 27TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; 28PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."[a] 29Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and *put* a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

BELSHAZZAR'S FALL

30That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. 31And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, *being* about sixty-two years old.

THE PLOT AGAINST DANIEL

6 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; 2and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel *was* one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. 3Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors

5:12 [a]Literally *untying knots,* and so in verse 16 **5:13** [a]Literally *of the sons of the captivity* **5:24** [a]Literally *palm* **5:25** [a]Literally *a mina* (50 shekels) from the verb "to number" [b]Literally *a shekel* from the verb "to weigh" [c]Literally *and half-shekels* from the verb "to divide" **5:28** [a]Aramaic *Paras,* consonant with *Peres*

and satraps, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. 4So the governors and satraps sought to find *some* charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he *was* faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. 5Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God."

INTEGRITY
How does integrity help us?
Daniel 6:4, 5

6So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever! 7All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. 8Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter." 9Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

10Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

Daniel 6:10
Daniel faced Jerusalem when he prayed because the city had been the center of worship for the Jewish people before it was captured by King Nebuchadnezzar.

11Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 12And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

The king answered and said, "The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter."

13So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives[a] from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

14And the king, when he heard *these* words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. 15Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that *it is* the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

16So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast *him* into the den of lions. *But* the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." 17Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

DANIEL SAVED FROM THE LIONS

18Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians[a] were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. 19Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. 20And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

21Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! 22My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent

6:13 [a]Literally *of the sons of the captivity*
6:18 [a]Exact meaning unknown

before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

23Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

DARIUS HONORS GOD

24And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions—them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

25Then King Darius wrote:

To all peoples, nations, and languages
that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you.

26I make a decree that in every
dominion of my kingdom *men must*
tremble and fear before the God of
Daniel.

For He *is* the living God,
And steadfast forever;
His kingdom *is the one* which shall not
be destroyed,
And His dominion *shall endure* to the
end.
27He delivers and rescues,
And He works signs and wonders
In heaven and on earth,
Who has delivered Daniel from the
power of the lions.

28So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

7 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head *while* on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts.[a]

2Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

5"And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and *had* three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

6"After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

7"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It *was* different from all the beasts that *were* before it, and it had ten horns. 8I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, *were* eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

VISION OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS

9"I watched till thrones were put in
place,
And the Ancient of Days was seated;
His garment *was* white as snow,
And the hair of His head *was* like pure
wool.
His throne *was* a fiery flame,
Its wheels a burning fire;
10A fiery stream issued
And came forth from before Him.
A thousand thousands ministered to
Him;
Ten thousand times ten thousand
stood before Him.
The court[a] was seated,
And the books were opened.

11"I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to

7:1 [a]Literally *the head* (or *chief*) *of the words*
7:10 [a]Or *judgment*

the burning flame. 12As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13"I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.
14Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one*
Which shall not be destroyed.

DANIEL'S VISIONS INTERPRETED

15"I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me. 16I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17'Those great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings[a] *which* arise out of the earth. 18But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'

19"Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, *with* its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, *which* devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20and the ten horns that *were* on its head, and the other *horn* which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance *was* greater than his fellows.

21"I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

23"Thus he said:

'The fourth beast shall be
A fourth kingdom on earth,
Which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms,
And shall devour the whole earth,
Trample it and break it in pieces.
24The ten horns *are* ten kings
Who shall arise from this kingdom.
And another shall rise after them;
He shall be different from the first *ones,*
And shall subdue three kings.
25He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High,
Shall persecute[a] the saints of the Most High,
And shall intend to change times and law.
Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand
For a time and times and half a time.

26'But the court shall be seated,
And they shall take away his dominion,
To consume and destroy *it* forever.
27Then the kingdom and dominion,
And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,
Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.
His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,
And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

28"This *is* the end of the account.[a] As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed; but I kept the matter in my heart."

VISION OF A RAM AND A GOAT

8 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared *to* me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time. 2I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I *was* in Shushan, the citadel, which *is* in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. 3Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns *were*

7:17 [a]Representing their kingdoms (compare verse 23) **7:25** [a]Literally *wear out*
7:28 [a]Literally *the word*

high; but one *was* higher than the other, and the higher *one* came up last. 4I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor *was there any* that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

5And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes. 6Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. 7And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.

Daniel 8:9–12

The nasty little horn described in these verses may refer to a Syrian king named Antiochus Epiphanes. After the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon, Antiochus Epiphanes took control of the temple in Jerusalem. In a disgusting act of blasphemy, he built an altar to the Greek god Zeus directly over what had been the Jewish altar of burnt offering. He then sacrificed a pig on the altar. (Remember, God declared pigs to be unclean animals.) The one good thing that came from Antiochus Epiphanes' outrageous actions was the Jews revolted and overthrew the Syrian leaders. Today, the Jewish people celebrate this revolution at Hanukkah.

8Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. 9And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious *Land.* 10And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down *some* of the host and *some* of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. 11He even exalted *himself* as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily *sacrifices* were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. 12Because of transgression, an army was given over *to the horn* to oppose the daily *sacrifices;* and he cast truth down to the ground. He did *all this* and prospered.

13Then I heard a holy one speaking; and *another* holy one said to that certain *one* who was speaking, "How long *will* the vision *be, concerning* the daily *sacrifices* and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?"

14And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days;[a] then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

GABRIEL INTERPRETS THE VISION

15Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. 16And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of* the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this *man* understand the vision." 17So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision *refers* to the time of the end."

18Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright. 19And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end *shall be.* 20The ram which you saw, having the two horns—*they are* the kings of Media and Persia. 21And the male goat *is* the kingdom[a] of Greece. The large horn that *is* between its eyes *is* the first king. 22As for the broken *horn* and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

23"And in the latter time of their
kingdom,
When the transgressors have reached
their fullness,

8:14 [a]Literally *evening-mornings* **8:21** [a]Literally *king,* representing his kingdom (compare 7:17, 23)

A king shall arise,
Having fierce features,
Who understands sinister schemes.
24His power shall be mighty, but not by
his own power;
He shall destroy fearfully,
And shall prosper and thrive;
He shall destroy the mighty, and *also*
the holy people.

25"Through his cunning
He shall cause deceit to prosper under
his rule;[a]
And he shall exalt *himself* in his heart.
He shall destroy many in *their*
prosperity.
He shall even rise against the Prince of
princes;
But he shall be broken without *human*
means.[b]

26"And the vision of the evenings and
mornings
Which was told is true;
Therefore seal up the vision,
For *it refers* to many days *in the future.*"

27And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

DANIEL'S PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE

9 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— 2in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years *specified* by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. 4And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, 5we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. 6Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. 7O Lord, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us shame of face, as *it is* this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

8"O Lord, to us *belongs* shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9To the Lord our God *belong* mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. 10We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. 11Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. 12And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

13"As *it is* written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. 14Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. 15And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as *it is* this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

16"O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people *are* a reproach to all *those* around us. 17Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary,

8:25 [a]Literally *hand* [b]Literally *hand*

which is desolate. 18O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. 19O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

THE SEVENTY-WEEKS PROPHECY

20Now while I *was* speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, 21yes, while I *was* speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. 22And he informed *me,* and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell *you,* for you *are* greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

24"Seventy weeks[a] are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of[b] sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.

Daniel 9:25

In 538 B.C., Cyrus, the king of Persia, allowed the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple. Ninety-three years later, Artaxerxes, Cyrus's successor as king, allowed several more Jews to return to Jerusalem with Nehemiah to begin rebuilding the city.

25"Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street[a] shall be built again, and the wall,[b]
Even in troublesome times.

26"And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.
27Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate."

VISION OF THE GLORIOUS MAN

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message *was* true, but the appointed time *was* long;[a] and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. 2In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 3I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

4Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that *is,* the Tigris,[a] 5I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist *was* girded with gold of Uphaz! 6His body *was* like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in

9:24 [a]Literally *sevens,* and so throughout the chapter [b]Following Qere, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Kethib and Theodotion read *To seal up.* **9:25** [a]Or *open square* [b]Or *moat* **10:1** [a]Or *and of great conflict* **10:4** [a]Hebrew *Hiddekel*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // DANIEL 10:10, 11A

Greatly Beloved Daniel had a powerful story! In one part of it, he was totally immersed in a vision from God. When it was over, he fell down on his face and went to sleep. All of a sudden, an angel of the Lord lifted him up and told him that he was loved by God. Then, several verses later, the angel said it again: "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!" (Dan. 10:19). And Daniel *was* brave and strong.

You may be thinking: *If an angel of the Lord woke me up to tell me I was greatly loved, I'd be brave and strong, too.* Well, you have already been told that you're greatly loved, right here in the pages of God's Word. God thinks highly of *you*! He wants only the best for you. You're His child. You're the work of His hands. He wants to pour out blessings on you.

It doesn't matter how difficult things seem to your natural mind. You have a supernatural God! You can be brave and strong. In fact, Daniel 11:32 says, "The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits." If you realize that you are strong because God gives you your strength, you can accomplish all the great things He has planned for you. Remember, it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks of you. You're special to God. Don't forget it! (See also: Deut. 31:6; Dan. 9:23; 10:18, 19; 2 Tim. 1:7.)

Words to Live By

Greatly beloved: The word translated as "greatly beloved" in Daniel 10:11 is the Hebrew word *chemdah* (khem-daw'). It means "delightful, desirable, pleasant, and precious." Can you imagine the God who created the universe considers you precious? The One who hung the stars and invented the rainbow thinks you are delightful. Wow! Just, wow!

color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

7And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. 9Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

PROPHECIES CONCERNING PERSIA AND GREECE

10Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and *on* the palms of my hands. 11And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

12Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. 14Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision *refers* to *many* days yet *to come*."

15When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16And suddenly, *one* having the likeness of the sons[a] of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. 17For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord?

10:16 [a]Theodotion and Vulgate read *the son;* Septuagint reads *a hand.*

As for me, no strength remains in me now,
nor is any breath left in me."
18Then again, *the one* having the likeness
of a man touched me and strengthened
me. 19And he said, "O man greatly beloved,
fear not! Peace *be* to you; be strong, yes, be
strong!"
So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you
have strengthened me."
20Then he said, "Do you know why I
have come to you? And now I must return
to fight with the prince of Persia; and when
I have gone forth, indeed the prince of
Greece will come. 21But I will tell you what
is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one
upholds me against these, except Michael
your prince.

11 "Also in the first year of Darius
the Mede, I, *even* I, stood up to
confirm and strengthen him.)
2And now I will tell you the truth: Behold,
three more kings will arise in Persia, and
the fourth shall be far richer than *them*
all; by his strength, through his riches, he
shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.
3Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall
rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. 4And when he has arisen,
his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but
not among his posterity nor according to
his dominion with which he ruled; for his
kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others
besides these.

WARRING KINGS OF NORTH AND SOUTH

5"Also the king of the South shall become
strong, as well as *one* of his princes; and
he shall gain power over him and have
dominion. His dominion *shall be* a great
dominion. 6And at the end of *some* years
they shall join forces, for the daughter of
the king of the South shall go to the king of
the North to make an agreement; but she
shall not retain the power of her authority,[a]
and neither he nor his authority[b] shall
stand; but she shall be given up, with those
who brought her, and with him who begot
her, and with him who strengthened her in
those times. 7But from a branch of her roots
one shall arise in his place, who shall come
with an army, enter the fortress of the
king of the North, and deal with them and
prevail. 8And he shall also carry their gods
captive to Egypt, with their princes[a] *and*
their precious articles of silver and gold;
and he shall continue *more* years than the
king of the North.
9"Also *the king of the North* shall come to
the kingdom of the king of the South, but
shall return to his own land. 10However
his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble
a multitude of great forces; and *one* shall
certainly come and overwhelm and pass
through; then he shall return to his fortress
and stir up strife.
11"And the king of the South shall be
moved with rage, and go out and fight
with him, with the king of the North, who
shall muster a great multitude; but the
multitude shall be given into the hand of
his *enemy.* 12When he has taken away the
multitude, his heart will be lifted up; and
he will cast down tens of thousands, but he
will not prevail. 13For the king of the North
will return and muster a multitude greater
than the former, and shall certainly come
at the end of some years with a great army
and much equipment.
14"Now in those times many shall rise up
against the king of the South. Also, violent
men[a] of your people shall exalt themselves
in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall
fall. 15So the king of the North shall come
and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces[a] of the South shall
not withstand *him.* Even his choice troops
shall have no strength to resist. 16But he
who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand
against him. He shall stand in the Glorious
Land with destruction in his power.[a]
17"He shall also set his face to enter with
the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones[a] with him; thus shall he do. And
he shall give him the daughter of women to
destroy it; but she shall not stand *with him,*
or be for him. 18After this he shall turn his
face to the coastlands, and shall take many.
But a ruler shall bring the reproach against
them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him. 19Then

11:6 [a]Literally *arm* [b]Literally *arm* **11:8** [a]Or *molded images* **11:14** [a]Or *robbers,* literally *sons of breakage* **11:15** [a]Literally *arms* **11:16** [a]Literally *hand* **11:17** [a]Or *bring equitable terms*

he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

20"There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes *on* the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle. 21And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue. 22With the force[a] of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant. 23And after the league *is made* with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small *number of* people. 24He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do *what* his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but *only* for a time.

25"He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. 26Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. 27Both these kings' hearts *shall be* bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end *will* still *be* at the appointed time. 28While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be *moved* against the holy covenant; so he shall do *damage* and return to his own land.

THE NORTHERN KING'S BLASPHEMIES

29"At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. 30For ships from Cyprus[a] shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do *damage.*

"So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. 31And forces[a] shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices,* and place *there* the abomination of desolation. 32Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits.* 33And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet *for many* days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. 34Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. 35And *some* of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify *them,* and make *them* white, *until* the time of the end; because *it is* still for the appointed time.

36"Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. 37He shall regard neither the God[a] of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above *them* all. 38But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. 39Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, *and* advance *its* glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

THE NORTHERN KING'S CONQUESTS

40"At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm *them,* and pass through. 41He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. 42He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and

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11:22 [a]Literally *arms* **11:30** [a]Hebrew *Kittim,* western lands, especially Cyprus
11:31 [a]Literally *arms* **11:37** [a]Or *gods*

over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians *shall follow* at his heels. 44But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. 45And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

PROPHECY OF THE END TIME

12 "At that time Michael shall
stand up,
The great prince who stands
watch over the sons of
your people;
And there shall be a time of trouble,
Such as never was since there was a
nation,
Even to that time.
And at that time your people shall be
delivered,
Every one who is found written in the
book.
2And many of those who sleep in the
dust of the earth shall awake,
Some to everlasting life,
Some to shame *and* everlasting
contempt.
3Those who are wise shall shine
Like the brightness of the firmament,
And those who turn many to
righteousness
Like the stars forever and ever.

4"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

5Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. 6And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders *be?*"

7Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that *it shall be* for a time, times, and half *a time;* and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these *things* shall be finished.

8Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things?*"

9And he said, "Go *your way,* Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

11"And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there shall be* one thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12Blessed *is* he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

13"But you, go *your way* till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

Hosea

DATE OF WRITING: 750–720 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET HOSEA
THEME: GOD REMAINS COMMITTED TO US EVEN WHEN WE ARE UNFAITHFUL TO HIM
PURPOSE: WE NEED TO BE REMINDED TO ALWAYS BE FAITHFUL TO GOD.

OUTLINE

1:1—3:5 ..... Hosea's Family Is a Picture of the Lord's Unfaithful People
4:1—5:15 ..... The Lord Accuses Israel, Judah, and Their Leaders
6:1—7:10 ..... The People Pretend to Turn to the Lord
7:11—8:14 ..... Israel Refuses to Trust the Lord
9:1–17 ..... Israel Will Be Judged
10:1–15 ..... Punishment for Israel
11:1–11 ..... God's Love for His Faithless People
11:12—13:16 ..... Israel and Judah Are Doomed
14:1–9 ..... Future Forgiveness and Blessings

KEY VERSE:

"I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD" (Hosea 2:20).

THEN /// The Hebrew people struggled with idolatry throughout their whole existence. Whether they were wandering in a desert, exiled in Babylon, or happy at home, they had a real problem with being faithful to God. God warned them through leaders and prophets and kings, but, without fail, along would come a false god to worship and off they would go.

God used the prophet Hosea to give the people an object lesson. He asked Hosea to do something outlandish—even crazy—so the people would know how God felt about idolatry. God told Hosea to marry a prostitute, a hooker, a woman who stays with men for money. Believe it or not, Hosea did it—he married Gomer.

As you can guess, Gomer was not faithful to Hosea. She left him. He brought her back. She wandered away. He loved her still.

NOW /// God commanded Hosea to marry the prostitute, Gomer, because He wanted to show Hosea's people that they had treated God like Gomer treated Hosea. They wandered away, but God brought them back. They worshiped other gods, but God loved them still. God wanted them to see His love and learn to have faithful hearts.

Gomer is a pretty graphic example of unfaithfulness. She was completely ruled by her own desires. In a lot of ways, she is like a picture of our own hearts. Whenever what we want is more important to us than what God wants, we wander away and do whatever pleases us. Then God reaches out to us and we return to Him. But soon, our desires get in the way again and we take off to find fulfillment of our own wants.

REALITY CHECK /// Gomer probably got very used to the whole scenario of being unfaithful and then being welcomed back by Hosea. His forgiveness was always there waiting for her. She sinned, he forgave. She was unloving, he continued to love. We are left to wonder if she simply took his love and forgiveness for granted. Did she truly appreciate what she had?

The picture Gomer and Hosea present of continuing sin and repeated forgiveness is a beautiful picture of how God deals with us—we continue to sin and He continues to forgive. But the same questions we can ask of Gomer can be asked of us: Do we appreciate and value God's love? Do we see forgiveness as a license to sin? Do we treat God the way Gomer treated Hosea?

God deserves our love and faithfulness. We should love Him because He first loved us (see 1 John 4:19).

1 The word of the LORD that came to
Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of
Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah,
kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam
the son of Joash, king of Israel.

THE FAMILY OF HOSEA

2 When the LORD began to speak by Hosea,
the LORD said to Hosea:

"Go, take yourself a wife of
harlotry
And children of harlotry,
For the land has committed great
harlotry
By departing from the LORD."

Hosea 1:1

The Israel that existed during Hosea's time was actually two separate nations. The northern kingdom, which was called Israel, had Samaria as its capital. The southern kingdom, which was called Judah, had Jerusalem as its capital. The descendants of David ruled Judah from Jerusalem, which also served as the nation's religious center.

3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter
of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore
him a son. 4 Then the LORD said to him:

"Call his name Jezreel,
For in a little *while*
I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel
on the house of Jehu,
And bring an end to the kingdom of
the house of Israel.
5It shall come to pass in that day
That I will break the bow of Israel in
the Valley of Jezreel."

6And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then *God* said to him:

"Call her name Lo-Ruhamah,[a]
For I will no longer have mercy on the
house of Israel,
But I will utterly take them away.[b]
7Yet I will have mercy on the house of
Judah,
Will save them by the LORD their
God,
And will not save them by bow,
Nor by sword or battle,
By horses or horsemen."

8Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9Then *God* said:

"Call his name Lo-Ammi,[a]
For you *are* not My people,
And I will not be your *God*.

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

10"Yet the number of the children of Israel
Shall be as the sand of the sea,
Which cannot be measured or
numbered.
And it shall come to pass
In the place where it was said to
them,
'You *are* not My people,'[a]
There it shall be said to them,
'*You are* sons of the living God.'
11Then the children of Judah and the
children of Israel
Shall be gathered together,
And appoint for themselves one
head;
And they shall come up out of the
land,
For great *will be* the day of Jezreel!

2 Say to your brethren, 'My people,'[a]
And to your sisters, 'Mercy[b] *is*
shown.'

GOD'S UNFAITHFUL PEOPLE

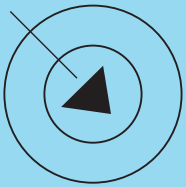
2"Bring charges against your mother,
bring charges;
For she *is* not My wife, nor *am* I her
Husband!
Let her put away her harlotries from
her sight,
And her adulteries from between her
breasts;
3Lest I strip her naked
And expose her, as in the day she was
born,
And make her like a wilderness,
And set her like a dry land,
And slay her with thirst.

4"I will not have mercy on her children,
For they *are* the children of harlotry.
5For their mother has played the harlot;
She who conceived them has behaved
shamefully.
For she said, 'I will go after my lovers,
Who give *me* my bread and my water,
My wool and my linen,
My oil and my drink.'

6"Therefore, behold,
I will hedge up your way with thorns,
And wall her in,
So that she cannot find her paths.
7She will chase her lovers,
But not overtake them;
Yes, she will seek them, but not find
them.
Then she will say,
'I will go and return to my first
husband,
For then *it was* better for me than now.'
8For she did not know
That I gave her grain, new wine, and
oil,
And multiplied her silver and gold—
Which they prepared for Baal.

9"Therefore I will return and take away
My grain in its time
And My new wine in its season,
And will take back My wool and My
linen,

1:6 [a]Literally *No-Mercy* [b]Or *That I may forgive them at all* **1:9** [a]Literally *Not-My-People*
1:10 [a]Hebrew *lo-ammi* (compare verse 9)
2:1 [a]Hebrew *Ammi* (compare 1:9, 10) [b]Hebrew *Ruhamah* (compare 1:6)



PROMISE

God promises you can know Him.

"And it shall be, in that day," says the LORD, *"that you will call Me 'My Husband,' and no longer call Me 'My Master,'. . . I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the* LORD*"* (Hos. 2:16, 19, 20).

How can you know God? He says that you will know Him through the justice, righteousness, mercy, lovingkindness, and faithfulness He will give you. He says that He will be as a husband and not as a master. In other words, He will treat you with love and tenderness and not with arrogance or harshness. He is not there to boss you around and make you work like a dog. He is there to be in love with you, to give you kindness when you don't deserve it, to be faithful to you when you aren't faithful to Him, to help you live the way He wants you to, to help you reach your full potential, to know the true goodness of your heart even when you do something you shouldn't, to encourage you, to understand when no one else can.

This is the God who promises to reveal Himself to you and allow you to actually know Him, not just know about Him or realize the things He does for you. According to Deuteronomy 4:29, "You will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart." So seek and find the One who loves you more than anyone else and the One who will call you His forever.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 91:14–16; 145:18, 19; Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 3:1

Given to cover her nakedness.
10 Now I will uncover her lewdness in the
sight of her lovers,
And no one shall deliver her from My
hand.
11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease,
Her feast days,
Her New Moons,
Her Sabbaths—
All her appointed feasts.

12 "And I will destroy her vines and her
fig trees,
Of which she has said,
'These *are* my wages that my lovers
have given me.'
So I will make them a forest,
And the beasts of the field shall eat
them.
13 I will punish her
For the days of the Baals to which she
burned incense.
She decked herself with her earrings
and jewelry,
And went after her lovers;
But Me she forgot," says the LORD.

GOD'S MERCY ON HIS PEOPLE

14 "Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
Will bring her into the wilderness,
And speak comfort to her.
15 I will give her her vineyards from
there,
And the Valley of Achor as a door of
hope;
She shall sing there,
As in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up from
the land of Egypt.

16 "And it shall be, in that day,"
Says the LORD,
"*That* you will call Me 'My Husband,'[a]
And no longer call Me 'My Master,'[b]
17 For I will take from her mouth the
names of the Baals,
And they shall be remembered by their
name no more.
18 In that day I will make a covenant for
them
With the beasts of the field,

2:16 [a]Hebrew *Ishi* [b]Hebrew *Baali*

With the birds of the air,
And *with* the creeping things of the ground.
Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth,
To make them lie down safely.

19"I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,
In lovingkindness and mercy;
20I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,
And you shall know the LORD.

21"It shall come to pass in that day
That I will answer," says the LORD;
"I will answer the heavens,
And they shall answer the earth.
22The earth shall answer
With grain,
With new wine,
And with oil;
They shall answer Jezreel.[a]
23Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth,
And I will have mercy on *her who had* not obtained mercy;[a]
Then I will say to *those who were* not My people,[b]
'You *are* My people!'
And they shall say, *'You are* my God!' "

ISRAEL WILL RETURN TO GOD

3 Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman *who is* loved by a lover[a] and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love *the* raisin cakes *of the pagans.*"

Hosea 3:1

In ancient times, cakes made of dried raisins were very popular. Some Israelites used raisin cakes in their pagan rituals as they worshiped a goddess known as the "queen of heaven."

2So I bought her for myself for fifteen *shekels* of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley. 3And I said to her, "You shall stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man—so, too, *will* I *be* toward you."

4For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or *sacred* pillar, without ephod or teraphim. 5Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.

GOD'S CHARGE AGAINST ISRAEL

4 Hear the word of the LORD,
You children of Israel,
For the LORD *brings* a charge against the inhabitants of the land:

"There is no truth or mercy
Or knowledge of God in the land.
2*By* swearing and lying,
Killing and stealing and committing adultery,
They break all restraint,
With bloodshed upon bloodshed.
3Therefore the land will mourn;
And everyone who dwells there will waste away
With the beasts of the field
And the birds of the air;
Even the fish of the sea will be taken away.

4"Now let no man contend, or rebuke another;
For your people *are* like those who contend with the priest.
5Therefore you shall stumble in the day;
The prophet also shall stumble with you in the night;
And I will destroy your mother.

OBEDIENCE
What happens if we neglect God's Word?
Hosea 4:6

6My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.
Because you have rejected knowledge,
I also will reject you from being priest for Me;

2:22 [a]Literally *God Will Sow* **2:23** [a]Hebrew *lo-ruhamah* [b]Hebrew *lo-ammi* **3:1** [a]Literally *friend* or *husband*

Because you have forgotten the law of
your God,
I also will forget your children.

7"The more they increased,
The more they sinned against Me;
I will change[a] their glory[b] into shame.
8They eat up the sin of My people;
They set their heart on their iniquity.
9And it shall be: like people, like priest.
So I will punish them for their ways,
And reward them for their deeds.
10For they shall eat, but not have
enough;
They shall commit harlotry, but not
increase;
Because they have ceased obeying the
LORD.

THE IDOLATRY OF ISRAEL

11"Harlotry, wine, and new wine enslave
the heart.
12My people ask counsel from their
wooden *idols,*
And their staff informs them.
For the spirit of harlotry has caused
them to stray,
And they have played the harlot
against their God.
13They offer sacrifices on the
mountaintops,
And burn incense on the hills,
Under oaks, poplars, and terebinths,
Because their shade *is* good.
Therefore your daughters commit
harlotry,
And your brides commit adultery.

14"I will not punish your daughters when
they commit harlotry,
Nor your brides when they commit
adultery;
For *the men* themselves go apart with
harlots,
And offer sacrifices with a ritual
harlot.[a]
Therefore people *who* do not
understand will be trampled.

15"Though you, Israel, play the harlot,
Let not Judah offend.
Do not come up to Gilgal,
Nor go up to Beth Aven,
Nor swear an oath, *saying,* 'As the
LORD lives'—

16"For Israel is stubborn
Like a stubborn calf;
Now the LORD will let them forage
Like a lamb in open country.

17"Ephraim *is* joined to idols,
Let him alone.
18Their drink is rebellion,
They commit harlotry continually.
Her rulers dearly[a] love dishonor.
19The wind has wrapped her up in its
wings,
And they shall be ashamed because of
their sacrifices.

IMPENDING JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL AND JUDAH

5 "Hear this, O priests!
Take heed, O house of Israel!
Give ear, O house of the king!
For yours *is* the judgment,
Because you have been a snare to
Mizpah
And a net spread on Tabor.
2The revolters are deeply involved in
slaughter,
Though I rebuke them all.
3I know Ephraim,
And Israel is not hidden from Me;
For now, O Ephraim, you commit
harlotry;
Israel is defiled.

4"They do not direct their deeds
Toward turning to their God,
For the spirit of harlotry is in their
midst,
And they do not know the LORD.
5The pride of Israel testifies to his face;
Therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble
in their iniquity;
Judah also stumbles with them.

6"With their flocks and herds
They shall go to seek the LORD,
But they will not find *Him;*
He has withdrawn Himself from them.

4:7 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; scribal tradition, Syriac, and Targum read *They will change.* [b]Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate; scribal tradition reads *My glory.* **4:14** [a]Compare Deuteronomy 23:18 **4:18** [a]Hebrew is difficult; a Jewish tradition reads *Her rulers shamefully love, 'Give!'*

7 They have dealt treacherously with the LORD,
For they have begotten pagan children.
Now a New Moon shall devour them
and their heritage.

8 "Blow the ram's horn in Gibeah,
The trumpet in Ramah!
Cry aloud *at* Beth Aven,
'*Look* behind you, O Benjamin!'
9 Ephraim shall be desolate in the day
of rebuke;
Among the tribes of Israel I make
known what is sure.

10 "The princes of Judah are like those
who remove a landmark;
I will pour out My wrath on them like
water.
11 Ephraim is oppressed *and* broken in
judgment,
Because he willingly walked by *human*
precept.
12 Therefore I *will be* to Ephraim like a
moth,
And to the house of Judah like
rottenness.

13 "When Ephraim saw his sickness,
And Judah *saw* his wound,
Then Ephraim went to Assyria
And sent to King Jareb;
Yet he cannot cure you,
Nor heal you of your wound.
14 For I *will be* like a lion to Ephraim,
And like a young lion to the house of
Judah.
I, *even* I, will tear *them* and go away;
I will take *them* away, and no one shall
rescue.
15 I will return again to My place
Till they acknowledge their offense.
Then they will seek My face;
In their affliction they will earnestly
seek Me."

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

6 Come, and let us return to the
LORD;
For He has torn, but He will heal us;
He has stricken, but He will bind us up.
2 After two days He will revive us;
On the third day He will raise us up,
That we may live in His sight.
3 Let us know,
Let us pursue the knowledge of the
LORD.
His going forth is established as the
morning;
He will come to us like the rain,
Like the latter *and* former rain to the
earth.

IMPENITENCE OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

4 "O Ephraim, what shall I do to you?
O Judah, what shall I do to you?
For your faithfulness is like a morning
cloud,
And like the early dew it goes away.
5 Therefore I have hewn *them* by the
prophets,
I have slain them by the words of My
mouth;
And your judgments *are like* light *that*
goes forth.
6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice,
And the knowledge of God more than
burnt offerings.

7 "But like men[a] they transgressed the
covenant;
There they dealt treacherously
with Me.
8 Gilead *is* a city of evildoers
And defiled with blood.
9 As bands of robbers lie in wait for a
man,
So the company of priests murder on
the way to Shechem;
Surely they commit lewdness.
10 I have seen a horrible thing in the
house of Israel:
There *is* the harlotry of Ephraim;
Israel is defiled.
11 Also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed
for you,
When I return the captives of My
people.

7 "When I would have healed Israel,
Then the iniquity of Ephraim was
uncovered,
And the wickedness of Samaria.
For they have committed fraud;
A thief comes in;
A band of robbers takes spoil outside.
2 They do not consider in their hearts

6:7 [a]Or *like Adam*



LIFE APP

Faithfulness / Hosea 6:4

God has always been faithful to His people, but His people have not always been faithful to Him. This is the problem addressed in Hosea 6:4: "For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, and like the early dew it goes away." The people had been fair-weather friends to God, following Him when it was convenient; but their faithfulness never lasted. They loved, served, and obeyed Him for a little while. But then they jumped right back into behaviors that offended, hurt, and angered Him. Over and over again God called them to repentance.

Have you ever had a fair-weather friend who was only there for you when it was convenient? It's heartbreaking when a so-called friend treats you that way. But often that's how we treat God. We may serve Him quite faithfully when we need something or when we're afraid of something. However, eventually things settle down and we forget about all God has done for us and begin to take Him for granted. We tend to read God's Word only when we need Him to help us and most of the time, we pray very little, if we remember to pray at all. When things go well in our lives, our faithfulness can evaporate as surely as the morning dew.

But this doesn't have to happen. The Holy Spirit lives inside us and He can give us the strength and determination to remain faithful. We can literally be full of faith, completely trusting in God to guide us throughout all the good times and bad times in our lives. Even when we don't understand what's going on around us, we can trust Him and be faithful. Even when we think we may have things under control, we still need to trust Him and be faithful, recognizing that it is only God who truly has control. He is always faithful, keeping all His promises and never going back on His Word. Make a decision to not have dew-like faithfulness to Him. Rather, make your faithfulness like the ocean: deep, lasting, and powerful.

That I remember all their
wickedness;
Now their own deeds have
surrounded them;
They are before My face.
3They make a king glad with their
wickedness,
And princes with their lies.

4"They *are* all adulterers.
Like an oven heated by a baker—
He ceases stirring *the fire* after
kneading the dough,
Until it is leavened.
5In the day of our king
Princes have made *him* sick, inflamed
with wine;
He stretched out his hand with
scoffers.
6They prepare their heart like an oven,
While they lie in wait;
Their baker[a] sleeps all night;
In the morning it burns like a flaming
fire.
7They are all hot, like an oven,
And have devoured their judges;
All their kings have fallen.
None among them calls upon Me.

8"Ephraim has mixed himself among the
peoples;
Ephraim is a cake unturned.
9Aliens have devoured his strength,
But he does not know *it;*
Yes, gray hairs are here and there on
him,
Yet he does not know *it.*
10And the pride of Israel testifies to his
face,
But they do not return to the LORD
their God,
Nor seek Him for all this.

FUTILE RELIANCE ON THE NATIONS

11"Ephraim also is like a silly dove,
without sense—
They call to Egypt,
They go to Assyria.
12Wherever they go, I will spread My net
on them;
I will bring them down like birds of
the air;
I will chastise them
According to what their congregation
has heard.

Hosea 7:11

For a while, Israel paid "protection money"—in the form of taxes—to Assyria to keep them from attacking. When the Israelites got tired of giving their hard earned money to a foreign king, they decided to team up with the Egyptians and fight Assyria. In 722 B.C., the Assyrians responded by attacking Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, and taking many people captive. The northern kingdom never recovered from the devastation.

13"Woe to them, for they have fled
from Me!
Destruction to them,
Because they have transgressed
against Me!
Though I redeemed them,
Yet they have spoken lies against Me.

SIN

What does God think of His people's sin?

Hosea 7:13

14They did not cry out to Me with their
heart
When they wailed upon their beds.

"They assemble together for[a] grain and
new wine,
They rebel against Me;[b]
15Though I disciplined *and* strengthened
their arms,
Yet they devise evil against Me;
16They return, *but* not to the Most
High;[a]
They are like a treacherous bow.
Their princes shall fall by the sword
For the cursings of their tongue.

7:6 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Syriac and Targum read *Their anger;* Septuagint reads *Ephraim.* **7:14** [a]Following Masoretic Text and Targum; Vulgate reads *thought upon;* Septuagint reads *slashed themselves for* (compare 1 Kings 18:28). [b]Following Masoretic Text, Syriac, and Targum; Septuagint omits *They rebel against Me;* Vulgate reads *They departed from Me.* **7:16** [a]Or *upward*

This *shall be* their derision in the land
of Egypt.

THE APOSTASY OF ISRAEL

8 "*Set* the trumpet[a] to your mouth!
He shall come like an eagle against
the house of the LORD,
Because they have transgressed My
covenant
And rebelled against My law.
2 Israel will cry to Me,
'My God, we know You!'
3 Israel has rejected the good;
The enemy will pursue him.

4 "They set up kings, but not by Me;
They made princes, but I did not
acknowledge *them.*
From their silver and gold
They made idols for themselves—
That they might be cut off.

Hosea 8:5

The "calf" in this verse was probably an idol that people worshiped in Samaria. The capital city of the northern kingdom had the dubious distinction of being the center of the nation's pagan worship. Calves and bulls were especially popular idols in ancient times. People believed the animals symbolized fertility.

5 Your calf is rejected, O Samaria!
My anger is aroused against them—
How long until they attain to
innocence?
6 For from Israel *is* even this:
A workman made it, and it *is* not God;
But the calf of Samaria shall be broken
to pieces.

7 "They sow the wind,
And reap the whirlwind.
The stalk has no bud;
It shall never produce meal.
If it should produce,
Aliens would swallow it up.
8 Israel is swallowed up;
Now they are among the Gentiles
Like a vessel in which *is* no pleasure.
9 For they have gone up to Assyria,
Like a wild donkey alone by itself;
Ephraim has hired lovers.
10 Yes, though they have hired among the
nations,
Now I will gather them;
And they shall sorrow a little,[a]
Because of the burden[b] of the king of
princes.

11 "Because Ephraim has made many
altars for sin,
They have become for him altars for
sinning.
12 I have written for him the great things
of My law,
But they were considered a strange
thing.
13 *For* the sacrifices of My offerings they
sacrifice flesh and eat *it,*
But the LORD does not accept them.
Now He will remember their iniquity
and punish their sins.
They shall return to Egypt.

14 "For Israel has forgotten his Maker,
And has built temples;[a]
Judah also has multiplied fortified
cities;
But I will send fire upon his cities,
And it shall devour his palaces."

JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL'S SIN

9 Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like
other peoples,
For you have played the harlot
against your God.
You have made love *for* hire on every
threshing floor.
2 The threshing floor and the winepress
Shall not feed them,
And the new wine shall fail in her.

3 They shall not dwell in the LORD's land,
But Ephraim shall return to Egypt,
And shall eat unclean *things* in
Assyria.
4 They shall not offer wine *offerings* to
the LORD,
Nor shall their sacrifices be pleasing
to Him.
It shall be like bread of mourners to
them;
All who eat it shall be defiled.

8:1 [a]Hebrew *shophar,* ram's horn **8:10** [a]Or *begin to diminish* [b]Or *oracle* **8:14** [a]Or *palaces*

For their bread *shall be* for their *own* life;
It shall not come into the house of the LORD.

5 What will you do in the appointed day,
And in the day of the feast of the LORD?

Hosea 9:6

Memphis was a city in Egypt known for its pyramids and tombs, not to mention the Sphinx. Located on the west bank of the Nile River, about thirteen miles from Cairo, the city was destroyed in the Middle Ages.

6 For indeed they are gone because of destruction.
Egypt shall gather them up;
Memphis shall bury them.
Nettles shall possess their valuables of silver;
Thorns *shall be* in their tents.

7 The days of punishment have come;
The days of recompense have come.
Israel knows!
The prophet *is* a fool,
The spiritual man *is* insane,
Because of the greatness of your iniquity and great enmity.
8 The watchman of Ephraim *is* with my God;
But the prophet *is* a fowler's[a] snare in all his ways—
Enmity in the house of his God.
9 They are deeply corrupted,
As in the days of Gibeah.
He will remember their iniquity;
He will punish their sins.

10 "I found Israel
Like grapes in the wilderness;
I saw your fathers
As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season.
But they went to Baal Peor,
And separated themselves *to that* shame;
They became an abomination like the thing they loved.
11 *As for* Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird—
No birth, no pregnancy, and no conception!
12 Though they bring up their children,
Yet I will bereave them to the last man.
Yes, woe to them when I depart from them!
13 Just as I saw Ephraim like Tyre,
planted in a pleasant place,
So Ephraim will bring out his children to the murderer."

14 Give them, O LORD—
What will You give?
Give them a miscarrying womb
And dry breasts!

15 "All their wickedness *is* in Gilgal,
For there I hated them.
Because of the evil of their deeds
I will drive them from My house;
I will love them no more.
All their princes *are* rebellious.
16 Ephraim is stricken,
Their root is dried up;
They shall bear no fruit.
Yes, were they to bear children,
I would kill the darlings of their womb."

17 My God will cast them away,
Because they did not obey Him;
And they shall be wanderers among the nations.

ISRAEL'S SIN AND CAPTIVITY

10 Israel empties *his* vine;
He brings forth fruit for himself.
According to the multitude of his fruit
He has increased the altars;
According to the bounty of his land
They have embellished *his sacred* pillars.
2 Their heart is divided;
Now they are held guilty.
He will break down their altars;
He will ruin their *sacred* pillars.

3 For now they say,
"We have no king,
Because we did not fear the LORD.

9:8 [a] That is, one who catches birds in a trap or snare

MAKING IT REAL // HOSEA 10:12

Righteous Rain Imagine that you're working outside on a sticky, hot summer day when suddenly it starts to rain. You may get soaking wet, but that's a good thing, because you feel totally refreshed!

Hosea 10:12 tells us that God will send His righteousness like rain when we worship Him. Are you ready for that rain? Do you want it to drench not only you but your friends and family as well? Don't you want everyone you meet to get soaked with God's saving rain? You can help that happen.

When we worship the Lord, He pours out His refreshing rain! God's thunderstorms are rolling into your circumstances, ready to rain down His saving power! So the next time it starts raining outside, let that be a reminder of what God wants to do in your life. (See also: Ps. 20:6; 33:20; 37:40; 109:26; Acts 3:19.)

Words to Live By

Rains: The word translated as "rains" in Hosea 10:12 is the Hebrew word *yarah* (yaw-raw'). It means "to flow as water," "to throw," or "to rain." When we seek God and His righteousness, He won't just sprinkle a little bit of righteousness on us. Rather, He will throw down refreshing rain.

And as for a king, what would he do
for us?"
4 They have spoken words,
Swearing falsely in making a covenant.
Thus judgment springs up like
hemlock in the furrows of the
field.

5 The inhabitants of Samaria fear
Because of the calf[a] of Beth Aven.
For its people mourn for it,
And its priests shriek for it—
Because its glory has departed from it.

Hosea 10:5

Jeroboam, Solomon's son, decided to have two golden calves made and placed in Bethel and Dan to make them convenient for worshipers in the northern kingdom. Aaron made the same mistake—committed the same sin—centuries earlier while Moses was on Mount Sinai talking to God.

6 *The idol* also shall be carried to Assyria
As a present for King Jareb.
Ephraim shall receive shame,
And Israel shall be ashamed of his own
counsel.

7 *As for* Samaria, her king is cut off
Like a twig on the water.
8 Also the high places of Aven, the sin
of Israel,
Shall be destroyed.
The thorn and thistle shall grow on
their altars;
They shall say to the mountains,
"Cover us!"
And to the hills, "Fall on us!"

9 "O Israel, you have sinned from the
days of Gibeah;
There they stood.
The battle in Gibeah against the
children of iniquity[a]
Did not overtake them.
10 When *it is* My desire, I will chasten
them.
Peoples shall be gathered against them
When I bind them for their two
transgressions.[a]
11 Ephraim *is* a trained heifer
That loves to thresh *grain;*
But I harnessed her fair neck,
I will make Ephraim pull *a plow.*

10:5 [a]Literally *calves* **10:9** [a]So read many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *unruliness.* **10:10** [a]Or *in their two habitations*

Judah shall plow;
Jacob shall break his clods."

12 Sow for yourselves righteousness;
Reap in mercy;
Break up your fallow ground,
For *it is* time to seek the LORD,
Till He comes and rains righteousness
on you.

13 You have plowed wickedness;
You have reaped iniquity.
You have eaten the fruit of lies,
Because you trusted in your own way,
In the multitude of your mighty men.
14 Therefore tumult shall arise among
your people,
And all your fortresses shall be
plundered
As Shalman plundered Beth Arbel in
the day of battle—
A mother dashed in pieces upon *her*
children.
15 Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel,
Because of your great wickedness.
At dawn the king of Israel
Shall be cut off utterly.

GOD
Does God love His people?
Hosea 11:1

GOD'S CONTINUING LOVE FOR ISRAEL

11 "When Israel *was* a child,
I loved him,
And out of Egypt I called My
son.
2 *As* they called them,[a]
So they went from them;[b]
They sacrificed to the Baals,
And burned incense to carved
images.

3 "I taught Ephraim to walk,
Taking them by their arms;[a]
But they did not know that I healed
them.
4 I drew them with gentle cords,[a]
With bands of love,
And I was to them as those who take
the yoke from their neck.[b]
I stooped *and* fed them.

5 "He shall not return to the land of
Egypt;
But the Assyrian shall be his king,
Because they refused to repent.
6 And the sword shall slash in his cities,
Devour his districts,
And consume *them,*
Because of their own counsels.
7 My people are bent on backsliding
from Me.
Though they call to the Most High,[a]
None at all exalt *Him.*

8 "How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, Israel?
How can I make you like Admah?
How can I set you like Zeboiim?
My heart churns within Me;
My sympathy is stirred.
9 I will not execute the fierceness of My
anger;
I will not again destroy Ephraim.
For I *am* God, and not man,
The Holy One in your midst;
And I will not come with terror.[a]

10 "They shall walk after the LORD.
He will roar like a lion.
When He roars,
Then *His* sons shall come trembling
from the west;
11 They shall come trembling like a bird
from Egypt,
Like a dove from the land of Assyria.
And I will let them dwell in their
houses,"
Says the LORD.

GOD'S CHARGE AGAINST EPHRAIM

12 "Ephraim has encircled Me with lies,
And the house of Israel with deceit;
But Judah still walks with God,
Even with the Holy One[a] *who is*
faithful.

11:2 [a]Following Masoretic Text and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *Just as I called them;* Targum interprets as *I sent prophets to a thousand of them.* [b]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *from My face.* **11:3** [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate read *My arms.* **11:4** [a]Literally *cords of a man* [b]Literally *jaws* **11:7** [a]Or *upward* **11:9** [a]Or *I will not enter a city* **11:12** [a]Or *holy ones*

12 "Ephraim feeds on the wind,
And pursues the east wind;
He daily increases lies and desolation.
Also they make a covenant with the Assyrians,
And oil is carried to Egypt.

2"The LORD also *brings* a charge against Judah,
And will punish Jacob according to his ways;
According to his deeds He will recompense him.
3He took his brother by the heel in the womb,
And in his strength he struggled with God.[a]
4Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed;
He wept, and sought favor from Him.
He found Him *in* Bethel,
And there He spoke to us—
5That is, the LORD God of hosts.
The LORD *is* His memorable name.
6So you, by *the help of* your God, return;
Observe mercy and justice,
And wait on your God continually.

7"A cunning Canaanite!
Deceitful scales *are* in his hand;
He loves to oppress.
8And Ephraim said,
'Surely I have become rich,
I have found wealth for myself;
In all my labors
They shall find in me no iniquity that *is* sin.'

9"But I *am* the LORD your God,
Ever since the land of Egypt;
I will again make you dwell in tents,
As in the days of the appointed feast.
10I have also spoken by the prophets,
And have multiplied visions;
I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets."

11Though Gilead *has* idols—
Surely they are vanity—
Though they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal,
Indeed their altars *shall be* heaps in the furrows of the field.

12Jacob fled to the country of Syria;
Israel served for a spouse,
And for a wife he tended *sheep.*
13By a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt,
And by a prophet he was preserved.
14Ephraim provoked *Him* to anger most bitterly;
Therefore his Lord will leave the guilt of his bloodshed upon him,
And return his reproach upon him.

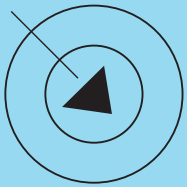
RELENTLESS JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL

13 When Ephraim spoke, trembling,
He exalted *himself* in Israel;
But when he offended through Baal *worship*, he died.
2Now they sin more and more,
And have made for themselves molded images,
Idols of their silver, according to their skill;
All of it *is* the work of craftsmen.
They say of them,
"Let the men who sacrifice[a] kiss the calves!"
3Therefore they shall be like the morning cloud
And like the early dew that passes away,
Like chaff blown off from a threshing floor
And like smoke from a chimney.

4"Yet I *am* the LORD your God
Ever since the land of Egypt,
And you shall know no God but Me;
For *there is* no savior besides Me.
5I knew you in the wilderness,
In the land of great drought.
6When they had pasture, they were filled;
They were filled and their heart was exalted;
Therefore they forgot Me.

7"So I will be to them like a lion;
Like a leopard by the road I will lurk;
8I will meet them like a bear deprived *of her cubs;*
I will tear open their rib cage,

12:3 [a]Compare Genesis 32:28 **13:2** [a]Or *those who offer human sacrifice*



PROMISE

God promises to love you freely.

"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from him" (Hos. 14:4).

A father might say to his son, "I've done my best, but this is it. You've gone too far this time. I want you out of my house. You are no longer my son." A boyfriend might say to his girlfriend, "I thought I loved you, but now I just don't feel the same. I guess it's over." A coach might say to his team, "You guys better pull yourselves together. If we don't win tonight, I don't ever want to see your faces again!"

Limits. Conditions. Terms. Humans have a hard time loving without limits, so it can be hard to imagine a God who does. But that's His promise—to freely love you beyond anything you've ever experienced here on earth. He sees your scars. He's even been hurt by your sin and by the times you've rejected Him. And He still loves you. He will never kick you out, never love-you-and-leave-you, never throw you off the team. We humans just can't grasp a limitless love. So you'll have to trust Him. He'll prove it.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 36:10; Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 8:38, 39; 1 John 3:1; 4:7–16

And there I will devour them like a lion.
The wild beast shall tear them.

9"O Israel, you are destroyed,[a]
But your help[b] *is* from Me.
10I will be your King;[a]
Where *is any other,*
That he may save you in all your cities?
And your judges to whom you said,
'Give me a king and princes'?
11I gave you a king in My anger,
And took *him* away in My wrath.

12"The iniquity of Ephraim *is* bound up;
His sin *is* stored up.
13The sorrows of a woman in childbirth shall come upon him.
He *is* an unwise son,
For he should not stay long where children are born.

14"I will ransom them from the power of the grave;[a]
I will redeem them from death.
O Death, I will be your plagues![b]
O Grave,[c] I will be your destruction![d]
Pity is hidden from My eyes."

15Though he is fruitful among *his* brethren,
An east wind shall come;
The wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness.
Then his spring shall become dry,
And his fountain shall be dried up.
He shall plunder the treasury of every desirable prize.
16Samaria is held guilty,[a]
For she has rebelled against her God.
They shall fall by the sword,
Their infants shall be dashed in pieces,
And their women with child ripped open.

ISRAEL RESTORED AT LAST

14 O Israel, return to the LORD your God,
For you have stumbled because of your iniquity;
2Take words with you,
And return to the LORD.
Say to Him,
"Take away all iniquity;

13:9 [a]Literally *it* or *he destroyed you* [b]Literally *in your help* **13:10** [a]Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *Where is your king?* **13:14** [a]Or *Sheol* [b]Septuagint reads *where is your punishment?* [c]Or *Sheol* [d]Septuagint reads *where is your sting?* **13:16** [a]Septuagint reads *shall be disfigured*

Receive *us* graciously,
For we will offer the sacrifices[a] of our lips.
3 Assyria shall not save us,
We will not ride on horses,
Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, '*You are* our gods.'
For in You the fatherless finds mercy."

4 "I will heal their backsliding,
I will love them freely,
For My anger has turned away from him.
5 I will be like the dew to Israel;
He shall grow like the lily,
And lengthen his roots like Lebanon.
6 His branches shall spread;
His beauty shall be like an olive tree,
And his fragrance like Lebanon.
7 Those who dwell under his shadow shall return;
They shall be revived *like* grain,
And grow like a vine.
Their scent[a] *shall be* like the wine of Lebanon.

8 "Ephraim *shall say,* 'What have I to do anymore with idols?'
I have heard and observed him.
I *am* like a green cypress tree;
Your fruit is found in Me."

9 Who *is* wise?
Let him understand these things.
Who is prudent?
Let him know them.
For the ways of the LORD *are* right;
The righteous walk in them,
But transgressors stumble in them.

14:2 [a]Literally *bull calves;* Septuagint reads *fruit.*
14:7 [a]Literally *remembrance*

Joel

DATE OF WRITING: PROBABLY 835–805 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET HOSEA
THEME: THE JUDGMENT AND GRACE OF GOD
PURPOSE: REPENT AND AVOID JUDGMENT BY GOD.

OUTLINE

1:1—2:17 .....Locusts and an Enemy Army
2:18–32.....The Lord Will Bless His People
3:1–21 .....The Lord Will Punish the Nations

KEY VERSE:

"And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Joel 2:32).

THEN /// Things were going pretty well for the people in Joel's day. There hadn't been a disaster in a while. Tragedy seemed far away. There was only one problem: the people were still not being faithful to God and, even if circumstances felt good, judgment was on its way.

Joel's message was about those consequences, and they came in the form of flying grasshopper-type insects that could strip a farmer's land in almost the time it took them to fly across it. These grasshoppers were called locusts. Joel's warning about locusts reminded his people that life is *not* in our control.

NOW /// Life pretty much seems in our control, doesn't it? If we work hard in school, we get good grades. If we get good grades, we'll get a good job one day. If we plant crops, they will grow. If we feed our dog, he will stick around. Sometimes life seems so certain and so sure that we forget how fragile and uncertain it is.

We never know what the future might hold. Only God knows. Without Him, how can we face the difficult times that are sure to come one day? No life is problem free; no life can be lived without hard times. We can't just live as if God is unnecessary. Any minute the locusts (difficulties and hard times) will be on their way.

REALITY CHECK /// We often wonder why bad things happen to people who don't seem to deserve it. Why do hard times hit us and the ones we love? Why doesn't God keep difficulties from finding their way into our lives? The answers to those questions may be difficult to understand.

First we must understand that sin is alive and well in this world. You see it everywhere and no one can live a sinless life. Wherever sin is, God's will is not. When people make wrong choices, those choices affect everyone. Even when we think no one will be hurt by our behavior, we never know what the consequences might be. Think of it this way: a young person decides to break the rules and have an alcoholic drink; then he gets in the car to drive home. Because his reactions are slowed by alcohol, he gets in an accident that kills a man. That man was a father, and his son must now grow up without a dad. Because he doesn't have a dad, the child grows up angry and ends up going to jail for murder. The story goes on, one sin building on another. Get it?

Sometimes bad things don't seem to have a reason we can trace. Sometimes they just happen for no apparent reason. During those times, we just have to trust that God knows what He's doing. We have to believe that God meant it when He said, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you . . . thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

THE LAND LAID WASTE

2 Hear this, you elders,
And give ear, all you inhabitants of the land!
Has *anything like* this happened in your days,
Or even in the days of your fathers?
3 Tell your children about it,
Let your children *tell* their children,
And their children another generation.

4 What the chewing locust[a] left, the swarming locust has eaten;
What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten;
And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.

5 Awake, you drunkards, and weep;
And wail, all you drinkers of wine,
Because of the new wine,
For it has been cut off from your mouth.
6 For a nation has come up against My land,
Strong, and without number;
His teeth *are* the teeth of a lion,

1:4 [a]Exact identity of these locusts is unknown.

Joel 1:4

A locust looks like a large grasshopper with two sets of wings and a brown-colored body two to three inches long. Locusts travel in swarms that can number in the millions. The swarm can be large enough to blot out the sun in the sky and strip a field completely bare—down to its last leaf—within minutes.

And he has the fangs of a fierce lion.
7 He has laid waste My vine,
And ruined My fig tree;
He has stripped it bare and thrown *it* away;
Its branches are made white.

8 Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth
For the husband of her youth.
9 The grain offering and the drink offering
Have been cut off from the house of the LORD;
The priests mourn, who minister to the LORD.
10 The field is wasted,
The land mourns;
For the grain is ruined,
The new wine is dried up,
The oil fails.

11 Be ashamed, you farmers,
Wail, you vinedressers,
For the wheat and the barley;
Because the harvest of the field has perished.
12 The vine has dried up,
And the fig tree has withered;
The pomegranate tree,
The palm tree also,
And the apple tree—
All the trees of the field are withered;
Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men.

MOURNING FOR THE LAND

13 Gird yourselves and lament, you priests;
Wail, you who minister before the altar;
Come, lie all night in sackcloth,
You who minister to my God;
For the grain offering and the drink offering
Are withheld from the house of your God.
14 Consecrate a fast,
Call a sacred assembly;
Gather the elders
And all the inhabitants of the land
Into the house of the LORD your God,
And cry out to the LORD.

15 Alas for the day!
For the day of the LORD *is* at hand;
It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.
16 Is not the food cut off before our eyes,
Joy and gladness from the house of our God?
17 The seed shrivels under the clods,
Storehouses are in shambles;
Barns are broken down,
For the grain has withered.
18 How the animals groan!
The herds of cattle are restless,
Because they have no pasture;
Even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.[a]

19 O LORD, to You I cry out;
For fire has devoured the open pastures,
And a flame has burned all the trees of the field.
20 The beasts of the field also cry out to You,
For the water brooks are dried up,
And fire has devoured the open pastures.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

2 Blow the trumpet in Zion,
And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;
For the day of the LORD is coming,
For it is at hand:
2 A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains.

1:18 [a] Septuagint and Vulgate read *are made desolate.*

Joel 2:1

Two questions need to be answered here: (1) Where is Zion? (2) What's with the trumpet? Mount Zion is the hill in Jerusalem where Solomon built the first temple. The trumpet was an ancestor of the modern church bell. It was used to call people together for religious ceremonies and special festivals. Occasionally it was used to sound an alarm or to call troops to battle.

A people *come*, great and strong,
The like of whom has never been;
Nor will there ever be any *such* after them,
Even for many successive generations.

3 A fire devours before them,
And behind them a flame burns;
The land *is* like the Garden of Eden before them,
And behind them a desolate wilderness;
Surely nothing shall escape them.
4 Their appearance is like the appearance of horses;
And like swift steeds, so they run.
5 With a noise like chariots
Over mountaintops they leap,
Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble,
Like a strong people set in battle array.

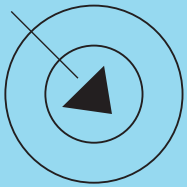
6 Before them the people writhe in pain;
All faces are drained of color.[a]
7 They run like mighty men,
They climb the wall like men of war;
Every one marches in formation,
And they do not break ranks.
8 They do not push one another;
Every one marches in his own column.[a]
Though they lunge between the weapons,
They are not cut down.[b]
9 They run to and fro in the city,
They run on the wall;
They climb into the houses,
They enter at the windows like a thief.
10 The earth quakes before them,
The heavens tremble;
The sun and moon grow dark,
And the stars diminish their brightness.
11 The LORD gives voice before His army,
For His camp is very great;
For strong *is the One* who executes His word.
For the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible;
Who can endure it?

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

12 "Now, therefore," says the LORD,
"Turn to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."
13 So rend your heart, and not your garments;
Return to the LORD your God,
For He *is* gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger, and of great kindness;
And He relents from doing harm.
14 Who knows *if* He will turn and relent,
And leave a blessing behind Him—
A grain offering and a drink offering
For the LORD your God?

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Consecrate a fast,
Call a sacred assembly;
16 Gather the people,
Sanctify the congregation,
Assemble the elders,
Gather the children and nursing babes;
Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber,
And the bride from her dressing room.
17 Let the priests, who minister to the LORD,
Weep between the porch and the altar;
Let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD,
And do not give Your heritage to reproach,
That the nations should rule over them.
Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where *is* their God?'"

2:6 [a]Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *gather blackness.* **2:8** [a]Literally *his own highway* [b]That is, they are not halted by losses



PROMISE

God promises to send His Spirit.

"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28).

Joel was a prophet. God spoke to him and revealed things that would happen thousands of years after Joel died. Joel prophesied that a time would come on earth when God would give His Spirit to everyone. God would even use young people, Joel said, to prophesy from visions—to speak God's words and proclaim the Good News.

Joel's prophecy came true. We can read in the second chapter of Acts about what happened when the Holy Spirit was "poured out" on a group of believers. These people were filled with such power and love for the Lord that their words and actions changed the world forever.

That same Holy Spirit lives inside of you if you are a Christian. He is not some mysterious "it." He is the third Person of the Trinity, right there beside the Father and the Son. Before Jesus died, He told His disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit (John 16:5–15). The Holy Spirit is available to you today. He is the One who helps you, who teaches you, who guides you into full truth, and who gives Jesus' message to you. The Holy Spirit lives in you—in your heart. Get to know Him. Allow Him to guide you and you, too, can change your world!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Ezekiel 39:29; John 16:4–15; Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 1:14; 1 John 4:13

THE LAND REFRESHED

18 Then the LORD will be zealous for His land,
And pity His people.
19 The LORD will answer and say to His people,
"Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil,
And you will be satisfied by them;
I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.

20 "But I will remove far from you the northern *army,*
And will drive him away into a barren and desolate land,
With his face toward the eastern sea
And his back toward the western sea;
His stench will come up,
And his foul odor will rise,
Because he has done monstrous things."

21 Fear not, O land;
Be glad and rejoice,
For the LORD has done marvelous things!
22 Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field;
For the open pastures are springing up,
And the tree bears its fruit;
The fig tree and the vine yield their strength.
23 Be glad then, you children of Zion,
And rejoice in the LORD your God;
For He has given you the former rain faithfully,[a]
And He will cause the rain to come down for you—
The former rain,
And the latter rain in the first *month.*
24 The threshing floors shall be full of wheat,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.

25 "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten,

2:23 [a]Or *the teacher of righteousness*

The crawling locust,
The consuming locust,
And the chewing locust,[a]
My great army which I sent among you.
26 You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied,
And praise the name of the LORD your God,
Who has dealt wondrously with you;
And My people shall never be put to shame.
27 Then you shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel:
I *am* the LORD your God
And there is no other.
My people shall never be put to shame.

GOD'S SPIRIT POURED OUT

28 "And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
29 And also on *My* menservants and on *My* maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

30 "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:
Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.
31 The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

SALVATION
Who can be saved?
Joel 2:32

32 And it shall come to pass
That whoever calls on the name of the LORD
Shall be saved.
For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance,
As the LORD has said,
Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

GOD JUDGES THE NATIONS

3 "For behold, in those days and at that time,
When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem,
2 I will also gather all nations,
And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
And I will enter into judgment with them there
On account of My people, My heritage Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations;
They have also divided up My land.
3 They have cast lots for My people,
Have given a boy *as payment* for a harlot,
And sold a girl for wine, that they may drink.

4 "Indeed, what have you to do with Me,
O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia?
Will you retaliate against Me?
But if you retaliate against Me,
Swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head;

Joel 3:4
Tyre and Sidon were Mediterranean coastal cities famous for their trading business. They weren't necessarily enemies of Israel, but they were eager for Jerusalem to fall so they could take over the trade routes controlled by Judah.

5 Because you have taken My silver and My gold,
And have carried into your temples My prized possessions.
6 Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem
You have sold to the Greeks,
That you may remove them far from their borders.

7 "Behold, I will raise them
Out of the place to which you have sold them,

2:25 [a]Compare 1:4

And will return your retaliation upon
your own head.
8 I will sell your sons and your
daughters
Into the hand of the people of Judah,
And they will sell them to the
Sabeans,[a]
To a people far off;
For the LORD has spoken."

9 Proclaim this among the nations:
"Prepare for war!
Wake up the mighty men,
Let all the men of war draw near,
Let them come up.
10 Beat your plowshares into swords
And your pruning hooks into spears;
Let the weak say, 'I *am* strong.'"
11 Assemble and come, all you nations,
And gather together all around.
Cause Your mighty ones to go down
there, O LORD.

12 "Let the nations be wakened, and
come up to the Valley of
Jehoshaphat;
For there I will sit to judge all the
surrounding nations.

Joel 3:13

At harvest time, grapes were gathered in baskets and carried to a large vat. Barefoot workers would then stomp on the grapes, squeezing out the juice that flowed down a slope into another container. There it was collected in clay jars or wineskins and stored until it fermented and became wine. The days of harvesting and squashing the grapes were times of celebration and joy for the people of Judah and Israel.

13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is
ripe.
Come, go down;
For the winepress is full,
The vats overflow—
For their wickedness *is* great."

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of
decision!
For the day of the LORD *is* near in the
valley of decision.
15 The sun and moon will grow dark,
And the stars will diminish their
brightness.
16 The LORD also will roar from Zion,
And utter His voice from Jerusalem;
The heavens and earth will shake;
But the LORD will be a shelter for His
people,
And the strength of the children of
Israel.

17 "So you shall know that I *am* the LORD
your God,
Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain.
Then Jerusalem shall be holy,
And no aliens shall ever pass through
her again."

GOD BLESSES HIS PEOPLE

18 And it will come to pass in that day
That the mountains shall drip with
new wine,
The hills shall flow with milk,
And all the brooks of Judah shall be
flooded with water;
A fountain shall flow from the house of
the LORD
And water the Valley of Acacias.

19 "Egypt shall be a desolation,
And Edom a desolate wilderness,
Because of violence *against* the people
of Judah,
For they have shed innocent blood in
their land.
20 But Judah shall abide forever,
And Jerusalem from generation to
generation.
21 For I will acquit them of the guilt
of bloodshed, whom I had not
acquitted;
For the LORD dwells in Zion."

3:8 [a]Literally *Shebaites* (compare Isaiah 60:6 and Ezekiel 27:22)

Amos

DATE OF WRITING: 760 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET AMOS
THEME: THE JUDGMENT OF GOD IS ABOUT TO FALL ON ISRAEL
PURPOSE: IMMORALITY AND INJUSTICE SHOW A SOCIETY THAT HAS LOST CONTACT WITH GOD.

OUTLINE

1:1—3:2 .....Crimes of the Nations Will Be Punished
3:3—6:14 .....Israel and Samaria Will Be Destroyed
7:1—9:10 .....Five Visions of Israel's Punishment
9:11–15 .....Israel's Bright Future

KEY VERSE:

Seek good and not evil, that you may live; so the LORD God of hosts will be with you (Amos 5:14).

THEN /// Amos was a prophet at a time when life was good for Israel. The economy was stable. Business was booming. War was at a minimum. It was a great time to be alive for the Hebrews.

It was also a great time to be comfortable, to be complacent, and to be self-centered. Life was going so well, in general, that people really didn't want to be bothered with unpleasantness. They didn't want to think about the poor and the struggling elements of their society. They didn't want to think about obedience to God. They didn't want to have to think too much at all. But Amos' message was that they needed to think about all those things and respond obediently. It was not a popular message, but it was a strong one.

NOW /// While Amos' message wasn't welcomed, it was necessary. Many poor people in his land were receiving no help from those who were better off. These same wealthy people would show up at religious services and put on a show that they were living according to God's law, but their lives were empty of compassion.

Unfortunately, that sad reality is one with which we are all familiar. Not much has changed since Amos' day—our society is just as self-serving and lacking in compassion. Many thousands of people in our country don't have enough food to eat; millions throughout the world live in life-threatening poverty. But how many of us ever think of sacrificing a luxury in order to give to those in need? We can still benefit from the words of Amos.

REALITY CHECK /// Amos' message could just as easily be spoken to us today: "Do you know what God thinks of your selfish, comfortable existence? He thinks it has nothing to do with Him at all. You are living apart from God and apart from people who need you. Wake up and start living a better life."

It's so easy to get comfortable with life and never even notice those around us. But that's not what a life of faith should look like.

It's also very easy to forget our need of God when things are going well. All our attention is focused completely on the moment. We tend to forget God and begin to allow our lives to be filled with the luxuries of life instead of faith in God; it's almost like we worship things instead of God. But it's at those times we need to remember what God said, "I am the LORD your God and there is no other" (Joel 2:27).

1 The words of Amos, who was among
the sheepbreeders[a] of Tekoa, which
he saw concerning Israel in the days
of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of
Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel,
two years before the earthquake.
2 And he said:

"The LORD roars from Zion,
And utters His voice from Jerusalem;
The pastures of the shepherds
mourn,
And the top of Carmel withers."

JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS

3 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Damascus,
and for four,

Amos 1:3

Syria, the area northeast of the Sea of Galilee, had been under Israel's control during the reign of David. Things changed when David's son, Solomon, became king. Syria, with its capital city of Damascus, united with other nations in the area against Israel. From that point on, the Syrians and the Israelites battled each other frequently in war.

I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they have threshed Gilead
with implements of iron.

1:1 [a]Compare 2 Kings 3:4

4 But I will send a fire into the house of
Hazael,
Which shall devour the palaces of
Ben-Hadad.
5 I will also break the *gate* bar of
Damascus,
And cut off the inhabitant from the
Valley of Aven,
And the one who holds the scepter
from Beth Eden.
The people of Syria shall go captive
to Kir,"
Says the LORD.

6 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Gaza, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they took captive the whole
captivity
To deliver *them* up to Edom.

Amos 1:6
The Philistines lived in coastal cities along the Mediterranean Sea. Not content with merely one capital city, the Philistines boasted five: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. The Israelites and Philistines were long-time enemies, but their battles were especially nasty during David's lifetime.

7 But I will send a fire upon the wall of
Gaza,
Which shall devour its palaces.
8 I will cut off the inhabitant from
Ashdod,
And the one who holds the scepter
from Ashkelon;
I will turn My hand against Ekron,
And the remnant of the Philistines
shall perish,"
Says the Lord GOD.

9 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Tyre, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they delivered up the whole
captivity to Edom,
And did not remember the covenant
of brotherhood.
10 But I will send a fire upon the wall of
Tyre,
Which shall devour its palaces."

11 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Edom, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because he pursued his brother with
the sword,
And cast off all pity;
His anger tore perpetually,
And he kept his wrath forever.
12 But I will send a fire upon Teman,
Which shall devour the palaces of
Bozrah."

13 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of the people
of Ammon, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they ripped open the women
with child in Gilead,
That they might enlarge their territory.

Amos 1:13
The people of Ammon were actually distant relatives of the Israelites. They were descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham (the father of the Jews). Rabbah, the capital of ancient Ammon, is today known as Amman, the capital of Jordan.

14 But I will kindle a fire in the wall of
Rabbah,
And it shall devour its palaces,
Amid shouting in the day of battle,
And a tempest in the day of the
whirlwind.
15 Their king shall go into captivity,
He and his princes together,"
Says the LORD.

2 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Moab,
and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*

Because he burned the bones of the
king of Edom to lime.
2But I will send a fire upon Moab,
And it shall devour the palaces of
Kerioth;
Moab shall die with tumult,
With shouting *and* trumpet sound.
3And I will cut off the judge from its
midst,
And slay all its princes with him,"
Says the LORD.

JUDGMENT ON JUDAH

4Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Judah, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they have despised the law of
the LORD,
And have not kept His
commandments.
Their lies lead them astray,
Lies which their fathers followed.
5But I will send a fire upon Judah,
And it shall devour the palaces of
Jerusalem."

JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL

6Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of Israel, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they sell the righteous for
silver,
And the poor for a pair of sandals.
7They pant after[a] the dust of the earth
which is on the head of the poor,
And pervert the way of the humble.
A man and his father go in to the *same*
girl,
To defile My holy name.
8They lie down by every altar on clothes
taken in pledge,
And drink the wine of the condemned
in the house of their god.

9"Yet *it was* I *who* destroyed the Amorite
before them,
Whose height *was* like the height of
the cedars,
And he *was as* strong as the oaks;
Yet I destroyed his fruit above
And his roots beneath.
10Also *it was* I *who* brought you up from
the land of Egypt,
And led you forty years through the
wilderness,
To possess the land of the Amorite.
11I raised up some of your sons as
prophets,
And some of your young men as
Nazirites.
Is it not so, O you children of Israel?"
Says the LORD.
12"But you gave the Nazirites wine to
drink,
And commanded the prophets
saying,
'Do not prophesy!'

13"Behold, I am weighed down by you,
As a cart full of sheaves is weighed
down.
14Therefore flight shall perish from the
swift,
The strong shall not strengthen his
power,
Nor shall the mighty deliver himself;
15He shall not stand who handles the
bow,
The swift of foot shall not escape,
Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver
himself.
16The most courageous men of might
Shall flee naked in that day,"
Says the LORD.

AUTHORITY OF THE PROPHET'S MESSAGE

3 Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying:

2"You only have I known of all the
families of the earth;
Therefore I will punish you for all your
iniquities."

3Can two walk together, unless they are
agreed?
4Will a lion roar in the forest, when he
has no prey?
Will a young lion cry out of his den, if
he has caught nothing?

2:7 [a]Or *trample on*

5 Will a bird fall into a snare on the
earth, where there is no trap
for it?
Will a snare spring up from the earth,
if it has caught nothing at all?
6 If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not
the people be afraid?
If there is calamity in a city, will not
the LORD have done *it?*

7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing,
Unless He reveals His secret to His
servants the prophets.
8 A lion has roared!
Who will not fear?
The Lord GOD has spoken!
Who can but prophesy?

PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL'S SINS

9 "Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod,[a]
And in the palaces in the land of
Egypt, and say:
'Assemble on the mountains of
Samaria;
See great tumults in her midst,
And the oppressed within her.
10 For they do not know to do right,'
Says the LORD,
'Who store up violence and robbery in
their palaces.'"

11 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"An adversary *shall be* all around the
land;
He shall sap your strength from you,
And your palaces shall be plundered."

12 Thus says the LORD:

"As a shepherd takes from the mouth
of a lion
Two legs or a piece of an ear,
So shall the children of Israel be taken
out
Who dwell in Samaria—
In the corner of a bed and on the edge[a]
of a couch!
13 Hear and testify against the house of
Jacob,"
Says the Lord GOD, the God of hosts,
14 "That in the day I punish Israel for their
transgressions,
I will also visit *destruction* on the altars
of Bethel;

Amos 3:12

In 722 B.C., Assyria attacked and defeated Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. The Assyrians took many Israelites captive and brought in foreigners to live in Canaan. Before long, the Israelites left in Samaria began marrying and having kids with the foreigners; they also adopted their idol worship. This mingling continued generation after generation until the distinction between the Israelites and the foreigners disappeared altogether. The descendants of these mixed marriages were known as Samaritans.

And the horns of the altar shall be
cut off
And fall to the ground.
15 I will destroy the winter house along
with the summer house;
The houses of ivory shall perish,
And the great houses shall have an
end,"
Says the LORD.

4 Hear this word, you cows of Bashan,
who *are* on the mountain of
Samaria,
Who oppress the poor,
Who crush the needy,
Who say to your husbands,[a] "Bring
wine, let us drink!"
2 The Lord GOD has sworn by His
holiness:
"Behold, the days shall come upon you
When He will take you away with
fishhooks,
And your posterity with fishhooks.
3 You will go out *through* broken *walls,*
Each one straight ahead of her,
And you will be cast into Harmon,"
Says the LORD.

4 "Come to Bethel and transgress,
At Gilgal multiply transgression;
Bring your sacrifices every morning,
Your tithes every three days.[a]

3:9 [a]Following Masoretic Text; Septuagint reads *Assyria.* **3:12** [a]The Hebrew is uncertain. **4:1** [a]Literally *their lords* or *their masters* **4:4** [a]Or *years* (compare Deuteronomy 14:28)

Amos 4:4

Bethel and Gilgal were both important cities in Israel's history. Bethel was the place where Jacob had his life-changing dream of a stairway to heaven. Gilgal was the site of a memorial to God for His protection of the Israelites when they crossed the Jordan River. The people of Israel proved their lack of respect for their history by making both places centers for pagan worship.

5 Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with
leaven,
Proclaim *and* announce the freewill
offerings;
For this you love,
You children of Israel!"
Says the Lord GOD.

ISRAEL DID NOT ACCEPT CORRECTION

6 "Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all
your cities,
And lack of bread in all your places;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

7 "I also withheld rain from you,
When *there were* still three months to
the harvest.
I made it rain on one city,
I withheld rain from another city.
One part was rained upon,
And where it did not rain the part
withered.
8 So two *or* three cities wandered to
another city to drink water,
But they were not satisfied;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

9 "I blasted you with blight and
mildew.
When your gardens increased,
Your vineyards,
Your fig trees,
And your olive trees,
The locust devoured *them;*
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

10 "I sent among you a plague after the
manner of Egypt;
Your young men I killed with a sword,
Along with your captive horses;
I made the stench of your camps come
up into your nostrils;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

11 "I overthrew *some* of you,
As God overthrew Sodom and
Gomorrah,
And you were like a firebrand plucked
from the burning;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

12 "Therefore thus will I do to you,
O Israel;
Because I will do this to you,
Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"

13 For behold,
He who forms mountains,
And creates the wind,
Who declares to man what his[a]
thought *is,*
And makes the morning darkness,
Who treads the high places of the
earth—
The LORD God of hosts *is* His name.

A LAMENT FOR ISRAEL

5 Hear this word which I take up against you, a lamentation, O house of Israel:

2 The virgin of Israel has fallen;
She will rise no more.
She lies forsaken on her land;
There is no one to raise her up.

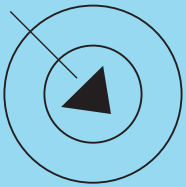
3 For thus says the Lord GOD:

"The city that goes out by a thousand
Shall have a hundred left,
And that which goes out by a hundred
Shall have ten left to the house of
Israel."

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

4 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel:

4:13 [a]Or *His*



PROMISE

God promises to be with you.

Seek good and not evil, that you may live; so the LORD *God of hosts will be with you, as you have spoken* (Amos 5:14).

Many groups, factions, and nations claim to have God on their side. Sometimes even the opposing sides in a war both say their cause is the one God favors. Sometimes it can be confusing, but it's important to remember that God is concerned with the condition of our hearts, not the rhetoric of our causes. As a matter of fact, everything we do and say should be based on pleasing Him. So if that is how we're living, then our causes will be His causes, and not just our own. God will be with us. It may sound simple, but our part is to follow Him and to seek good and not evil.

Easier said than done? Relying on your own ability, you'll think it's impossible to even do that one thing: seek good and not evil. As a matter of fact, even David (a man after God's own heart!) failed to obey God at times. But David was quick to turn back to God when he messed up. David understood what God really wanted. "You do not delight in burnt offering," he told God. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise" (Ps. 51:16, 17). God wants a perfect heart, one that you constantly wash with repentance and forgiveness.

When God says you must start doing right, He's not looking for exact perfection. He's looking for someone who really wants to obey Him, who will pray as David did: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10). You can live a life that seeks good, not evil. He will be with you.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// 2 Chronicles 13:10–12; Psalm 118:5–9; Zechariah 10:5

"Seek Me and live;
5 But do not seek Bethel,
Nor enter Gilgal,
Nor pass over to Beersheba;
For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity,
And Bethel shall come to nothing.
6 Seek the LORD and live,
Lest He break out like fire *in* the house of Joseph,
And devour *it,*
With no one to quench *it* in Bethel—
7 You who turn justice to wormwood,
And lay righteousness to rest in the earth!"

8 He made the Pleiades and Orion;
He turns the shadow of death into morning
And makes the day dark as night;
He calls for the waters of the sea
And pours them out on the face of the earth;
The LORD *is* His name.
9 He rains ruin upon the strong,
So that fury comes upon the fortress.

10 They hate the one who rebukes in the gate,
And they abhor the one who speaks uprightly.
11 Therefore, because you tread down the poor
And take grain taxes from him,
Though you have built houses of hewn stone,
Yet you shall not dwell in them;
You have planted pleasant vineyards,
But you shall not drink wine from them.
12 For I know your manifold transgressions
And your mighty sins:
Afflicting the just *and* taking bribes;
Diverting the poor *from justice* at the gate.
13 Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time,
For it *is* an evil time.

14 Seek good and not evil,
That you may live;

So the LORD God of hosts will be with
you,
As you have spoken.
15 Hate evil, love good;
Establish justice in the gate.
It may be that the LORD God of hosts
Will be gracious to the remnant of
Joseph.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

16 Therefore the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, says this:

"*There shall be* wailing in all streets,
And they shall say in all the
highways,
'Alas! Alas!'
They shall call the farmer to
mourning,
And skillful lamenters to wailing.
17 In all vineyards *there shall be* wailing,
For I will pass through you,"
Says the LORD.

18 Woe to you who desire the day of the
LORD!
For what good *is* the day of the LORD
to you?
It *will be* darkness, and not light.
19 It *will be* as though a man fled from
a lion,
And a bear met him!
Or *as though* he went into the house,
Leaned his hand on the wall,
And a serpent bit him!
20 *Is* not the day of the LORD darkness,
and not light?
Is it not very dark, with no brightness
in it?

21 "I hate, I despise your feast days,
And I do not savor your sacred
assemblies.
22 Though you offer Me burnt offerings
and your grain offerings,
I will not accept *them,*
Nor will I regard your fattened peace
offerings.
23 Take away from Me the noise of your
songs,
For I will not hear the melody of your
stringed instruments.
24 But let justice run down like water,
And righteousness like a mighty
stream.

CHARACTER
Does God care about our character?
Amos 5:24

25 "Did you offer Me sacrifices and
offerings
In the wilderness forty years, O house
of Israel?
26 You also carried Sikkuth[a] your king[b]
And Chiun,[c] your idols,
The star of your gods,
Which you made for yourselves.
27 Therefore I will send you into captivity
beyond Damascus,"
Says the LORD, whose name *is* the God
of hosts.

WARNINGS TO ZION AND SAMARIA

6 Woe to you *who are* at ease in Zion,
And trust in Mount Samaria,
Notable persons in the chief
nation,
To whom the house of Israel comes!
2 Go over to Calneh and see;
And from there go to Hamath the
great;
Then go down to Gath of the
Philistines.
Are you better than these kingdoms?
Or is their territory greater than your
territory?

3 *Woe to* you who put far off the day of
doom,
Who cause the seat of violence to
come near;
4 Who lie on beds of ivory,
Stretch out on your couches,
Eat lambs from the flock
And calves from the midst of the
stall;
5 Who sing idly to the sound of stringed
instruments,
And invent for yourselves musical
instruments like David;
6 Who drink wine from bowls,
And anoint yourselves with the best
ointments,

5:26 [a]A pagan deity [b]Septuagint and Vulgate read *tabernacle of Moloch.* [c]A pagan deity

But are not grieved for the affliction
of Joseph.
7 Therefore they shall now go captive as
the first of the captives,
And those who recline at banquets
shall be removed.

8 The Lord GOD has sworn by Himself,
The LORD God of hosts says:
"I abhor the pride of Jacob,
And hate his palaces;
Therefore I will deliver up *the* city
And all that is in it."

9 Then it shall come to pass, that if ten men remain in one house, they shall die. 10 And when a relative *of the dead,* with one who will burn *the bodies,* picks up the bodies[a] to take them out of the house, he will say to one inside the house, "*Are there* any more with you?"

Then someone will say, "None."

And he will say, "Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the LORD."

11 For behold, the LORD gives a
command:
He will break the great house into
bits,
And the little house into pieces.

12 Do horses run on rocks?
Does *one* plow *there* with oxen?
Yet you have turned justice into gall,
And the fruit of righteousness into
wormwood,
13 You who rejoice over Lo Debar,[a]
Who say, "Have we not taken
Karnaim[b] for ourselves
By our own strength?"

14 "But, behold, I will raise up a nation
against you,
O house of Israel,"
Says the LORD God of hosts;
"And they will afflict you from the
entrance of Hamath
To the Valley of the Arabah."

VISION OF THE LOCUSTS

7 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop; indeed *it was* the late crop after the king's mowings. 2 And so it was, when they had finished eating the grass of the land, that I said:

"O Lord GOD, forgive, I pray!
Oh, that Jacob may stand,
For he *is* small!"
3 *So* the LORD relented concerning this.
"It shall not be," said the LORD.

VISION OF THE FIRE

4 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, the Lord GOD called for conflict by fire, and it consumed the great deep and devoured the territory. 5 Then I said:

"O Lord GOD, cease, I pray!
Oh, that Jacob may stand,
For he *is* small!"
6 *So* the LORD relented concerning this.
"This also shall not be," said the Lord
GOD.

VISION OF THE PLUMB LINE

7 Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall *made* with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. 8 And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"

And I said, "A plumb line."

Then the Lord said:

"Behold, I am setting a plumb line
In the midst of My people Israel;
I will not pass by them anymore.
9 The high places of Isaac shall be
desolate,
And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be
laid waste.
I will rise with the sword against the
house of Jeroboam."

AMAZIAH'S COMPLAINT

10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. 11 For thus Amos has said:

'Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
And Israel shall surely be led away
captive
From their own land.'"

6:10 [a]Literally *bones* **6:13** [a]Literally *Nothing* [b]Literally *Horns,* symbol of strength

12 Then Amaziah said to Amos:

"Go, you seer!
Flee to the land of Judah.
There eat bread,
And there prophesy.
13 But never again prophesy at Bethel,
For it *is* the king's sanctuary,
And it *is* the royal residence."

14 Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah:

"I *was* no prophet,
Nor *was* I a son of a prophet,
But I *was* a sheepbreeder[a]
And a tender of sycamore fruit.
15 Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock,
And the LORD said to me,
'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'
16 Now therefore, hear the word of the LORD:
You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel,
And do not spout against the house of Isaac.'

17 "Therefore thus says the LORD:

'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city;
Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword;
Your land shall be divided by *survey* line;
You shall die in a defiled land;
And Israel shall surely be led away captive
From his own land.'"

VISION OF THE SUMMER FRUIT

8 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, a basket of summer fruit. 2 And He said, "Amos, what do you see?"
So I said, "A basket of summer fruit."
Then the LORD said to me:

"The end has come upon My people Israel;
I will not pass by them anymore.
3 And the songs of the temple
Shall be wailing in that day,"
Says the Lord GOD—
"Many dead bodies everywhere,
They shall be thrown out in silence."

4 Hear this, you who swallow up[a] the needy,
And make the poor of the land fail,

5 Saying:

"When will the New Moon be past,
That we may sell grain?
And the Sabbath,
That we may trade wheat?
Making the ephah small and the shekel large,
Falsifying the scales by deceit,
6 That we may buy the poor for silver,
And the needy for a pair of sandals—
Even sell the bad wheat?"

7 The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
"Surely I will never forget any of their works.
8 Shall the land not tremble for this,
And everyone mourn who dwells in it?
All of it shall swell like the River,[a]
Heave and subside
Like the River of Egypt.

9 "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD,
"That I will make the sun go down at noon,
And I will darken the earth in broad daylight;
10 I will turn your feasts into mourning,
And all your songs into lamentation;
I will bring sackcloth on every waist,
And baldness on every head;
I will make it like mourning for an only *son,*
And its end like a bitter day.

11 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD,
"That I will send a famine on the land,
Not a famine of bread,
Nor a thirst for water,
But of hearing the words of the LORD.
12 They shall wander from sea to sea,
And from north to east;

7:14 [a]Compare 2 Kings 3:4 **8:4** [a]Or *trample on* (compare 2:7) **8:8** [a]That is, the Nile; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *River;* Masoretic Text reads *the light.*

They shall run to and fro, seeking the
word of the LORD,
But shall not find *it.*

13"In that day the fair virgins
And strong young men
Shall faint from thirst.

Amos 8:14

Dan was located in northern Israel and Beersheba was located in the south. The references to Dan and Beersheba were another way of saying "from one end of the country to the other."

14"Those who swear by the sin[a] of
Samaria,
Who say,
'As your god lives, O Dan!'
And, 'As the way of Beersheba lives!'
They shall fall and never rise again."

THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL

9 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said:

"Strike the doorposts, that the
thresholds may shake,
And break them on the heads of them
all.
I will slay the last of them with the
sword.
He who flees from them shall not get
away,
And he who escapes from them shall
not be delivered.

2"Though they dig into hell,[a]
From there My hand shall take them;
Though they climb up to heaven,
From there I will bring them down;
3And though they hide themselves on
top of Carmel,
From there I will search and take
them;
Though they hide from My sight at the
bottom of the sea,
From there I will command the
serpent, and it shall bite them;
4Though they go into captivity before
their enemies,
From there I will command the sword,
And it shall slay them.
I will set My eyes on them for harm
and not for good."

5The Lord GOD of hosts,
He who touches the earth and it
melts,
And all who dwell there mourn;
All of it shall swell like the River,[a]
And subside like the River of Egypt.
6He who builds His layers in the sky,
And has founded His strata in the
earth;
Who calls for the waters of the sea,
And pours them out on the face of the
earth—
The LORD *is* His name.

7"*Are* you not like the people of Ethiopia
to Me,
O children of Israel?" says the LORD.
"Did I not bring up Israel from the land
of Egypt,
The Philistines from Caphtor,
And the Syrians from Kir?

8"Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD *are*
on the sinful kingdom,
And I will destroy it from the face of
the earth;
Yet I will not utterly destroy the house
of Jacob,"
Says the LORD.

9"For surely I will command,
And will sift the house of Israel among
all nations,
As *grain* is sifted in a sieve;
Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to
the ground.
10All the sinners of My people shall die
by the sword,
Who say, 'The calamity shall not
overtake nor confront us.'

ISRAEL WILL BE RESTORED

11"On that day I will raise up
The tabernacle[a] of David, which has
fallen down,
And repair its damages;
I will raise up its ruins,

8:14 [a]Or *Ashima,* a Syrian goddess **9:2** [a]Or *Sheol* **9:5** [a]That is, the Nile **9:11** [a]Literally *booth,* figure of a deposed dynasty

And rebuild it as in the days of old;
12 That they may possess the remnant of
Edom,[a]
And all the Gentiles who are called by
My name,"
Says the LORD who does this thing.

13 "Behold, the days are coming," says the
LORD,
"When the plowman shall overtake the
reaper,
And the treader of grapes him who
sows seed;
The mountains shall drip with sweet
wine,
And all the hills shall flow *with it.*
14 I will bring back the captives of My
people Israel;
They shall build the waste cities and
inhabit *them;*
They shall plant vineyards and drink
wine from them;
They shall also make gardens and eat
fruit from them.
15 I will plant them in their land,
And no longer shall they be pulled up
From the land I have given them,"
Says the LORD your God.

9:12 [a]Septuagint reads *mankind.*

Obadiah

DATE OF WRITING: 586 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET OBADIAH
THEME: GOD'S JUDGMENT ON EDOM
PURPOSE: GOD WILL JUDGE THOSE WHO HARASS HIS PEOPLE.

OUTLINE

1–9.....God's Judgment on Edom
10–14.....Edom's Cruelty Toward Israel
15–21.....Israel's Victory

KEY VERSE:

"As you have done, it shall be done to you" (Obadiah 15).

THEN /// Obadiah's prophecy pertained to a neighboring nation. There had been a rift between Edom and Israel for many generations. It was actually more of a family feud than a rift.

A few hundred years before, Israel's ancestor and Edom's ancestor were brothers. Israel (Jacob) cheated Edom (Esau) out of the family fortune, so to speak. And forever after, these two nations hated each other. That hatred was passed down from generation to generation and grew bigger and fiercer along the way. If Israel received blessings, then Edom booed. If Israel fell into hard times, then Edom cheered.

Finally, Obadiah, a prophet of God, stood up to say, "ENOUGH!"

While Israel was certainly not a perfect nation, they were God's chosen people. To stand against Israel was like taking sides against God! For Edom to continue to bully and harass God's people would *not* do. Obadiah sent the message loud and clear that Edom would face the consequences for being a bully.

What were those consequences to be? Edom would die out completely as a nation. Wow!—that was pretty harsh. Was God serious? Have you seen Edom on a map lately?

NOW /// Edom lost it all because of pride and arrogance. Their relationship with Israel went from bad to worse and the Edomites refused to change. They stubbornly held on to their right to be right and would not back down even in the face of God's condemnation. They paid the ultimate price for their arrogance.

In the world today, we often see arrogant politicians causing problems in the government. We see prideful people creating chaos in the world around them. And we see people who think only of themselves causing friendships to fail, families to be torn apart, and daily life made more difficult—all because of selfish pride.

REALITY CHECK /// Pride and arrogance ruin lives, destroy families, and can bring an end to powerful nations. Pride and arrogance never lead to any good thing. They represent an attitude of entitlement—a self-centered belief that you are better and more deserving than others. Pride and arrogance will cause friends to become enemies and life to become nothing more than a fight to get what you think you deserve.

According to Scripture, pride is a sin that separates us from God: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). Whether we speak of the relationships between nations or between friends, pride will serve to separate and destroy. But humility—thinking of others before yourself—will create life-long bonds of love and peace.

In the Book of Romans, Paul said no one should "think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (12:3). He also said, "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (12:10). Can you imagine what a wonderful place the world would be if we all lived our lives based on those wise words?

THE COMING JUDGMENT ON EDOM

The vision of Obadiah.

Thus says the Lord GOD concerning Edom
(We have heard a report from the LORD,
And a messenger has been sent among the nations, *saying,*
"Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle"):

2 "Behold, I will make you small among the nations;
You shall be greatly despised.
3 The pride of your heart has deceived you,
You who dwell in the clefts of the rock,
Whose habitation is high;
You who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?'
4 Though you ascend *as* high as the eagle,

Obadiah 1

The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, and the Israelites, the descendants of Jacob. The rivalry that existed between the two brothers was passed on to their descendants. The Edomites refused to let Israel cross through Edom on their way to the Promised Land. The Israelites were forced to travel through the desert. The bad feelings between the two countries continued for centuries.

And though you set your nest among
the stars,
From there I will bring you down," says
the LORD.

5"If thieves had come to you,
If robbers by night—
Oh, how you will be cut off!—
Would they not have stolen till they
had enough?
If grape-gatherers had come to you,
Would they not have left *some*
gleanings?

6"Oh, how Esau shall be searched out!
How his hidden treasures shall be
sought after!
7All the men in your confederacy
Shall force you to the border;
The men at peace with you
Shall deceive you *and* prevail against
you.
Those who eat your bread shall lay a
trap[a] for you.
No one is aware of it.

8"Will I not in that day," says the LORD,
"Even destroy the wise *men* from Edom,
And understanding from the
mountains of Esau?
9Then your mighty men, O Teman, shall
be dismayed,
To the end that everyone from the
mountains of Esau
May be cut off by slaughter.

EDOM MISTREATED HIS BROTHER

10"For violence against your brother
Jacob,
Shame shall cover you,
And you shall be cut off forever.
11In the day that you stood on the other
side—
In the day that strangers carried
captive his forces,
When foreigners entered his gates
And cast lots for Jerusalem—
Even you *were* as one of them.

12"But you should not have gazed on the
day of your brother
In the day of his captivity;[a]
Nor should you have rejoiced over the
children of Judah
In the day of their destruction;
Nor should you have spoken proudly
In the day of distress.
13You should not have entered the gate
of My people
In the day of their calamity.
Indeed, you should not have gazed on
their affliction
In the day of their calamity,
Nor laid *hands* on their substance
In the day of their calamity.
14You should not have stood at the
crossroads
To cut off those among them who
escaped;
Nor should you have delivered up
those among them who remained
In the day of distress.

15"For the day of the LORD upon all the
nations *is* near;
As you have done, it shall be done to
you;
Your reprisal shall return upon your
own head.

JUDGMENT
Do we reap what we sow?
Obadiah 15

16For as you drank on My holy
mountain,
So shall all the nations drink
continually;
Yes, they shall drink, and swallow,
And they shall be as though they had
never been.

7 [a]Or *wound,* or *plot* **12** [a]Literally *on the day he became a foreigner*

ISRAEL'S FINAL TRIUMPH

17 "But on Mount Zion there shall be
deliverance,
And there shall be holiness;
The house of Jacob shall possess their
possessions.
18 The house of Jacob shall be a fire,
And the house of Joseph a flame;
But the house of Esau *shall be* stubble;
They shall kindle them and devour
them,
And no survivor shall *remain* of the
house of Esau,"
For the LORD has spoken.

19 The South[a] shall possess the
mountains of Esau,
And the Lowland shall possess
Philistia.
They shall possess the fields of
Ephraim
And the fields of Samaria.
Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead.
20 And the captives of this host of the
children of Israel
Shall possess the land of the
Canaanites
As far as Zarephath.
The captives of Jerusalem who are in
Sepharad
Shall possess the cities of the South.[a]
21 Then saviors[a] shall come to Mount
Zion
To judge the mountains of Esau,
And the kingdom shall be the LORD's.

19 [a]Hebrew *Negev* **20** [a]Hebrew *Negev* **21** [a]Or *deliverers*

Jonah

DATE OF WRITING: 750 B.C.
AUTHOR: MOST LIKELY JONAH
THEME: GOD'S COMPASSION IS FOR ALL PEOPLE
PURPOSE: WE ARE TO ADOPT GOD'S GRACIOUS ATTITUDE TOWARD ALL.

OUTLINE

1:1–17 .....Jonah Disobeys the Lord
2:1–10 .....Jonah Prays to the Lord
3:1–10 .....Jonah Goes to Nineveh, and the People Repent
4:1–11 .....Jonah Is Angry Because the Lord Showed Mercy

KEY VERSE:

"Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own Mercy. But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD" (Jonah 2:8, 9).

THEN /// Jonah is a story about the stubbornness of human nature versus the stubborn grace of God.

In one corner, you have a prophet who is so caught up in his own hate and prejudice against Nineveh that he would rather run from God than preach there. In the other corner, you have a God who loves both the delinquent prophet and the evil city and would rather give them both a hard time than let them stay the way they are.

The prophet throws the first punch by hopping a ship that's headed the opposite way from Nineveh. God counters the blow by sending a storm and big fish that, working together, give the prophet three days to evaluate his choices.

At the end of round one, Jonah does go to Nineveh.

That's the most famous part of the story, but in round two is the real knockout. Once Jonah preaches to Nineveh, the people respond beautifully. They repent of their sin and God puts off their destruction. A happy ending? Not yet. Jonah is still so full of hate for these people that he is disappointed that they repented.

Did you get that? The *prophet* is *disappointed* that the people *repented*. You decide who won after you've read the rest.

NOW /// Sometimes we look at God's call as a scary thing. Sometimes we think that God will call us to do the one thing we think we can't bear to do. In the case of Jonah, this was true; but, because Jonah's hate was a sin, he needed to face it, not run from it.

In your life, discovering God's call, or task, for you will be a process that might have scary parts and will certainly have fun parts. But you can feel certain that God does not rule our hearts just waiting with glee until He can make us do the thing we most dread. In fact, God most often calls us to do what He has already put a passion and a dream in our hearts to do.

REALITY CHECK /// If you had lived in Jonah's country in Jonah's day, his hatred for the people of Nineveh would not have seemed so unusual. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, a cruel and warlike nation that had threatened Israel for years. Jonah had reason to be angry, fearful, and hesitant to offer himself, much less God's grace, to this city.

This brings us to the same issue that Jonah struggled with: why should God be gracious to those who are not gracious to others? Most often, we would rather see the bad guys get beaten up in the end. If they get away with their evil, we feel disappointed. But God's grace is God's business. Jonah's story reminds us to leave judgment to God and trust Him to do what is just in the end.

JONAH'S DISOBEDIENCE

1 Now the word of the LORD came
to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,
2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city,
and cry out against it; for their wickedness
has come up before Me." 3 But Jonah arose
to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the
LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a
ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare,
and went down into it, to go with them to
Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

THE STORM AT SEA

4 But the LORD sent out a great wind on the
sea, and there was a mighty tempest on
the sea, so that the ship was about to be
broken up.
5 Then the mariners were afraid; and ev-
ery man cried out to his god, and threw the
cargo that *was* in the ship into the sea, to
lighten the load.[a] But Jonah had gone down
into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain
down, and was fast asleep.
6 So the captain came to him, and said to
him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise,
call on your God; perhaps your God will
consider us, so that we may not perish."
7 And they said to one another, "Come,
let us cast lots, that we may know for

1:5 [a] Literally *from upon them*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // JONAH 1:1–3

Runaway God called Jonah to go to a place called Nineveh to deliver a message for Him. Jonah didn't like the Ninevites. They were the enemies of his people, and he did not want to tell them God's message. So, instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah got on a ship going in the opposite direction. He was running away. But God didn't let Jonah get away. A huge storm blew up and tossed the ship around in the waves like it was a toy boat. Jonah was thrown overboard and swallowed by a big fish. Really! Jonah was alive, but stuck inside the belly of a giant fish! Surrounded by half-digested food and fish belly gunk, Jonah decided it was a better idea to do what God wanted. The fish spit him up and, you guessed it, Jonah went to Nineveh.

Why do we often think that what God wants us to do will be awful? We may hear Him call and we sense His leading, and then run off in the opposite direction trying to get away from Him. Where do you think God is calling you? Are you ready? Or are you plotting an escape route? Will He have to send a big fish to get your attention?

God is a loving God; and while there may be hard days, He does have an amazing plan for you. You may be apprehensive because something is new and different, but you don't have to be afraid that God is wrong. He knows you, and He knows when you're ready for the task. So when God calls you to Nineveh (whatever your "Nineveh" may be), go quickly. The belly of a fish is not the best place to start trusting God. (See also: Ps. 37:23, 24; 40:6–8; Phil. 2:13.)

Words to Live By

To flee: The word translated as "to flee" in Jonah 1:3 is the Hebrew word *barach* (baw-rakh'). It means "to get away quickly or run away." Sometimes, when God calls us to do something, our first instinct is to take off running. Whether we're scared or intimidated or we just don't want to do it, we're tempted to immediately go in the opposite direction. But we don't have to give in to that temptation. We can stand strong where we are and trust God to give us the strength to run *toward* the plans He has for us.

whose cause this trouble *has come* upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. 8Then they said to him, "Please tell us! For whose cause *is* this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?"

9So he said to them, "I *am* a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry *land*."

Jonah 1:1, 2

The city of Nineveh was about five hundred miles away from Jonah's home and the largest city in the ancient world. The wall around Nineveh stretched for almost eight miles. Each of its fifteen gates was "guarded" by a statue of a bull. After King Sennacherib made Nineveh the capital of the Assyrian Empire, he really improved the city. In addition to many beautiful temples, Sennacherib built a seventy-one-room palace, a botanical garden, a zoo, and several parks.

JONAH THROWN INTO THE SEA

10Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. 11Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?"—for the sea was growing more tempestuous.

12And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will



LIFE APP

Responsibility / Jonah 1:1–3

Expectations from others can really be a pain! It's your life, right? Why should anyone have the right to put expectations and limitations on the person you are and the things you choose to do? The argument sounds reasonable. But this way of thinking will lead directly to trouble.

Jonah is a perfect example; he felt he was the victim of unreasonable expectations. Eight hundred miles away from where he lived, there was a city filled with people called Assyrians; they were a war-loving people and were long-standing enemies of Israel—God's people.

But God loves everyone. His love is based on who He is, not on who we are or what we do. So God loved the Assyrians. God told Jonah to go to them and tell them about His love and the forgiveness He wanted to give them.

Jonah was livid! How could God expect him to do such a thing? How could telling these evil people about God be his responsibility? He had served God faithfully and those Assyrians were just horrible people who didn't deserve God—or so Jonah thought. God had a plan, but Jonah didn't want any part of it. So he ran away. Funny how he thought God wouldn't find him somewhere else.

Jonah's actions may seem a bit stupid to us. How foolish to try to run away from God! But are we any different? Don't we run from the things we don't like and don't agree with? Don't we try to find a way out of living up to expectations we feel are wrong?

It might be a good idea to take a look at how Jonah's attempt to run from his responsibilities ended up. He found himself inside the belly of a fish, covered in seaweed and fish innards. All because he didn't understand and didn't agree. We might not end up inside some sea creature, but if we don't live up to the responsibilities in our own lives, we could well find ourselves in places we don't want to be, covered over with regret.

become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest *is* because of me."

13Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. 14Therefore they cried out to the LORD and said, "We pray, O LORD, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O LORD, have done as it pleased You." 15So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. 16Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.

JONAH'S PRAYER AND DELIVERANCE

17Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

2 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly. 2And he said:

"I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction,
And He answered me.

"Out of the belly of Sheol I cried,
And You heard my voice.
3For You cast me into the deep,
Into the heart of the seas,
And the floods surrounded me;
All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.
4Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight;
Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'
5The waters surrounded me, *even* to my soul;
The deep closed around me;
Weeds were wrapped around my head.
6I went down to the moorings of the mountains;
The earth with its bars *closed* behind me forever;
Yet You have brought up my life from the pit,
O LORD, my God.

7"When my soul fainted within me,
I remembered the LORD;
And my prayer went *up* to You,
Into Your holy temple.

8"Those who regard worthless idols
Forsake their own Mercy.
9But I will sacrifice to You
With the voice of thanksgiving;
I will pay what I have vowed.
Salvation *is* of the LORD."

10So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry *land.*

JONAH PREACHES AT NINEVEH

3 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you." 3So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey[a] *in extent.* 4And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH BELIEVE

5So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. 6Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat in ashes. 7And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying,

> Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. 8But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. 9Who can tell *if* God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?

10Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said

3:3 [a]Exact meaning unknown

He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

JONAH'S ANGER AND GOD'S KINDNESS

4 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. 2So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You *are* a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. 3Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for *it is* better for me to die than to live!"

4Then the LORD said, "*Is it* right for you to be angry?"

5So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. 6And the LORD God prepared a plant[a] and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. 7But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it *so* damaged the plant that it withered. 8And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, "*It is* better for me to die than to live."

9Then God said to Jonah, "*Is it* right for you to be angry about the plant?"

And he said, "*It is* right for me to be angry, even to death!"

10But the LORD said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. 11And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?"

4:6 [a]Hebrew *kikayon,* exact identity unknown

Micah

DATE OF WRITING: 730 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET MICAH
THEME: GOD'S COMPASSION IS INCOMPARABLE
PURPOSE: WE ARE TO BE AS CONCERNED AS GOD IS WITH PERSONAL AND SOCIAL MORALITY.

OUTLINE

1:1—2:11 .....The Lord Will Punish His People
2:12, 13 .....A Promise of Restoration to Israel
3:1–12 .....The Lord Will Punish Wicked Rulers and Prophets
4:1—5:15 .....A New Temple in a New Israel
6:1—7:7 .....Israel Is Declared Guilty
7:8–20 .....The Nation Turns to God

KEY VERSE:

And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

THEN ///

Several things set Micah apart as a prophet.

First, Micah preached to both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel (Samaria and Judah). Most of the Old Testament prophets prophesied to one or the other. The fact that Micah spoke to both is significant since there was a longtime feud between the kingdoms. It shows that Micah knew how to rise above petty human conflicts.

Second, Micah actually prophesied that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. This was an amazing feat, since prophets of the Old Testament weren't known as people who often told the future in specifics.

Third, Micah was known for being practical, down-to-earth. He talked about faith in a way that tells us what God expects on a day-to-day basis rather than on a Sunday-to-Sunday basis.

NOW ///

The message of the Book of Micah is one that calls us to repent of our sins and to live our lives honorably. We can often find it difficult to live out our faith every day, especially when we are surrounded by people who live greedy, selfish lives. Sometimes we can feel like aliens lost in a world that doesn't agree with us at all and understands us even less.

But whether or not God is God is not based on what others think or how we feel. We don't worship Him because it's convenient. We should worship God simply because He is—He is the One who created us; He is the One who loves us; He is the One who gave His life so we could live.

REALITY CHECK ///

The Book of Micah calls us to be good people and to live out our faith, not only in how we worship God but also in how we treat other people.

Let's face it, we all know people who drive us crazy. We all know people who act just plain ugly. How on earth can we treat the bullies and the haters well? How can we act lovingly to those who are mean or treat us badly? Nothing can be more difficult than trying to treat someone well when we don't think they deserve it.

Just like we don't worship God based on how we feel, we shouldn't allow our feelings to dictate how we treat others. It's like this: feelings are not right or wrong; it's the way we act on those feelings that can be right or wrong. Feelings just happen to us; but we have a choice how to respond to those feelings. Even when we don't want to, we should always choose to act lovingly. We don't make that choice based on feelings; we make it based on God's will for our lives.

When someone asked Jesus which commandment was the greatest, He said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matt. 22:37–39).

1 The word of the LORD that came to
Micah of Moresheth in the days of
Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of
Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria
and Jerusalem.

THE COMING JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL

2 Hear, all you peoples!
Listen, O earth, and all that is in it!
Let the Lord GOD be a witness against
you,
The Lord from His holy temple.

3 For behold, the LORD is coming out of
His place;
He will come down
And tread on the high places of the
earth.
4 The mountains will melt under Him,

Micah 1:1

During Micah's lifetime, Israel was actually split into two different nations. The northern kingdom, which was called Israel, had Samaria as its capital. The southern kingdom, which was called Judah, had Jerusalem as its capital. Both capital cities also served as the main worship centers for their nations.

And the valleys will split
Like wax before the fire,
Like waters poured down a steep
place.
5All this is for the transgression of
Jacob
And for the sins of the house of
Israel.
What *is* the transgression of Jacob?
Is it not Samaria?
And what *are* the high places of
Judah?
Are they not Jerusalem?

6"Therefore I will make Samaria a heap
of ruins in the field,
Places for planting a vineyard;
I will pour down her stones into the
valley,
And I will uncover her foundations.
7All her carved images shall be beaten
to pieces,
And all her pay as a harlot shall be
burned with the fire;
All her idols I will lay desolate,
For she gathered *it* from the pay of a
harlot,
And they shall return to the pay of a
harlot."

MOURNING FOR ISRAEL AND JUDAH

8Therefore I will wail and howl,
I will go stripped and naked;
I will make a wailing like the jackals
And a mourning like the ostriches,
9For her wounds *are* incurable.
For it has come to Judah;
It has come to the gate of My
people—
To Jerusalem.

10Tell *it* not in Gath,
Weep not at all;
In Beth Aphrah[a]
Roll yourself in the dust.
11Pass by in naked shame, you
inhabitant of Shaphir;
The inhabitant of Zaanan[a] does not
go out.
Beth Ezel mourns;
Its place to stand is taken away from
you.

12For the inhabitant of Maroth pined[a]
for good,
But disaster came down from the
LORD
To the gate of Jerusalem.
13O inhabitant of Lachish,
Harness the chariot to the swift
steeds
(She *was* the beginning of sin to the
daughter of Zion),
For the transgressions of Israel were
found in you.

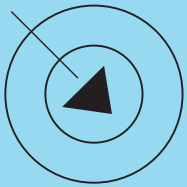
14Therefore you shall give presents to
Moresheth Gath;[a]
The houses of Achzib[b] *shall be* a lie to
the kings of Israel.
15I will yet bring an heir to you,
O inhabitant of Mareshah;[a]
The glory of Israel shall come to
Adullam.

Micah 1:16

The Israelites considered a clean-shaven head shameful. Aside from priests and Levites, the only Israelite man who would have considered shaving his head was one who was going through a time of extreme sadness or mourning.

16Make yourself bald and cut off your
hair,
Because of your precious children;
Enlarge your baldness like an eagle,
For they shall go from you into
captivity.

1:10 [a]Literally *House of Dust* **1:11** [a]Literally *Going Out* **1:12** [a]Literally *was sick*
1:14 [a]Literally *Possession of Gath* [b]Literally *Lie*
1:15 [a]Literally *Inheritance*



PROMISE

God promises to be your king.

"The one who breaks open will come up before them; they will break out, pass through the gate, and go out by it; their king will pass before them, with the LORD *at their head"* (Mic. 2:13).

Sometimes, for a moment, people wonder what it would be like to be part of a royal family—wealth, privilege, honor, and a strong heritage. You are a member of the family of God, and He promises to be your King. That makes you the son or daughter of the King. You will be honored because you belong to Him. You take part in the wealth of your Father. He doesn't rule with an iron fist but with a loving heart. It may be difficult to understand it all now, but you are truly a child of the King. Your title can never be removed, and the Lord will never be dethroned. He will reign forever.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Isaiah 33:22; Zechariah 14:9; 1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16

WOE TO EVILDOERS

2 Woe to those who devise iniquity,
And work out evil on their beds!
At morning light they practice it,
Because it is in the power of their hand.
2 They covet fields and take *them* by violence,
Also houses, and seize *them.*
So they oppress a man and his house,
A man and his inheritance.

3 Therefore thus says the LORD:

"Behold, against this family I am devising disaster,
From which you cannot remove your necks;
Nor shall you walk haughtily,
For this *is* an evil time.
4 In that day *one* shall take up a proverb against you,
And lament with a bitter lamentation, saying:
'We are utterly destroyed!
He has changed the heritage of my people;
How He has removed *it* from me!
To a turncoat He has divided our fields.'"

5 Therefore you will have no one to determine boundaries[a] by lot
In the assembly of the LORD.

LYING PROPHETS

6 "Do not prattle," *you say to those* who prophesy.
So they shall not prophesy to you;[a]
They shall not return insult for insult.[b]
7 *You who are* named the house of Jacob:
"Is the Spirit of the LORD restricted?
Are these His doings?
Do not My words do good
To him who walks uprightly?

8 "Lately My people have risen up as an enemy—
You pull off the robe with the garment
From those who trust *you,* as they pass by,
Like men returned from war.
9 The women of My people you cast out
From their pleasant houses;
From their children
You have taken away My glory forever.

10 "Arise and depart,
For this *is* not *your* rest;
Because it is defiled, it shall destroy,
Yes, with utter destruction.
11 If a man should walk in a false spirit
And speak a lie, *saying,*
'I will prophesy to you of wine and drink,'

2:5 [a]Literally *one casting a surveyor's line*
2:6 [a]Literally *to these* [b]Vulgate reads *He shall not take shame.*

Even he would be the prattler of this people.

ISRAEL RESTORED

12 "I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob,
I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;
I will put them together like sheep of the fold,[a]
Like a flock in the midst of their pasture;
They shall make a loud noise because of *so many* people.
13 The one who breaks open will come up before them;
They will break out,
Pass through the gate,
And go out by it;
Their king will pass before them,
With the LORD at their head."

WICKED RULERS AND PROPHETS

3 And I said:

"Hear now, O heads of Jacob,
And you rulers of the house of Israel:
Is it not for you to know justice?
2 You who hate good and love evil;
Who strip the skin from My people,[a]
And the flesh from their bones;
3 Who also eat the flesh of My people,
Flay their skin from them,
Break their bones,
And chop *them* in pieces
Like *meat* for the pot,
Like flesh in the caldron."

4 Then they will cry to the LORD,
But He will not hear them;
He will even hide His face from them at that time,
Because they have been evil in their deeds.

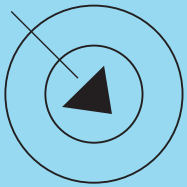
5 Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets
Who make my people stray;
Who chant "Peace"
While they chew with their teeth,
But who prepare war against him
Who puts nothing into their mouths:
6 "Therefore you shall have night without vision,
And you shall have darkness without divination;
The sun shall go down on the prophets,
And the day shall be dark for them.
7 So the seers shall be ashamed,
And the diviners abashed;
Indeed they shall all cover their lips;
For *there is* no answer from God."

8 But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD,
And of justice and might,
To declare to Jacob his transgression
And to Israel his sin.
9 Now hear this,
You heads of the house of Jacob
And rulers of the house of Israel,
Who abhor justice
And pervert all equity,
10 Who build up Zion with bloodshed
And Jerusalem with iniquity:
11 Her heads judge for a bribe,
Her priests teach for pay,
And her prophets divine for money.
Yet they lean on the LORD, and say,
"Is not the LORD among us?
No harm can come upon us."
12 Therefore because of you
Zion shall be plowed *like* a field,
Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple[a]
Like the bare hills of the forest.

THE LORD'S REIGN IN ZION

4 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days
That the mountain of the LORD's house
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And peoples shall flow to it.
2 Many nations shall come and say,
"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths."
For out of Zion the law shall go forth,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

2:12 [a]Hebrew *Bozrah* **3:2** [a]Literally *them*
3:12 [a]Literally *house*



PROMISE

God promises rest and freedom from fear.

But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD *of hosts has spoken* (Mic. 4:4).

"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). This is one of the things Jesus told His followers to pray for whenever they talked to God. Can you imagine what the world would be like if people on earth obeyed Him as faithfully as the angels do now? There'd be no divorce, no drunk drivers, no drug deals, no carjackings, and the list could go on.

There wouldn't even be any war. It's hard to believe that could ever happen. But Jesus wasn't telling you to pray for something impossible. That time is coming, and Micah describes it in this passage. He gives you a picture of rest and security, not behind locked windows and doors but out in the peaceful shade. And note Micah's words of assurance: "For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken." Someday God will give rest to all of His people. Take a moment to appreciate the beauty of this snapshot of the future. Be encouraged; God's will *will* be done.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 16:8, 9; Matthew 11:28; Hebrews 4:9

3 He shall judge between many peoples,
And rebuke strong nations afar off;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.[a]

4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree,
And no one shall make *them* afraid;
For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.
5 For all people walk each in the name of his god,
But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God
Forever and ever.

ZION'S FUTURE TRIUMPH

6 "In that day," says the LORD,
"I will assemble the lame,
I will gather the outcast
And those whom I have afflicted;
7 I will make the lame a remnant,
And the outcast a strong nation;
So the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion
From now on, even forever.
8 And you, O tower of the flock,
The stronghold of the daughter of Zion,
To you shall it come,
Even the former dominion shall come,
The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."

9 Now why do you cry aloud?
Is there no king in your midst?
Has your counselor perished?
For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor.

Micah 4:10

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, led three different attacks against Judah. He took thousands of Jews back to Babylon as prisoners. In 586 B.C., the Babylonian army burned down the temple in Jerusalem.

10 Be in pain, and labor to bring forth,
O daughter of Zion,
Like a woman in birth pangs.
For now you shall go forth from the city,
You shall dwell in the field,
And to Babylon you shall go.

4:3 [a]Compare Isaiah 2:2–4

There you shall be delivered;
There the LORD will redeem you
From the hand of your enemies.

11 Now also many nations have gathered
against you,
Who say, "Let her be defiled,
And let our eye look upon Zion."
12 But they do not know the thoughts of
the LORD,
Nor do they understand His counsel;
For He will gather them like sheaves to
the threshing floor.

13 "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion;
For I will make your horn iron,
And I will make your hooves bronze;
You shall beat in pieces many peoples;
I will consecrate their gain to the
LORD,
And their substance to the Lord of the
whole earth."

5 Now gather yourself in troops,
O daughter of troops;
He has laid siege against us;
They will strike the judge of Israel with
a rod on the cheek.

THE COMING MESSIAH

2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the
thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth *are* from of old,
From everlasting."

3 Therefore He shall give them up,
Until the time *that* she who is in labor
has given birth;
Then the remnant of His brethren
Shall return to the children of Israel.
4 And He shall stand and feed *His flock*
In the strength of the LORD,
In the majesty of the name of the LORD
His God;
And they shall abide,
For now He shall be great
To the ends of the earth;
5 And this *One* shall be peace.

JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL'S ENEMIES

When the Assyrian comes into our
land,
And when he treads in our palaces,
Then we will raise against him
Seven shepherds and eight princely
men.
6 They shall waste with the sword the
land of Assyria,
And the land of Nimrod at its
entrances;
Thus He shall deliver *us* from the
Assyrian,
When he comes into our land
And when he treads within our
borders.

7 Then the remnant of Jacob
Shall be in the midst of many peoples,
Like dew from the LORD,
Like showers on the grass,
That tarry for no man
Nor wait for the sons of men.
8 And the remnant of Jacob
Shall be among the Gentiles,
In the midst of many peoples,
Like a lion among the beasts of the
forest,
Like a young lion among flocks of
sheep,
Who, if he passes through,
Both treads down and tears in pieces,
And none can deliver.
9 Your hand shall be lifted against your
adversaries,
And all your enemies shall be cut off.

10 "And it shall be in that day," says the
LORD,
"That I will cut off your horses from
your midst
And destroy your chariots.
11 I will cut off the cities of your land
And throw down all your
strongholds.
12 I will cut off sorceries from your
hand,
And you shall have no soothsayers.
13 Your carved images I will also cut off,
And your *sacred* pillars from your
midst;
You shall no more worship the work of
your hands;
14 I will pluck your wooden images[a] from
your midst;
Thus I will destroy your cities.

5:14 [a]Hebrew *Asherim,* Canaanite deities

Micah 5:14

According to the ancient Canaanites, Asherah, the goddess of fertility, was the wife of Baal, the number one god in the land. When the Israelites got to Canaan, they started worshiping Baal, Asherah, and many other pagan gods. The places where people worshiped Asherah were marked by carved wooden poles.

15 And I will execute vengeance in anger
and fury
On the nations that have not heard."[a]

GOD PLEADS WITH ISRAEL

6 Hear now what the LORD says:

"Arise, plead your case before the
mountains,
And let the hills hear your voice.
2 Hear, O you mountains, the LORD's
complaint,
And you strong foundations of the
earth;
For the LORD has a complaint against
His people,
And He will contend with Israel.

3 "O My people, what have I done to
you?
And how have I wearied you?
Testify against Me.
4 For I brought you up from the land of
Egypt,
I redeemed you from the house of
bondage;
And I sent before you Moses, Aaron,
and Miriam.
5 O My people, remember now
What Balak king of Moab counseled,
And what Balaam the son of Beor
answered him,
From Acacia Grove[a] to Gilgal,
That you may know the righteousness
of the LORD."

6 With what shall I come before the
LORD,
And bow myself before the High God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt
offerings,
With calves a year old?
7 Will the LORD be pleased with
thousands of rams,
Ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn *for* my
transgression,
The fruit of my body *for* the sin of my
soul?

DEVOTION
What does God require of us?
Micah 6:8

8 He has shown you, O man, what *is*
good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?

PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL'S INJUSTICE

9 The LORD's voice cries to the city—
Wisdom shall see Your name:

"Hear the rod!
Who has appointed it?
10 Are there yet the treasures of
wickedness
In the house of the wicked,
And the short measure *that is* an
abomination?
11 Shall I count pure *those* with the
wicked scales,
And with the bag of deceitful weights?
12 For her rich men are full of violence,
Her inhabitants have spoken lies,
And their tongue is deceitful in their
mouth.

13 "Therefore I will also make *you* sick by
striking you,
By making *you* desolate because of
your sins.
14 You shall eat, but not be satisfied;
Hunger[a] *shall be* in your midst.
You may carry *some* away,[b] but shall
not save *them;*
And what you do rescue I will give
over to the sword.

5:15 [a]Or *obeyed* **6:5** [a]Hebrew *Shittim* (compare Numbers 25:1; Joshua 2:1; 3:1) **6:14** [a]Or *Emptiness* or *Humiliation* [b]Targum and Vulgate read *You shall take hold.*



LIFE APP

Integrity / Micah 6:8

It seems integrity is a trait that's becoming harder to recognize in our society. Having integrity means you do everything in your power to live your life based on what's right. If you have integrity, other people know they can trust you to be faithful to your word. If you say you will do something, then you will do it. Other people will also see that you live a life of honesty, and they will be able to trust you more easily. No one is perfect, but if you have integrity, you do your best to depend on God to give you the strength to live a truthful life filled with honor and respect for others.

The prophet Micah gives us a great picture of how we can set out to live a life of integrity. "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic. 6:8). To live with integrity, we will "do justly"—we will treat others with honesty and respect. We will treat people the way we want them to treat us.

When we live our lives with integrity, others will come to expect us to be merciful because we will always remember how God has been merciful to us, so we will try to give that same mercy to others. A life of integrity is surely one that is lived with humility, as we walk with God. Humility doesn't mean that we set ourselves up to be the doormat for the world. Rather, we know our value comes from our identity in Christ, so we willingly choose to serve Him and others. It often takes more courage to have integrity and choose to serve than it does to go along with the crowd, in the opposite direction.

Integrity isn't something we can create in ourselves. But as we walk in faithfulness with God, He will give us all the strength, courage, and understanding we need to live as people of integrity.

15 "You shall sow, but not reap;
You shall tread the olives, but not
anoint yourselves with oil;
And *make* sweet wine, but not drink
wine.
16 For the statutes of Omri are kept;
All the works of Ahab's house *are*
done;
And you walk in their counsels,
That I may make you a desolation,
And your inhabitants a hissing.
Therefore you shall bear the reproach
of My people."[a]

SORROW FOR ISRAEL'S SINS

7 Woe is me!
For I am like those who gather
summer fruits,
Like those who glean vintage grapes;
There is no cluster to eat
Of the first-ripe fruit *which* my soul
desires.
2 The faithful *man* has perished from
the earth,
And *there is* no one upright among
men.
They all lie in wait for blood;
Every man hunts his brother with a
net.

3 That they may successfully do evil with
both hands—
The prince asks *for gifts,*
The judge *seeks* a bribe,
And the great *man* utters his evil
desire;
So they scheme together.
4 The best of them *is* like a brier;
The most upright *is sharper* than a
thorn hedge;
The day of your watchman and your
punishment comes;
Now shall be their perplexity.

5 Do not trust in a friend;
Do not put your confidence in a
companion;
Guard the doors of your mouth
From her who lies in your bosom.
6 For son dishonors father,
Daughter rises against her mother,
Daughter-in-law against her mother-
in-law;
A man's enemies *are* the men of his
own household.

7 Therefore I will look to the LORD;
I will wait for the God of my
salvation;
My God will hear me.

ISRAEL'S CONFESSION AND COMFORT

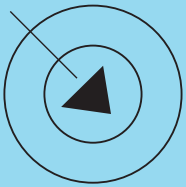
8 Do not rejoice over me, my enemy;
When I fall, I will arise;
When I sit in darkness,
The LORD *will be* a light to me.
9 I will bear the indignation of the
LORD,
Because I have sinned against Him,
Until He pleads my case
And executes justice for me.
He will bring me forth to the light;
I will see His righteousness.
10 Then *she who is* my enemy will see,
And shame will cover her who said
to me,
"Where is the LORD your God?"
My eyes will see her;
Now she will be trampled down
Like mud in the streets.

11 *In* the day when your walls are to be
built,
In that day the decree shall go far and
wide.[a]

Micah 7:12

There were three great oppressors of Israel: Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon. Egypt held the Israelites in slavery for several generations before the Lord used Moses to set the people free. The Assyrians destroyed Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, in 722 B.C. The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Seventy years later, a group of Jewish people were released from captivity in Babylon and allowed to return to the city to rebuild the temple. Roughly seventy years after that, another group of Jews led by Nehemiah was allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city's walls.

6:16 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *of nations.* **7:11** [a]Or *the boundary shall be extended*



PROMISE

God promises to subdue our sins and cast them into the sea.

He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:19).

Sin can haunt you for years. Out of the blue, you may have a flashback of something you did long ago, and just that thought can make you flinch. You may wonder if God does the same thing. Does He keep a DVD archive of your sins—the oldies plus the new releases? At His leisure, does He scroll down through the list and review it? Look at Micah 7:19. It says that God subdues, or conquers, our sins and casts them "into the depths of the sea." No DVDs. No archives or lists. Once you've repented, confessed, and received forgiveness, the files are erased on purpose. He hurls them into the sea. He doesn't replay your stuff because He doesn't even have it anymore. He's done what only He can do—erased your sin forever. It's totally amazing. It's totally grace.

To God, forgiven means forgotten. Someone once said that God throws our sins into the sea and puts up a "No Fishing" sign. No one is allowed to go and fish them out. In your attempt to be more like God, stop playing back your sins. Don't bring them up to yourself or to Him. Accept His forgiveness and don't look back.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 10:15–17; 1 John 1:9

12 *In* that day they[a] shall come to you
From Assyria and the fortified cities,[b]
From the fortress[c] to the River,[d]
From sea to sea,
And mountain *to* mountain.
13 Yet the land shall be desolate
Because of those who dwell in it,
And for the fruit of their deeds.

GOD WILL FORGIVE ISRAEL

14 Shepherd Your people with Your staff,
The flock of Your heritage,
Who dwell solitarily *in* a woodland,
In the midst of Carmel;
Let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead,
As in days of old.

15 "As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt,
I will show them[a] wonders."

16 The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might;
They shall put *their* hand over *their* mouth;
Their ears shall be deaf.
17 They shall lick the dust like a serpent;
They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth.
They shall be afraid of the LORD our God,
And shall fear because of You.

18 Who *is* a God like You,
Pardoning iniquity
And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?

He does not retain His anger forever,
Because He delights *in* mercy.
19 He will again have compassion on us,
And will subdue our iniquities.

You will cast all our[a] sins
Into the depths of the sea.
20 You will give truth to Jacob
And mercy to Abraham,
Which You have sworn to our fathers
From days of old.

7:12 [a]Literally *he,* collective of the captives [b]Hebrew *arey mazor,* possibly *cities of Egypt* [c]Hebrew *mazor*, possibly *Egypt* [d]That is, the Euphrates **7:15** [a]Literally *him,* collective for the captives **7:19** [a]Literally *their*

Nahum

DATE OF WRITING: 620 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET NAHUM
THEME: GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE CITY OF NINEVEH
PURPOSE: GODLESS NATIONS LIKE ASSYRIA WILL SURELY FALL.

OUTLINE

1:1–6 .....The Fierce Judgment of the Lord
1:7–15 .....Assyria's Doom Brings Hope for the Lord's People
2:1—3:19 .....Nineveh, the Capital of Assyria, Will Be Destroyed

KEY VERSE:

The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked (Nahum 1:3).

THEN ///

The message of the prophet Nahum tells of a final showdown between good and evil. Israel was given God's promise that He would deal with the nation of Assyria, specifically with its capital city, Nineveh, once and for all.

When you think of Nineveh, think of an out-of-control city where the police had left town. The gangs had taken over, and there was no justice to be found. It was not a place you'd want to drive through, let alone a place where you'd like to raise your kids. Nineveh was a sin-filled, dark, frightening place whose people had given Israel grief for hundreds of years.

Through Nahum, God promised protection for His people, but judgment for the wicked folks of Nineveh.

NOW ///

Most likely, the people of Israel thought God's judgment on Nineveh would never come, especially after Assyria warred against Israel, tore the people from their homes, and kept them in exile for a time. But God's judgment did come and Assyria suffered greatly for the evil they embraced. There was nowhere they could run from God's justice.

When evil seems to be winning, we might wonder where God is. We might think He either doesn't see or doesn't care. But God will give everyone time to change. He wants everyone to come to Him and live their lives based on His commands.

Evil will always lose and God will always win. That is a fact you can count on. But the timing is in God's hands. God is never late; He's always right on time and the victory is always His.

REALITY CHECK ///

Haters and users exist. That is a fact that is very sad, but it's very true. We all have to deal with people who hurt us, lie to us, or use us. We will all see injustice and prejudice throughout our lives. Sin is definitely in the world; we see it everywhere and every day.

When others hurt us or those we love, we can be filled with anger and want nothing more than revenge. We want justice—those who hurt us should pay the price! But the question is: who are we to decide what that price should be? Who are we to decide what justice looks like?

Romans 12:19 tells us that the Lord says, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." That's because God is the only One who truly knows justice. God is the only One qualified to judge hearts and decide on consequence.

1 The burden[a] against Nineveh. The
book of the vision of Nahum the
Elkoshite.

GOD'S WRATH ON HIS ENEMIES

2 God *is* jealous, and the LORD avenges;
The LORD avenges and *is* furious.
The LORD will take vengeance on His
adversaries,
And He reserves *wrath* for His
enemies;
3 The LORD *is* slow to anger and great
in power,
And will not at all acquit *the wicked.*

The LORD has His way
In the whirlwind and in the storm,
And the clouds *are* the dust of His feet.
4 He rebukes the sea and makes it dry,
And dries up all the rivers.
Bashan and Carmel wither,
And the flower of Lebanon wilts.
5 The mountains quake before Him,
The hills melt,
And the earth heaves[a] at His presence,
Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.

6 Who can stand before His indignation?
And who can endure the fierceness of
His anger?
His fury is poured out like fire,
And the rocks are thrown down by
Him.

1:1 [a]Or *oracle* **1:5** [a]Targum reads *burns.*

Nahum 1:1

Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. The Assyrians destroyed Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, in 722 B.C. They also tried to conquer Judah, the southern kingdom, by surrounding Jerusalem and not allowing any food, water, or supplies to enter the city. Ultimately, they failed in their attempt, but not before causing the people of Jerusalem to suffer terribly.

7 The LORD *is* good,
A stronghold in the day of trouble;
And He knows those who trust in Him.

TRIALS
Where can we find protection?
Nahum 1:7

8 But with an overflowing flood
He will make an utter end of its place,
And darkness will pursue His enemies.

9 What do you conspire against the LORD?
He will make an utter end *of it.*
Affliction will not rise up a second time.
10 For while tangled *like* thorns,
And while drunken *like* drunkards,
They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.
11 From you comes forth *one*
Who plots evil against the LORD,
A wicked counselor.

12 Thus says the LORD:

"Though *they are* safe, and likewise many,
Yet in this manner they will be cut down
When he passes through.
Though I have afflicted you,
I will afflict you no more;
13 For now I will break off his yoke from you,
And burst your bonds apart."

14 The LORD has given a command concerning you:
"Your name shall be perpetuated no longer.
Out of the house of your gods
I will cut off the carved image and the molded image.
I will dig your grave,
For you are vile."

15 Behold, on the mountains
The feet of him who brings good tidings,
Who proclaims peace!
O Judah, keep your appointed feasts,
Perform your vows.
For the wicked one shall no more pass through you;
He is utterly cut off.

THE DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH

2 He who scatters[a] has come up before your face.
Man the fort!
Watch the road!
Strengthen *your* flanks!
Fortify *your* power mightily.

2 For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob
Like the excellence of Israel,
For the emptiers have emptied them out
And ruined their vine branches.

Nahum 2:3, 4

Chariots were intimidating war machines powered by two or more horses. They usually held two or three soldiers. One person drove, while the other(s) fired arrows at the enemy. Sometimes one soldier served as a shield bearer.

3 The shields of his mighty men *are* made red,
The valiant men *are* in scarlet.

2:1 [a]Vulgate reads *He who destroys.*

The chariots *come* with flaming
torches
In the day of his preparation,
And the spears are brandished.[a]
4 The chariots rage in the streets,
They jostle one another in the broad
roads;
They seem like torches,
They run like lightning.

5 He remembers his nobles;
They stumble in their walk;
They make haste to her walls,
And the defense is prepared.
6 The gates of the rivers are opened,
And the palace is dissolved.
7 It is decreed:[a]
She shall be led away captive,
She shall be brought up;
And her maidservants shall lead *her* as
with the voice of doves,
Beating their breasts.

8 Though Nineveh of old *was* like a pool
of water,
Now they flee away.
"Halt! Halt!" *they cry;*
But no one turns back.
9 Take spoil of silver!
Take spoil of gold!
There is no end of treasure,
Or wealth of every desirable prize.
10 She is empty, desolate, and waste!
The heart melts, and the knees
shake;
Much pain *is* in every side,
And all their faces are drained of
color.[a]

11 Where *is* the dwelling of the lions,
And the feeding place of the young
lions,
Where the lion walked, the lioness
and lion's cub,
And no one made *them* afraid?
12 The lion tore in pieces enough for his
cubs,
Killed for his lionesses,
Filled his caves with prey,
And his dens with flesh.

13 "Behold, I *am* against you," says the LORD of hosts, "I will burn your[a] chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more."

THE WOE OF NINEVEH

3 Woe to the bloody city!
It *is* all full of lies *and* robbery.
Its victim never departs.
2 The noise of a whip
And the noise of rattling wheels,
Of galloping horses,
Of clattering chariots!
3 Horsemen charge with bright sword
and glittering spear.
There is a multitude of slain,
A great number of bodies,
Countless corpses—
They stumble over the corpses—
4 Because of the multitude of harlotries
of the seductive harlot,
The mistress of sorceries,
Who sells nations through her
harlotries,
And families through her sorceries.

5 "Behold, I *am* against you," says the
LORD of hosts;
"I will lift your skirts over your face,
I will show the nations your
nakedness,
And the kingdoms your shame.
6 I will cast abominable filth upon you,
Make you vile,
And make you a spectacle.
7 It shall come to pass *that* all who look
upon you
Will flee from you, and say,
'Nineveh is laid waste!
Who will bemoan her?'
Where shall I seek comforters for
you?"

8 Are you better than No Amon[a]
That was situated by the River,[b]
That had the waters around her,
Whose rampart *was* the sea,
Whose wall *was* the sea?

2:3 [a]Literally *the cypresses are shaken;* Septuagint and Syriac read *the horses rush about;* Vulgate reads *the drivers are stupefied.*
2:7 [a]Hebrew *Huzzab* **2:10** [a]Compare Joel 2:6
2:13 [a]Literally *her* **3:8** [a]That is, ancient Thebes; Targum and Vulgate read *populous Alexandria.* [b]Literally *rivers,* that is, the Nile and the surrounding canals

9 Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her strength,
And *it was* boundless;
Put and Lubim were your[a] helpers.
10 Yet she *was* carried away,
She went into captivity;
Her young children also were dashed to pieces
At the head of every street;
They cast lots for her honorable men,
And all her great men were bound in chains.

Nahum 3:9, 10

These verses refer to the Egyptian city of Thebes. It fell to the Assyrians in 663 B.C. Even allies from Ethiopia, Put, and Libya could not prevent Thebes' destruction. The Assyrians were extremely cruel to the prisoners they captured.

11 You also will be drunk;
You will be hidden;
You also will seek refuge from the enemy.

12 All your strongholds *are* fig trees with ripened figs:
If they are shaken,
They fall into the mouth of the eater.
13 Surely, your people in your midst *are* women!
The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies;
Fire shall devour the bars of your *gates.*

14 Draw your water for the siege!
Fortify your strongholds!
Go into the clay and tread the mortar!
Make strong the brick kiln!
15 There the fire will devour you,
The sword will cut you off;
It will eat you up like a locust.

Make yourself many—like the locust!
Make yourself many— like the *swarming* locusts!
16 You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven.
The locust plunders and flies away.
17 Your commanders *are* like *swarming* locusts,
And your generals like great grasshoppers,
Which camp in the hedges on a cold day;
When the sun rises they flee away,
And the place where they *are* is not known.

18 Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria;
Your nobles rest *in the dust.*
Your people are scattered on the mountains,
And no one gathers them.
19 Your injury *has* no healing,
Your wound is severe.
All who hear news of you
Will clap *their* hands over you,
For upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?

3:9 [a]Septuagint reads *her.*

Habakkuk

DATE OF WRITING: 612 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET HABAKKUK
THEME: THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH
PURPOSE: THERE IS NO REAL "SUCCESS" FOR THE WICKED.

OUTLINE

1:1—2:20 ..... Habakkuk Questions God's Judgments, and the Lord Answers
3:1–19 ..... Habakkuk Gives Praise to the Lord

KEY VERSE:

Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation (Habakkuk 3:18).

THEN ///

The prophet Habakkuk asks God some very difficult questions. Why does God choose the things He chooses? Why does He allow evil to exist? Habakkuk was full of questions and many of them began with "Why."

This book is an account of Habakkuk's journey from doubt to faith. He had seen violence and evil throughout the land. He had seen sin and violence prosper and the good seemingly ignored. He really began to wonder where God had gone and why He had disappeared.

It's interesting to listen in on the conversation between Habakkuk and God. And it's thrilling to watch as Habakkuk's faith grows. At the end of the book he is no longer filled with anxious questions, but has realized that all the answers are found in God.

NOW ///

Sometimes life seems like a math equation that just doesn't compute. It seems like life should work like this: living a good life + being a good person = having good things happen to you.

But even if we live good lives and are good people, we can never be sure what is on the other side of the equal sign. That's what Habakkuk struggled with. That's what we sometimes struggle with.

In the first two chapters, Habakkuk asks God those hard questions, and God gives him some good answers. Life isn't fair, but God is just. Sometimes it takes a while to find the final equal sign. Sometimes it takes all your life. Life on earth is about learning to live a life of faith and becoming what God wants us to be in the process. Those things aren't designed by God to make life fair; they just make it worth living.

REALITY CHECK ///

Let's be real. Living a life of faith can be *really* hard. So many things happen that we don't understand. Sometimes it seems as if God has stopped listening to prayers and is no longer concerned with the course of our lives. What are we supposed to do when our lives are running out of control and God just can't be found?

We would do well to follow Habakkuk's example when life is a mess and we can't find God. Keep on praying. But, more importantly, keep on listening. If your prayers are a constant stream of words *to* God, how can you expect to hear *from* God?

When life gets to be more than you can take and you need God to give you some answers, ask Him and then listen for the answer. When your faith is shaky and doubt has taken over your mind, go to God's Word and find out what He has to say. You may find your doubting mind filled with images of God's blessings and your faithless heart filled with the love of God.

1 The burden[a] which the prophet Habakkuk saw.

THE PROPHET'S QUESTION

2 O LORD, how long shall I cry,
And You will not hear?
Even cry out to You, "Violence!"
And You will not save.
3 Why do You show me iniquity,
And cause *me* to see trouble?
For plundering and violence *are* before me;
There is strife, and contention arises.
4 Therefore the law is powerless,
And justice never goes forth.
For the wicked surround the righteous;
Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.

THE LORD'S REPLY

5 "Look among the nations and watch—
Be utterly astounded!
For *I will* work a work in your days
Which you would not believe, though it were told *you.*

1:1 [a]Or *oracle*

MAKING IT REAL // HABAKKUK 1:12

Everlasting Have you ever thought about how God created everything, and then wondered, *Yeah, but where did God come from*? Well, the answer is that He has always existed. He's everlasting—no beginning, no end. Compare Habakkuk 1:12 with Genesis 1:1. Notice that the Genesis verse says, "In the beginning God . . ." He has always been. He was never born; He will never die. That can blow your mind. It's just too big to grasp. We are so used to a start and a finish for everything. God has no birthday, no expiration date. He always was, even before the earth was created. He is now, right where you are. He will always be, long after you and the earth have passed away (Rev. 1:8). (See also: Gen. 1:1; Is. 57:15; John 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 1:8.)

Words to Live By

Everlasting: The word translated as "everlasting" in Habakkuk 1:12 is the Hebrew word *qedem* (keh'-dem). It also means "eternal." God is not tied to space and time the way we are. He is eternal. And He offers us the chance to live eternally with Him. We all had a beginning and now live within the constraints of time and space. But one day, if we accept Christ, we can live forever with Him beyond time and space, into eternity.

6 For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans,
A bitter and hasty nation
Which marches through the breadth of the earth,
To possess dwelling places *that are* not theirs.
7 They are terrible and dreadful;
Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves.
8 Their horses also are swifter than leopards,
And more fierce than evening wolves.
Their chargers charge ahead;
Their cavalry comes from afar;
They fly as the eagle *that* hastens to eat.

9 "They all come for violence;
Their faces are set *like* the east wind.
They gather captives like sand.
10 They scoff at kings,
And princes are scorned by them.
They deride every stronghold,
For they heap up earthen *mounds* and seize it.
11 Then *his* mind[a] changes, and he transgresses;
He commits offense,
Ascribing this power to his god."

THE PROPHET'S SECOND QUESTION

12 Are You not from everlasting,
O LORD my God, my Holy One?
We shall not die.
O LORD, You have appointed them for judgment;
O Rock, You have marked them for correction.
13 *You are* of purer eyes than to behold evil,
And cannot look on wickedness.
Why do You look on those who deal treacherously,
And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours
A *person* more righteous than he?
14 *Why* do You make men like fish of the sea,
Like creeping things *that have* no ruler over them?

15 They take up all of them with a hook,
They catch them in their net,
And gather them in their dragnet.
Therefore they rejoice and are glad.
16 Therefore they sacrifice to their net,
And burn incense to their dragnet;

1:11 [a]Literally *spirit* or *wind*

Because by them their share *is*
sumptuous
And their food plentiful.
17 Shall they therefore empty their net,
And continue to slay nations without
pity?

2 I will stand my watch
And set myself on the rampart,
And watch to see what He will say
to me,
And what I will answer when I am
corrected.

THE JUST LIVE BY FAITH

2 Then the LORD answered me and said:

"Write the vision
And make *it* plain on tablets,
That he may run who reads it.
3 For the vision *is* yet for an appointed
time;
But at the end it will speak, and it will
not lie.
Though it tarries, wait for it;
Because it will surely come,
It will not tarry.

4 "Behold the proud,
His soul is not upright in him;
But the just shall live by his faith.

WOE TO THE WICKED

5 "Indeed, because he transgresses by
wine,
He is a proud man,
And he does not stay at home.
Because he enlarges his desire as
hell,[a]
And he *is* like death, and cannot be
satisfied,
He gathers to himself all nations
And heaps up for himself all peoples.

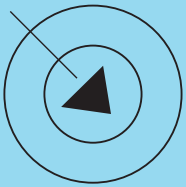
6 "Will not all these take up a proverb
against him,
And a taunting riddle against him,
and say,
'Woe to him who increases
What is not his—how long?
And to him who loads himself with
many pledges'?[a]
7 Will not your creditors[a] rise up
suddenly?
Will they not awaken who oppress
you?
And you will become their booty.
8 Because you have plundered many
nations,
All the remnant of the people shall
plunder you,
Because of men's blood
And the violence of the land *and* the
city,
And of all who dwell in it.

9 "Woe to him who covets evil gain for
his house,
That he may set his nest on high,
That he may be delivered from the
power of disaster!
10 You give shameful counsel to your
house,
Cutting off many peoples,
And sin *against* your soul.
11 For the stone will cry out from the
wall,
And the beam from the timbers will
answer it.

12 "Woe to him who builds a town with
bloodshed,
Who establishes a city by iniquity!
13 Behold, *is it* not of the LORD of hosts
That the peoples labor to feed the
fire,[a]
And nations weary themselves in
vain?
14 For the earth will be filled
With the knowledge of the glory of the
LORD,
As the waters cover the sea.

15 "Woe to him who gives drink to his
neighbor,
Pressing[a] *him to* your bottle,
Even to make *him* drunk,
That you may look on his nakedness!
16 You are filled with shame instead of
glory.
You also—drink!
And be exposed as uncircumcised![a]

2:5 [a]Or *Sheol* **2:6** [a]Syriac and Vulgate read *thick clay.* **2:7** [a]Literally *those who bite you* **2:13** [a]Literally *for what satisfies fire,* that is, for what is of no lasting value **2:15** [a]Literally *Attaching* or *Joining* **2:16** [a]Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *And reel!;* Syriac and Vulgate read *And fall fast asleep!*



PROMISE

God promises to be truthful about the future.

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2:3).

Everyone wants you to believe what they have to say about the future. Grocery store checkout line magazines report new predictions about the future every month or so. Late-night psychics want you to call so they can tell you about your future. And newspaper horoscopes want you to read every day to find out how this day will go. The whole business of "future-telling" is one big scam. Millions spend money because they want someone—anyone—to give them encouragement and hope. But the empty words of these "future-tellers" and horoscopes have no value.

Just as God promised the prophet Habakkuk that the vision He gave him would one day come true, we can trust everything we read in God's Word to be true, including the prophecies that will one day come to be. These prophecies are not guesswork or sham predictions. They are solid facts—truth. You can only trust what God says about the future. Only His truth can guide your life. Everything else will fall short. So if you need to consult someone about a decision or even your life in general, turn to the One who lives outside of time, who sees the future and knows the whole story. You can trust what He says. You can build your life on His truth.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Joshua 21:45; Psalm 18:30; Proverbs 30:5; Jeremiah 29:11; John 17:17

The cup of the LORD's right hand *will*
be turned against you,
And utter shame will be on your
glory.
17For the violence *done to* Lebanon will
cover you,
And the plunder of beasts *which* made
them afraid,
Because of men's blood
And the violence of the land *and* the
city,
And of all who dwell in it.

18"What profit is the image, that its
maker should carve it,
The molded image, a teacher of lies,
That the maker of its mold should
trust in it,
To make mute idols?
19Woe to him who says to wood, '
Awake!'
To silent stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!'
Behold, it is overlaid with gold and
silver,
Yet in it there is no breath at all.

20"But the LORD is in His holy temple.
Let all the earth keep silence before
Him."

THE PROPHET'S PRAYER

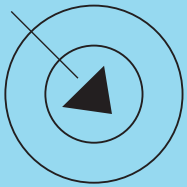
3 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.[a]

2O LORD, I have heard Your speech *and*
was afraid;
O LORD, revive Your work in the midst
of the years!
In the midst of the years make *it*
known;
In wrath remember mercy.

3God came from Teman,
The Holy One from Mount
Paran. *Selah*

His glory covered the heavens,
And the earth was full of His praise.
4*His* brightness was like the light;

3:1 [a]Exact meaning unknown



PROMISE

God promises to prepare you for life's journey.

The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills (Hab. 3:19).

Did you know that God can give you feet like a deer? Habakkuk shows us that picture—feet that are able to climb steep mountains, steady even when the path is slippery. God prepares you for the steep, slippery places in your life—when you have to cope with the tough stuff, when you face a strong temptation, when life is just hard. God gives you the strength to stand strong and bold when things get rough.

But God may not give you those deer feet automatically, like an instant miracle. You may have to feel what it's like to slip and almost fall, especially if you start up the mountain by yourself. Even Habakkuk said: "When I heard, my body trembled; my lips quivered at the voice" (Hab. 3:16a).

You can look at your stumbling steps as a gift from God. He's showing you that you can't make it without Him. If you start to fall, it's a little reminder that deer feet aren't a product of your own inner strength. They come from your faith in Him and in His Spirit living inside you. Whatever your high hills may look like, know that He can give you deer's feet, and anything else you need to walk faithfully.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 61:1–3; Isaiah 42:16

He had rays *flashing* from His hand,
And there His power *was* hidden.
5Before Him went pestilence,
And fever followed at His feet.

6He stood and measured the earth;
He looked and startled the nations.
And the everlasting mountains were scattered,
The perpetual hills bowed.
His ways *are* everlasting.

Habakkuk 3:3–6

Because Paran is near Mount Sinai, it's likely that these verses are referring to God's appearance to Moses at Sinai. (That's where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments.) The light, the noise, and the earthquake were all signs of God's presence.

7I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction;
The curtains of the land of Midian trembled.

8O LORD, were *You* displeased with the rivers,
Was Your anger against the rivers,
Was Your wrath against the sea,
That You rode on Your horses,
Your chariots of salvation?
9Your bow was made quite ready;
Oaths were sworn over *Your* arrows.[a]
Selah

You divided the earth with rivers.
10The mountains saw You *and* trembled;
The overflowing of the water passed by.
The deep uttered its voice,
And lifted its hands on high.

Habakkuk 3:7

The people of Cushan are usually referred to as Ethiopians in the Bible. The people of Cushan and Midian were nomads, wandering tribesmen who lived in tents. When God parted the Red Sea for the Israelites, they passed from the land of Cush to the land of Midian.

3:9 [a]Literally *rods* or *tribes* (compare verse 14)

11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation;
At the light of Your arrows they went,
At the shining of Your glittering spear.

12 You marched through the land in indignation;
You trampled the nations in anger.
13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people,
For salvation with Your Anointed.
You struck the head from the house of the wicked,
By laying bare from foundation to neck. *Selah*

14 You thrust through with his own arrows
The head of his villages.
They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me;
Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret.
15 You walked through the sea with Your horses,
Through the heap of great waters.

16 When I heard, my body trembled;
My lips quivered at *the* voice;
Rottenness entered my bones;
And I trembled in myself,
That I might rest in the day of trouble.
When he comes up to the people,
He will invade them with his troops.

ENCOURAGEMENT
Are we ever helpless?
Habakkuk 3:17–19

A HYMN OF FAITH

17 Though the fig tree may not blossom,
Nor fruit be on the vines;
Though the labor of the olive may fail,
And the fields yield no food;
Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,
And there be no herd in the stalls—
18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19 The LORD God[a] is my strength;
He will make my feet like deer's *feet,*
And He will make me walk on my high hills.

To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

3:19 [a]Hebrew *YHWH Adonai*

Zephaniah

DATE OF WRITING: 607 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET ZEPHANIAH
THEME: ENCOUNTERING THE WRATH OF A LOVING GOD
PURPOSE: GOD'S DISCIPLINE PURGES EVIL AND MOTIVATES US TO RETURN TO HIM.

OUTLINE

1:1–18 ..... Judah and Jerusalem Will Be Punished on the Great Day of the Lord
2:1–3 ..... Seek the Lord
2:4–15 ..... The Nations Will Be Punished
3:1–20 ..... Nations Will Call on the Lord

KEY VERSE:

"The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save" (Zephaniah 3:17).

THEN ///

Zephaniah's people were in trouble. They had become an evil people who sacrificed their own children to false gods and spit in the face of the true God. They disrespected and disregarded everything God had done for them. As a nation, they were going to face some consequences that would change their lives forever.

But the nation of Judah was blissfully unaware of the coming doom. They lived peaceful, prosperous lives and thought their world was totally secure. Can you imagine their surprise when Zephaniah suddenly shattered their illusion and spoke to them of God's displeasure and the wrath of God to come?

NOW ///

Have you ever seen a natural disaster film? Whether it's a tsunami or an earthquake or a nuclear power plant gone wrong, there is usually someone running around right before the disaster making one last effort to make the people understand what is about to happen. The person usually looks frazzled and wide-eyed and full of passion about his or her message.

That might have been what Zephaniah looked like. He was the last prophet to preach to Judah before judgment fell and they were taken away into captivity.

The heart of Zephaniah's message, though, is as powerful for us as it was for those people long ago. At the very core of Zephaniah's message is the importance of personal responsibility. Israel's problems may have been nationwide, but the solution was only as big as each person's own heart. They needed to make a choice, each of them, to obey what God told them to do. That's the same choice we each need to make today.

REALITY CHECK ///

When things go wrong, it's easy to blame someone or something else. Taking the blame and accepting the fault can be really hard. But when we refuse to admit our own guilt, nothing can really change. Whatever problem exists today will come up again in the future because the problem lies in us—we'll simply take it with us wherever we go.

Rather than point fingers and blame anything outside ourselves when things go wrong, the first place we should look for fault is inside our own hearts. If we insist on always being victims—always having someone or something else as the cause of our troubles—we will never accept our own weaknesses or grow beyond them.

More importantly, if we refuse to admit when we have sinned, we will never repent before God, we will never admit our need to be changed, and we will never be able to receive God's forgiveness.

1 The word of the LORD which came to
Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son
of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the
son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the
son of Amon, king of Judah.

THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD

2 "I will utterly consume everything
From the face of the land,"
Says the LORD;
3 "I will consume man and beast;
I will consume the birds of the
heavens,
The fish of the sea,
And the stumbling blocks[a] along with
the wicked.
I will cut off man from the face of the
land,"
Says the LORD.

4 "I will stretch out My hand against
Judah,
And against all the inhabitants of
Jerusalem.
I will cut off every trace of Baal from
this place,
The names of the idolatrous priests[a]
with the *pagan* priests—
5 Those who worship the host of heaven
on the housetops;

1:3 [a]Figurative of idols **1:4** [a]Hebrew *chemarim*

Those who worship and swear *oaths*
by the LORD,
But who *also* swear by Milcom;[a]

Zephaniah 1:4, 5

Baal was the chief god of the Canaanites, but the Israelites adopted him as their own. Although God had specifically forbidden human sacrifice, they joined the followers of Milcom (or Molech) in sacrificing children as part of their worship rituals. The Israelites embraced astrology and the worship of the sun, moon, and stars. As part of their idol worship, they poured out drink offerings and burnt incense on their rooftops.

6 Those who have turned back from
following the LORD,
And have not sought the LORD, nor
inquired of Him."

7 Be silent in the presence of the Lord
GOD;
For the day of the LORD *is* at hand,
For the LORD has prepared a sacrifice;
He has invited[a] His guests.

8 "And it shall be,
In the day of the LORD's sacrifice,
That I will punish the princes and the
king's children,
And all such as are clothed with
foreign apparel.
9 In the same day I will punish
All those who leap over the threshold,[a]
Who fill their masters' houses with
violence and deceit.

10 "And there shall be on that day," says
the LORD,
"The sound of a mournful cry from the
Fish Gate,
A wailing from the Second Quarter,
And a loud crashing from the hills.
11 Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh![a]
For all the merchant people are cut
down;
All those who handle money are cut
off.

12 "And it shall come to pass at that time
That I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
And punish the men
Who are settled in complacency,[a]
Who say in their heart,
'The LORD will not do good,
Nor will He do evil.'
13 Therefore their goods shall become
booty,
And their houses a desolation;
They shall build houses, but not
inhabit *them;*
They shall plant vineyards, but not
drink their wine."

14 The great day of the LORD *is* near;
It is near and hastens quickly.
The noise of the day of the LORD is
bitter;
There the mighty men shall cry out.
15 That day *is* a day of wrath,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of devastation and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
16 A day of trumpet and alarm
Against the fortified cities
And against the high towers.

17 "I will bring distress upon men,
And they shall walk like blind men,
Because they have sinned against the
LORD;
Their blood shall be poured out like
dust,
And their flesh like refuse."

18 Neither their silver nor their gold
Shall be able to deliver them
In the day of the LORD's wrath;
But the whole land shall be devoured
By the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make speedy riddance
Of all those who dwell in the land.

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

2 Gather yourselves together, yes,
gather together,
O undesirable[a] nation,
2 Before the decree is issued,

1:5 [a]Or *Malcam,* an Ammonite god, also called *Molech* (compare Leviticus 18:21) **1:7** [a]Literally *set apart, consecrated* **1:9** [a]Compare 1 Samuel 5:5 **1:11** [a]Literally *Mortar,* a market district of Jerusalem **1:12** [a]Literally *on their lees,* that is, settled like the dregs of wine **2:1** [a]Or *shameless*

Or the day passes like chaff,
Before the LORD's fierce anger comes
upon you,
Before the day of the LORD's anger
comes upon you!

HUMILITY
Is humility important?
Zephaniah 2:3

3 Seek the LORD, all you meek of the
earth,
Who have upheld His justice.
Seek righteousness, seek humility.
It may be that you will be hidden
In the day of the LORD's anger.

JUDGMENT ON NATIONS

4 For Gaza shall be forsaken,
And Ashkelon desolate;
They shall drive out Ashdod at
noonday,
And Ekron shall be uprooted.
5 Woe to the inhabitants of the
seacoast,
The nation of the Cherethites!
The word of the LORD *is* against you,
O Canaan, land of the Philistines:
"I will destroy you;
So there shall be no inhabitant."

Zephaniah 2:4, 5
The Philistines lived west of Israel, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron were all capitals of Philistia. Actually, there had been a fifth capital, Gath, but it was under Judah's control during Zephaniah's day.

6 The seacoast shall be pastures,
With shelters[a] for shepherds and folds
for flocks.
7 The coast shall be for the remnant of
the house of Judah;
They shall feed *their* flocks there;
In the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie
down at evening.
For the LORD their God will intervene
for them,
And return their captives.

8 "I have heard the reproach of Moab,
And the insults of the people of
Ammon,
With which they have reproached My
people,
And made arrogant threats against
their borders.
9 Therefore, as I live,"
Says the LORD of hosts, the God of
Israel,
"Surely Moab shall be like Sodom,
And the people of Ammon like
Gomorrah—
Overrun with weeds and saltpits,
And a perpetual desolation.
The residue of My people shall plunder
them,
And the remnant of My people shall
possess them."

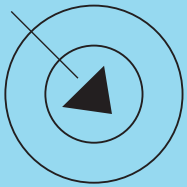
Zephaniah 2:8, 9
The people of Moab and Ammon were actually distant relatives of the Israelites. The Moabites and Ammonites were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew. (The Israelites, of course, were descendants of Abraham.) Despite the fact that they were kin, the people of Moab and Ammon were enemies of Israel.

10 This they shall have for their pride,
Because they have reproached and
made arrogant threats
Against the people of the LORD of
hosts.
11 The LORD *will be* awesome to them,
For He will reduce to nothing all the
gods of the earth;
People shall worship Him,
Each one from his place,
Indeed all the shores of the nations.

12 "You Ethiopians also,
You shall be slain by My sword."

13 And He will stretch out His hand
against the north,
Destroy Assyria,
And make Nineveh a desolation,
As dry as the wilderness.

2:6 [a] Literally *excavations,* either underground huts or cisterns



PROMISE

God promises to quiet you with His love.

"The LORD your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing" (Zeph. 3:17).

Zephaniah 3:17 is a completely awesome verse. It shows you incredible truths about God and about yourself. It reveals such a tender and delightful side of the Lord in the middle of some very serious words. He rejoices and sings! People don't usually think of God rejoicing and singing, but He does! He's excited because of *you.* When you don't feel as though you're worth much, remember that God is singing because of you. And on top of His rejoicing and singing, you get a blessing. He quiets you, or renews you, with His love.

Everybody needs renewal or restoration at some point in time. Life often gets pretty routine, and you may find yourself feeling stale, sluggish, and worn out on the inside. But you can't restore your own heart; only God has the power to change and renew us. He promises to meet you in those stale times. He promises "to quiet you with His love." There's nothing that refreshes your life more than the breath, or wind, of the Spirit of God blowing through your heart. It does more for you on the inside than a spray from the garden hose on a stifling hot afternoon does for you on the outside. It gives you rest, and then brings you back to life. It makes you excited about life again, and restores your energy. And it stokes the fire of God that's inside of you. God doesn't send miraculous signs or hit us with thunder and lightning when He restores us; He reaches out to us with tenderness and touches the deepest parts of our hearts with His love. In the rest of God's quietness we can find some of our most powerful strength. Never, ever forget that you are the one who makes God sing. And He is the One who "will quiet you with His love."

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 23:1–3; 80:18; Acts 3:19–21

14 The herds shall lie down in her midst,
Every beast of the nation.
Both the pelican and the bittern
Shall lodge on the capitals *of* her
pillars;
Their voice shall sing in the windows;
Desolation *shall be* at the threshold;
For He will lay bare the cedar work.
15 This is the rejoicing city
That dwelt securely,
That said in her heart,
"I *am it,* and *there is* none besides me."
How has she become a desolation,
A place for beasts to lie down!
Everyone who passes by her
Shall hiss and shake his fist.

THE WICKEDNESS OF JERUSALEM

3 Woe to her who is rebellious and
polluted,
To the oppressing city!
2 She has not obeyed *His* voice,
She has not received correction;
She has not trusted in the LORD,
She has not drawn near to her God.

3 Her princes in her midst *are* roaring
lions;
Her judges *are* evening wolves
That leave not a bone till morning.
4 Her prophets are insolent, treacherous
people;
Her priests have polluted the
sanctuary,
They have done violence to the law.
5 The LORD *is* righteous in her midst,
He will do no unrighteousness.
Every morning He brings His justice
to light;
He never fails,
But the unjust knows no shame.

6 "I have cut off nations,
Their fortresses are devastated;

MAKING IT REAL // ZEPHANIAH 3:18–20

You Belong There are all kinds of reasons for feeling like a misfit. Maybe you're a lot taller than everyone else. Maybe you live in a different part of town than all your friends. Maybe you have a whole different set of values than most people at your school and they think you're a nerd.

For whatever reason, feeling like you don't fit in can be a painful, lonely place. For some people, the situation changes when they go to a new school or move to a new neighborhood or when they get older. Some people go through much of their lives feeling like they don't belong.

But the truth is, you do belong. God loves you and chose to make you a part of His family. You are a child of the King, and you have a family that stretches across the globe: the body of Christ. God designed you to fit perfectly into His family; no one else can bring the same talents, skills, and personality into the family as you can. You are needed and loved. You belong. (See also: Ps. 31:5; Is. 56:8; Mic. 4:7; Zeph. 3:17.)

Words to Live By

Fame: The word translated as "fame" in Zephaniah 3:19 is the Hebrew word *shem* (shame). It means "to have a recognizable name," like a celebrity. God has promised to give His people a name that is important and honored. It's not about being famous for your beauty or talent. Rather, it's being known as an honored child of the King. There is no better fame and no greater name to have.

I have made their streets desolate,
With none passing by.
Their cities are destroyed;
There is no one, no inhabitant.
7 I said, 'Surely you will fear Me,
You will receive instruction'—
So that her dwelling would not be cut off,
Despite everything for which I punished her.
But they rose early and corrupted all their deeds.

A FAITHFUL REMNANT

8 "Therefore wait for Me," says the LORD,
"Until the day I rise up for plunder;[a]
My determination *is* to gather the nations
To My assembly of kingdoms,
To pour on them My indignation,
All My fierce anger;
All the earth shall be devoured
With the fire of My jealousy.

9 "For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language,
That they all may call on the name of the LORD,
To serve Him with one accord.
10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia
My worshipers,
The daughter of My dispersed ones,
Shall bring My offering.
11 In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds
In which you transgress against Me;
For then I will take away from your midst
Those who rejoice in your pride,
And you shall no longer be haughty
In My holy mountain.
12 I will leave in your midst
A meek and humble people,
And they shall trust in the name of the LORD.
13 The remnant of Israel shall do no unrighteousness
And speak no lies,

3:8 [a]Septuagint and Syriac read *for witness;* Targum reads *for the day of My revelation for judgment;* Vulgate reads *for the day of My resurrection that is to come.*

Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found
in their mouth;
For they shall feed *their* flocks and lie
down,
And no one shall make *them* afraid."

JOY IN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

[14]Sing, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all *your* heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!
[15]The LORD has taken away your
judgments,
He has cast out your enemy.
The King of Israel, the LORD, *is* in your
midst;
You shall see[a] disaster no more.

Zephaniah 3:16

Originally Zion was an ancient Jebusite fortress built on a hill in Jerusalem. When Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, the entire area in and around the city came to be known as Zion. Eventually, Zion was used to refer to the entire nation of Israel.

[16]In that day it shall be said to
Jerusalem:
"Do not fear;
Zion, let not your hands be weak.
[17]The LORD your God in your midst,
The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet *you* with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing."

[18]"I will gather those who sorrow over
the appointed assembly,
Who are among you,
To whom its reproach *is* a burden.
[19]Behold, at that time
I will deal with all who afflict you;
I will save the lame,
And gather those who were driven out;
I will appoint them for praise and
fame
In every land where they were put to
shame.
[20]At that time I will bring you back,
Even at the time I gather you;
For I will give you fame and praise
Among all the peoples of the earth,
When I return your captives before
your eyes,"
Says the LORD.

3:15 [a]Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, and Bomberg read *see;* Masoretic Text and Vulgate read *fear.*

Haggai

DATE OF WRITING: 520 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET HAGGAI
THEME: REBUILDING THE TEMPLE
PURPOSE: OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WILL BRINGS BLESSINGS.

OUTLINE

1:1–15.....The Command to Rebuild the Temple
2:1–19.....The Lord Blesses His People
2:20–23.....The Lord Chooses Zerubbabel

KEY VERSE:

"'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts" (Haggai 2:9).

THEN /// If you've been reading through the Bible, you are very familiar by now with the history of the Hebrews. They continued to go through cycles of obeying God, then not obeying God, then being beaten up by other countries, then finally returning to God and regaining their natural strength.

When Haggai preached his message, the Hebrews were in one of those recovery times. They had been back in their homeland for ten years after being held captive in Babylon for seventy years. They had spent those ten years rebuilding their homes and businesses. But they had not even started rebuilding the temple. They had been putting off one of the most important parts of their cultural and religious heritage!

NOW /// The temple was a special place to the Hebrews because it represented God's presence with them. The fact that they had put off working on the temple for ten years is a clear indication that their priorities were really messed up.

Today, churches are not like the temple was to Haggai's people; God's presence does not live in a church building. But the message Haggai gave to his people can speak just as powerfully to us today: putting God first is the real key to getting your life together and being strong enough to face the problems life holds.

REALITY CHECK /// The lessons Haggai tried to teach his people would be good ones for today. We get so caught up in our own lives. We spend our time texting, making new Internet friends, playing games—just living out our day-to-day stuff. We may think of the future and focus on work, or money, or power, or whatever the world tells us is important to achieve.

But how often do we think about what God wants for our lives? Is His desire for us the last thing we consider when we plan out our days? Do we even consider Him as we determine what our futures will hold?

If you find yourself going down the same path as the Hebrews and putting God last in your life, consider these words: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5, 6); and "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33).

THE COMMAND TO BUILD GOD'S HOUSE

1 In the second year of King Darius,
in the sixth month, on the first day
of the month, the word of the LORD
came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel
the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and
to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high
priest, saying, 2"Thus speaks the LORD of
hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time
has not come, the time that the LORD's
house should be built."'"

3Then the word of the LORD came by
Haggai the prophet, saying, 4"*Is it* time for
you yourselves to dwell in your paneled
houses, and this temple[a] *to lie* in ruins?"
5Now therefore, thus says the LORD of
hosts: "Consider your ways!

6"You have sown much, and bring in
little;
You eat, but do not have enough;
You drink, but you are not filled with
drink;
You clothe yourselves, but no one is
warm;

Haggai 1:1

King Darius allowed his captives to practice their own religion. He allowed the Jews who returned to Jerusalem to continue rebuilding the temple, even sending money to help with the construction and livestock to be used as sacrifices.

1:4 [a]Literally *house,* and so in verse 8

And he who earns wages,
Earns wages *to put* into a bag with holes."

7Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! 8Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD. 9"*You* looked for much, but indeed *it came to* little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. "Because of My house that *is in* ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. 10Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. 11For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of *your* hands."

Haggai 1:12

Zerubbabel was the grandson of Jehoiakim, one of the last kings to reign in Judah before the Babylonian invasion. King Cyrus of Persia allowed Zerubbabel to lead a group of Jews back to Jerusalem to begin rebuilding the temple. Cyrus also appointed Zerubbabel governor of Judah. Joshua was the son of Jehozadak, who was high priest when the Jewish people were deported to Babylon. Zerubbabel served as the political leader of the returning Jews; Joshua served as the spiritual leader.

THE PEOPLE'S OBEDIENCE

12Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the presence of the LORD. 13Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, spoke the LORD's message to the people, saying, "I *am* with you, says the LORD." 14So the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, 15on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

THE COMING GLORY OF GOD'S HOUSE

2 In the seventh *month,* on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying: 2"Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: 3'Who is left among you who saw this temple[a] in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, *is this* not in your eyes as nothing? 4Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the LORD; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the LORD, 'and work; for I *am* with you,' says the LORD of hosts. 5'*According to* the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!'

COURAGE
Why should we be confident?
Haggai 2:4

6"For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it *is* a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 7and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations,[a] and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. 8'The silver *is* Mine, and the gold *is* Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. 9'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts."

THE PEOPLE ARE DEFILED

10On the twenty-fourth *day* of the ninth *month,* in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 11"Thus says the LORD of

2:3 [a]Literally *house,* and so in verses 7 and 9
2:7 [a]Or *the desire of all nations*

hosts: 'Now, ask the priests *concerning the* law, saying, 12"If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?"' "

Then the priests answered and said, "No."

13And Haggai said, "If *one who is* unclean *because* of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?"

So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

14Then Haggai answered and said, "'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the LORD, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.

PROMISED BLESSING

15'And now, carefully consider from this day forward: from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the LORD— 16since those *days,* when *one* came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were *but* ten; when *one* came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were *but* twenty. 17I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labors of your hands; yet you did not *turn* to Me,' says the LORD. 18'Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid—consider it: 19Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded *fruit. But* from this day I will bless *you.*' "

ZERUBBABEL CHOSEN AS A SIGNET

20And again the word of the LORD came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, 21"Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying:

'I will shake heaven and earth.
22I will overthrow the throne of
kingdoms;
I will destroy the strength of the
Gentile kingdoms.
I will overthrow the chariots
And those who ride in them;
The horses and their riders shall
come down,
Every one by the sword of his
brother.

23'In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the LORD, 'and will make you like a signet *ring;* for I have chosen you,' says the LORD of hosts."

Zechariah

DATE OF WRITING: 515 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH
THEME: THE LORD WILL NEVER FORGET HIS PEOPLE
PURPOSE: GOD REMAINS IN CONTROL OF HISTORY AND WILL TRIUMPH.

OUTLINE

1:1–17 ..... The Vision of the Horses
1:18–21 ..... The Vision of the Horns
2:1–13 ..... The Vision of the Man with a Measuring Line
3:1–10 ..... The Vision of Joshua and Satan
4:1–14 ..... The Vision of the Lampstand and the Olive Trees
5:1–4 ..... The Vision of a Flying Scroll
5:5–11 ..... The Vision of the Woman Inside the Basket
6:1–8 ..... The Vision of the Four Chariots
6:9—8:23 ..... Mourning and Celebrating
9:1—11:3 ..... The Lord Will Rescue His People and Punish Their Enemies
11:4–17 ..... Israel's Leaders Are Worthless Shepherds
12:1–9 ..... Victory for Jerusalem
12:10—13:9 ..... The People Will Mourn and Return to the Lord
14:1–21 ..... The Final Battle and the Lord's Victory

KEY VERSE:

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD *(Zechariah 2:10).*

THEN /// Zechariah's message was for the group of Hebrews who had returned to Jerusalem and found it in ruins and inhabited by foreigners. These people wanted to reestablish their homes and rebuild the temple, but it was hard and discouraging work. There was so much to be done and it seemed they would never accomplish it all. They were totally overwhelmed and ready to give up.

So God gave Zechariah a message of encouragement for the people; He wanted them to know that what they were doing was worth the effort. He wanted the people to know His love for them and the wonderful things that would be theirs when their work was completed.

Zechariah prophesied that:

Jesus would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (9:9), which He did.

Judas would betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (11:12), which he did.

Jesus' side would be pierced (12:10) and His blood would cleanse our sin (13:1), which it was and it does.

Jesus would have scars in His hands and side (13:6) and He would be arrested and deserted by His disciples (13:7), which He did and He was.

Jesus would return a second time to reign on earth (14:4), and He will.

NOW /// As you can see, a lot of the amazing prophecies God gave Zechariah were about the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ.

The Hebrews were tired and ready to give up. They needed to remember that all their effort was for a reason. God wanted to remind them that this world is a preparation for the day when Jesus will rule as King.

No one knows what the kingdom of Jesus will be like. No one knows exactly what we will do when we live with Him forever. But we do know that all we do in the here and now will teach us and prepare us for that wonderful, amazing time.

REALITY CHECK /// In one way or another, all the Old Testament prophets were looking toward the coming of Jesus Christ. Understand that the whole identity of the Jewish people was wrapped up in this event. So every comfort given to the Hebrews as they struggled in some way contained the message that Jesus would come and He would fix things.

Sometimes living a life of faith can feel like enduring a losing season. Sometimes it seems like our team will never win again. Zechariah reminds us that the season isn't over until God says it is. Until then, we've got to stay in the game and get ready for Jesus' arrival on the scene.

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

1 In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of
Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet,
saying, 2"The LORD has been very angry
with your fathers. 3Therefore say to them,
'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Return to
Me," says the LORD of hosts, "and I will re-
turn to you," says the LORD of hosts. 4"Do
not be like your fathers, to whom the for-
mer prophets preached, saying, 'Thus says
the LORD of hosts: "Turn now from your
evil ways and your evil deeds."' But they
did not hear nor heed Me," says the LORD.

5"Your fathers, where *are* they?
And the prophets, do they live
forever?
6Yet surely My words and My statutes,
Which I commanded My servants the
prophets,
Did they not overtake your fathers?

"So they returned and said:

'Just as the LORD of hosts determined
to do to us,
According to our ways and according
to our deeds,
So He has dealt with us.'"'"

VISION OF THE HORSES

7On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet: 8I saw by night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse, and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow; and behind him *were* horses: red, sorrel, and white. 9Then I said, "My lord, what *are* these?" So the angel who talked with me said to me, "I will show you what they *are*."

10And the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These *are the ones* whom the LORD has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth."

11So they answered the Angel of the LORD, who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is resting quietly."

THE LORD WILL COMFORT ZION

12Then the Angel of the LORD answered and said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?"

> ***Zechariah 1:12***
> About seventy years passed between the time Nebuchadnezzar's forces burned down the temple in Jerusalem and the time King Cyrus of Persia allowed a group of Jews to return to Jerusalem to begin rebuilding the temple. The construction was still going on when Zechariah wrote this book.

13And the LORD answered the angel who talked to me, *with* good *and* comforting words. 14So the angel who spoke with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"I am zealous for Jerusalem
And for Zion with great zeal.
15I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease;
For I was a little angry,
And they helped—*but* with evil *intent*."

16"Therefore thus says the LORD:

"I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy;
My house shall be built in it," says the LORD of hosts,
"And a *surveyor's* line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem."'

17"Again proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"My cities shall again spread out through prosperity;
The LORD will again comfort Zion,
And will again choose Jerusalem."'"

VISION OF THE HORNS

18Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there *were* four horns. 19And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What *are* these?"

So he answered me, "These *are* the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."

20Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. 21And I said, "What are these coming to do?"

So he said, "These *are* the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but the craftsmen[a] are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up *their* horn against the land of Judah to scatter it."

VISION OF THE MEASURING LINE

2 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2So I said, "Where are you going?"

And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see what *is* its width and what *is* its length."

3And there *was* the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him, 4who said to him, "Run, speak to this young man, saying: 'Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it. 5For I,' says the LORD, 'will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.'"

1:21 [a]Literally *these*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ZECHARIAH 2:13

God Is Here Some people refer to God as "the Man upstairs." They seem to think that He's far away, beyond our reach, looking down from His comfortable throne. They must not have heard that God is here! He is "aroused from His holy habitation." That means He is involved. He is not shouting orders from some mountaintop. He is beside you—interacting in your life. Those who believe that God is just out there somewhere, uninvolved in the world, must not know Him very well.

It's hard to love from a distance. Relationships get built through closeness and intimacy. The Lord longs to be with you, not rule you from afar. So don't fall into the trap of thinking that God is far away and removed from your life. If you have accepted Christ, God's Spirit lives inside of you! God is not "the Man upstairs" watching from the sky. God is here! (See also: Is. 12:6; Ezek. 37:27; Joel 2:27; Zeph. 3:17; Matt. 18:20.)

Words to Live By

Before: The word translated as "before" in Zechariah 2:13 is the Hebrew word *paniym* (paw-neem'). It literally means "face," like in the term *face-to-face*. When we pray to the Lord, we're not just spitting out words, hoping God hears them from far away. Rather, we are face-to-face with the Lord; we can have a personal conversation with Him anytime we want.

FUTURE JOY OF ZION AND MANY NATIONS

6"Up, up! Flee from the land of the north,"
says the LORD; "for I have spread you
abroad like the four winds of heaven," says
the LORD. 7"Up, Zion! Escape, you who
dwell with the daughter of Babylon."
8For thus says the LORD of hosts: "He
sent Me after glory, to the nations which
plunder you; for he who touches you
touches the apple of His eye. 9For surely I
will shake My hand against them, and they
shall become spoil for their servants. Then
you will know that the LORD of hosts has
sent Me.

ENCOURAGEMENT
Is God close to His people?
Zechariah 2:10

10"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion!
For behold, I am coming and I will dwell
in your midst," says the LORD. 11"Many na-
tions shall be joined to the LORD in that
day, and they shall become My people. And
I will dwell in your midst. Then you will
know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me
to you. 12And the LORD will take posses-
sion of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy
Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.
13Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He
is aroused from His holy habitation!"

VISION OF THE HIGH PRIEST

3 Then he showed me Joshua the high
priest standing before the Angel of
the LORD, and Satan standing at his
right hand to oppose him. 2And the LORD
said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Sa-
tan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem
rebuke you! *Is* this not a brand plucked
from the fire?"

Zechariah 3:1, 2

Satan's name means "Someone Who Accuses." As you can see in these verses, the devil certainly lives up to his name. Joshua, the high priest, was responsible for the spiritual welfare of the people who returned to Jerusalem from captivity.

3Now Joshua was clothed with filthy gar-
ments, and was standing before the Angel.

4Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes."

Zechariah 3:5

The high priests of Israel wore a turban—a long piece of white linen cloth wrapped around the head and fastened in the back. Attached to the front of the turban was a gold sign engraved with the words "Holiness to the Lord."

5And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head."

So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.

THE COMING BRANCH

6Then the Angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, 7"Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'If you will walk in My ways,
And if you will keep My command,
Then you shall also judge My house,
And likewise have charge of My courts;
I will give you places to walk
Among these who stand here.

8'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest,
You and your companions who sit before you,
For they are a wondrous sign;
For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.
9For behold, the stone
That I have laid before Joshua:
Upon the stone *are* seven eyes.
Behold, I will engrave its inscription,'
Says the LORD of hosts,
'And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.
10In that day,' says the LORD of hosts,
'Everyone will invite his neighbor
Under his vine and under his fig tree.'"

VISION OF THE LAMPSTAND AND OLIVE TREES

4 Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep.
2And he said to me, "What do you see?"

So I said, "I am looking, and there *is* a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the *stand* seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. 3Two olive trees *are* by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." 4So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What *are* these, my lord?"

5Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?"

And I said, "No, my lord."

6So he answered and said to me:

"'This *is* the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel:
'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,'
Says the LORD of hosts.
7'Who *are* you, O great mountain?
Before Zerubbabel *you shall become* a plain!
And he shall bring forth the capstone
With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"'"

8Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

9"'The hands of Zerubbabel
Have laid the foundation of this temple;[a]
His hands shall also finish *it.*
Then you will know
That the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.
10For who has despised the day of small things?
For these seven rejoice to see
The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.
They are the eyes of the LORD,
Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth."

11Then I answered and said to him, "What *are* these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?"

4:9 [a]Literally *house*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ZECHARIAH 4:6

Real Power? We live in a world in which it seems we can do almost anything. Sports records are being broken every day. Scientists are discovering cures for diseases that were once considered incurable. Virtual reality can take us places we never thought we could go. It's true, technology and information have enabled humans to do a lot with their minds and bodies and abilities. But humans are still limited. No matter how advanced we get, we will never even come close to being as awesome and powerful and wise as God is.

God says that we are to depend on His Spirit. He wants us to learn to trust His Spirit instead of our own power. There are certain things that His Spirit can do that you could never do in your own strength—such as touch and change and heal a person way down deep inside. God's ways may be different from yours. When you follow His Spirit, you may need to keep your mouth shut instead of telling someone off. He may lead you to make a decision that doesn't seem to make sense; then later you may realize that *not* doing it would have been devastating for you.

He leads in lots of different ways. No matter how strong or how smart you are, you can't outdo the Spirit of God. He's the One you can totally depend on. (See also: Prov. 3:5, 6; Is. 55:8, 9; Matt. 19:26; 1 Cor. 2:10–12.)

Words to Live By

Power: The word translated as "power" in Zechariah 4:6 is the Hebrew word *koach* (ko'-akh). It means "strength" or "might." It doesn't matter how strong or powerful we think we are, we will always hit a limit to what we can do. We will always find things we just can't do on our own. But when we trust God's Spirit to work within us, we have access to His power. And there is no limit to what God's power can do.

12 And I further answered and said to him,
"What *are these* two olive branches that
drip into the receptacles[a] of the two gold
pipes from which the golden *oil* drains?"
13 Then he answered me and said, "Do
you not know what these *are?*"
And I said, "No, my lord."
14 So he said, "These *are* the two anointed
ones, who stand beside the Lord of the
whole earth."

VISION OF THE FLYING SCROLL

5 Then I turned and raised my eyes,
and saw there a flying scroll.
2 And he said to me, "What do you
see?"
So I answered, "I see a flying scroll. Its
length *is* twenty cubits and its width ten
cubits."
3 Then he said to me, "This *is* the curse
that goes out over the face of the whole
earth: 'Every thief shall be expelled,' ac-
cording *to* this side of *the scroll;* and, 'Every
perjurer shall be expelled,' according *to*
that side of it."

4 "I will send out *the curse,*" says the
LORD of hosts;
"It shall enter the house of the thief
And the house of the one who swears
falsely by My name.
It shall remain in the midst of his
house
And consume it, with its timber and
stones."

VISION OF THE WOMAN IN A BASKET

5 Then the angel who talked with me came
out and said to me, "Lift your eyes now, and
see what this *is* that goes forth."
6 So I asked, "What *is* it?" And he said, "It
is a basket[a] that is going forth."

4:12 [a]Literally *into the hands of* **5:6** [a]Hebrew *ephah,* a measuring container, and so elsewhere

He also said, "This *is* their resemblance throughout the earth: 7Here *is* a lead disc lifted up, and this *is* a woman sitting inside the basket"; 8then he said, "This *is* Wickedness!" And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover[a] over its mouth. 9Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there *were* two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven.

10So I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they carrying the basket?"

11And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar;[a] when it is ready, *the basket* will be set there on its base."

VISION OF THE FOUR CHARIOTS

6 Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots *were* coming from between two mountains, and the mountains *were* mountains of bronze. 2With the first chariot *were* red horses, with the second chariot black horses, 3with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses—strong *steeds*. 4Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What *are* these, my lord?"

5And the angel answered and said to me, "These *are* four spirits of heaven, who go out from *their* station before the Lord of all the earth. 6The one with the black horses is going to the north country, the white are going after them, and the dappled are going toward the south country." 7Then the strong *steeds* went out, eager to go, that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth. And He said, "Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth." So they walked to and fro throughout the earth. 8And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, "See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country."

THE COMMAND TO CROWN JOSHUA

9Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 10"Receive *the gift* from the captives—from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon—and go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah. 11Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set *it* on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. 12Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying:

"Behold, the Man whose name *is* the BRANCH!
From His place He shall branch out,
And He shall build the temple of the LORD;
13Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD.
He shall bear the glory,
And shall sit and rule on His throne;
So He shall be a priest on His throne,
And the counsel of peace shall be between them both."'

14"Now the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the LORD for Helem,[a] Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah. 15Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the LORD. Then you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. And *this* shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God."

OBEDIENCE BETTER THAN FASTING

7 Now in the fourth year of King Darius it came to pass *that* the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, on the fourth *day* of the ninth month, Chislev, 2when *the people*[a] sent Sherezer,[b] with Regem-Melech and his men, *to* the house of God,[c] to pray before the LORD, 3*and* to ask the priests who *were* in the house of the LORD of hosts, and the prophets, saying, "Should I weep in the fifth month and fast as I have done for so many years?"

4Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 5"Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *months* during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me—for Me? 6When you eat and when you drink, do you not

5:8 [a]Literally *stone* **5:11** [a]That is, Babylon
6:14 [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Syriac reads *for Heldai* (compare verse 10); Septuagint reads *for the patient ones.*
7:2 [a]Literally *they* (compare verse 5) [b]Or *Sar-Ezer* [c]Hebrew *Bethel*

MAKING IT REAL // ZECHARIAH 7:9, 10

Walk in Love The Bible is full of advice about how God wants you to treat other people. If you'll start with the instructions here in Zechariah 7:9 and 10, you'll be well on your way to living a godly life.

These verses put some responsibility on the people who read them. Yes, you are responsible to see that justice is done in situations where you can. Don't let people treat others unfairly when you can speak out against it. And it is even more important to make sure *you* act fairly.

You're also responsible for acting with compassion and mercy. Being compassionate means going out of your way to help someone, sacrificing in order to share, and doing more than someone asks of you. Being merciful means that you do those things for people even if you think they don't deserve it.

What else? "Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor." Do what you can for people who can't do things for themselves. Older people often have trouble with little things like changing light bulbs or raking leaves. It wouldn't take long for you to do odd jobs for them, and they would love it. "The fatherless," or orphaned, often just need someone to throw a football with them or take them to a movie. You can't imagine how excited they would be if you did that!

Finally, "Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother." Pretty self-explanatory. All of these actions will continue to become more natural to you as you commit to walk in love. (See also: Deut. 6:4, 5; Amos 5:21–24; Matt. 22:36–39; Phil. 1:27.)

Words to Live By

Mercy: The word translated as "mercy" in Zechariah 7:9 is the Hebrew word *checed* (kheh'-sed). It carries the idea of kindness and goodness. When we show true kindness to someone, it's about doing what is good and what is right. When we consider the kindness God has shown us, even when we didn't deserve it, how can we be stingy with our kindness to others?

eat and drink *for yourselves?* 7*Should you* not *have obeyed* the words which the LORD proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited and prosperous, and the South[a] and the Lowland were inhabited?'"

DISOBEDIENCE RESULTED IN CAPTIVITY

8Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, 9"Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Execute true justice,
Show mercy and compassion
Everyone to his brother.
10Do not oppress the widow or the
fatherless,
The alien or the poor.
Let none of you plan evil in his heart
Against his brother.'

CARING
How should we treat others?
Zechariah 7:9, 10

11"But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. 12Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. 13Therefore it happened, *that* just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so they called out and I would not listen," says the LORD of hosts. 14"But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not

7:7 [a]Hebrew *Negev*

known. Thus the land became desolate after them, so that no one passed through or returned; for they made the pleasant land desolate."

JERUSALEM, HOLY CITY OF THE FUTURE

8 Again the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, 2"Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal;
With great fervor I am zealous for her.'

3"Thus says the LORD:

'I will return to Zion,
And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth,
The Mountain of the LORD of hosts,
The Holy Mountain.'

4"Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Old men and old women shall again sit
In the streets of Jerusalem,
Each one with his staff in his hand
Because of great age.
5The streets of the city
Shall be full of boys and girls
Playing in its streets.'

6"Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days,
Will it also be marvelous in My eyes?'
Says the LORD of hosts.

7"Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east
And from the land of the west;
8I will bring them *back*,
And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
They shall be My people
And I will be their God,
In truth and righteousness.'

9"Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Let your hands be strong,
You who have been hearing in these days
These words by the mouth of the prophets,
Who *spoke* in the day the foundation was laid
For the house of the LORD of hosts,
That the temple might be built.
10For before these days
There were no wages for man nor any hire for beast;
There was no peace from the enemy for whoever went out or came in;
For I set all men, everyone, against his neighbor.

11But now I *will* not *treat* the remnant of this people as in the former days,' says the LORD of hosts.

12'For the seed *shall be* prosperous,
The vine shall give its fruit,
The ground shall give her increase,
And the heavens shall give their dew—
I will cause the remnant of this people
To possess all these.
13And it shall come to pass
That just as you were a curse among the nations,
O house of Judah and house of Israel,
So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing.
Do not fear,
Let your hands be strong.'

14"For thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Just as I determined to punish you
When your fathers provoked Me to wrath,'
Says the LORD of hosts,
'And I would not relent,
15So again in these days
I am determined to do good
To Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.
Do not fear.

MAKING IT REAL // ZECHARIAH 8:16

Speak Truth We all make mistakes. At some point in time, you will mess up; and the result could be a damaged friendship. When that happens, the first thing you've got to do is to be truthful with yourself. Face what you did, swallow your pride, and don't make excuses—just admit it. You messed up. Whether you meant to or not, it happened. The key to great relationships is being able to work out the stuff that comes between you.

Next you've got to be honest with God. Confess your sin. Tell Him you know you've done wrong and that you're sorry. Ask Him to forgive you. He'll forgive you before you finish asking. Then ask Him to help you deal with your friend—to help you know what to say and how to make things right.

The hardest part may be facing your friend and admitting that you aren't perfect, that you blew it and you're sorry. Ask for your friend's forgiveness. A good Christian friend may surprise you and say, "I've already forgiven you."

There are other things that will help you patch up a relationship, too. Walking in true forgiveness and grace, learning to overlook the little stuff, doing your best to love like Jesus, encouraging, supporting, having good times together—all of these things build good relationships and make it easier to work through the rough spots. (See also: 2 Cor. 2:7, 8; Eph. 4:25–32; 1 John 4:7.)

Words to Live By

Truth: The word translated as "truth" in Zechariah 8:16 is the Hebrew word *emeth* (eh'-meth). It means "trustworthiness," "faithfulness," or "certainty." We should always seek to speak truth so when people hear our words, they know they can trust them; and so they will know they can trust us to be faithful to the words we say.

16 These *are* the things you shall do:
Speak each man the truth to his neighbor;
Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace;
17 Let none of you think evil in your[a] heart against your neighbor;
And do not love a false oath.
For all these *are things* that I hate,'
Says the LORD."

18 Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 19 "'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'The fast of the fourth *month,*
The fast of the fifth,
The fast of the seventh,
And the fast of the tenth,
Shall be joy and gladness and cheerful feasts
For the house of Judah.
Therefore love truth and peace.'

20 "'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Peoples shall yet come,
Inhabitants of many cities;
21 The inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying,
"Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD,
And seek the LORD of hosts.
I myself will go also."
22 Yes, many peoples and strong nations
Shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem,
And to pray before the LORD.'

23 "'Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard *that* God *is* with you."'"

8:17 [a]Literally *his*

ISRAEL DEFENDED AGAINST ENEMIES

9 The burden[a] of the word of the LORD
Against the land of Hadrach,
And Damascus its resting place
(For the eyes of men
And all the tribes of Israel
Are on the LORD);
2 Also *against* Hamath, *which* borders on it,
And *against* Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.

3 For Tyre built herself a tower,
Heaped up silver like the dust,
And gold like the mire of the streets.
4 Behold, the Lord will cast her out;
He will destroy her power in the sea,
And she will be devoured by fire.

5 Ashkelon shall see *it* and fear;
Gaza also shall be very sorrowful;
And Ekron, for He dried up her expectation.
The king shall perish from Gaza,
And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

6 "A mixed race shall settle in Ashdod,
And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.
7 I will take away the blood from his mouth,
And the abominations from between his teeth.
But he who remains, even he *shall be* for our God,
And shall be like a leader in Judah,
And Ekron like a Jebusite.
8 I will camp around My house
Because of the army,
Because of him who passes by and him who returns.
No more shall an oppressor pass through them,
For now I have seen with My eyes.

THE COMING KING

9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you;
He *is* just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.

Zechariah 9:9

Donkeys were considered animals of peace. They were ridden by princes and kings (Judg. 5:10; 10:4; 12:14; 2 Sam. 16:1, 2). When Jesus rode into Jerusalem for the last week of His earthly ministry, He was sitting on a young donkey.

10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
And the horse from Jerusalem;
The battle bow shall be cut off.
He shall speak peace to the nations;
His dominion *shall be* 'from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.'[a]

GOD WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE

11 "As for you also,
Because of the blood of your covenant,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.
12 Return to the stronghold,
You prisoners of hope.
Even today I declare
That I will restore double to you.
13 For I have bent Judah, My *bow,*
Fitted the bow with Ephraim,
And raised up your sons, O Zion,
Against your sons, O Greece,
And made you like the sword of a mighty man."

14 Then the LORD will be seen over them,
And His arrow will go forth like lightning.
The Lord GOD will blow the trumpet,
And go with whirlwinds from the south.
15 The LORD of hosts will defend them;
They shall devour and subdue with slingstones.
They shall drink *and* roar as if with wine;
They shall be filled *with blood* like basins,
Like the corners of the altar.
16 The LORD their God will save them in that day,
As the flock of His people.

9:1 [a]Or *oracle* **9:10** [a]Psalm 72:8

For they *shall be like* the jewels of a crown,
Lifted like a banner over His land—
17For how great is its[a] goodness
And how great its[b] beauty!
Grain shall make the young men thrive,
And new wine the young women.

RESTORATION OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

10 Ask the LORD for rain
In the time of the latter rain.[a]
The LORD will make flashing clouds;
He will give them showers of rain,
Grass in the field for everyone.

2For the idols[a] speak delusion;
The diviners envision lies,
And tell false dreams;
They comfort in vain.
Therefore *the people* wend their way like sheep;
They are in trouble because *there is* no shepherd.

3"My anger is kindled against the shepherds,
And I will punish the goatherds.
For the LORD of hosts will visit His flock,
The house of Judah,
And will make them as His royal horse in the battle.
4From him comes the cornerstone,
From him the tent peg,
From him the battle bow,
From him every ruler[a] together.
5They shall be like mighty men,
Who tread down *their enemies*
In the mire of the streets in the battle.
They shall fight because the LORD is with them,
And the riders on horses shall be put to shame.

6"I will strengthen the house of Judah,
And I will save the house of Joseph.
I will bring them back,
Because I have mercy on them.
They shall be as though I had not cast them aside;
For I *am* the LORD their God,
And I will hear them.
7*Those of* Ephraim shall be like a mighty man,
And their heart shall rejoice as if with wine.
Yes, their children shall see *it* and be glad;
Their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.
8I will whistle for them and gather them,
For I will redeem them;
And they shall increase as they once increased.

9"I will sow them among the peoples,
And they shall remember Me in far countries;
They shall live, together with their children,
And they shall return.

Zechariah 10:10

Gilead and Lebanon refer to the regions on each side of the Jordan River. Together they form the land that God originally gave to the Israelites.

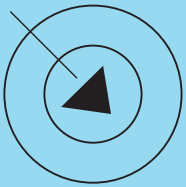
10I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt,
And gather them from Assyria.
I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon,
Until no *more room* is found for them.
11He shall pass through the sea with affliction,
And strike the waves of the sea:
All the depths of the River[a] shall dry up.
Then the pride of Assyria shall be brought down,
And the scepter of Egypt shall depart.

12"So I will strengthen them in the LORD,
And they shall walk up and down in His name,"
Says the LORD.

DESOLATION OF ISRAEL

11 Open your doors, O Lebanon,
That fire may devour your cedars.

9:17 [a]Or *His* [b]Or *His* **10:1** [a]That is, spring rain **10:2** [a]Hebrew *teraphim* **10:4** [a]Or *despot* **10:11** [a]That is, the Nile



PROMISE

God promises to strengthen His people.

"So I will strengthen them in the LORD, and they shall walk up and down in His name," says the LORD (Zech. 10:12).

Through the prophet Zechariah, God promised to restore the nation of Israel, His people. We know that we are now also God's people and He is still the same faithful God. So this promise is also for us. We can be sure that God will strengthen us, because He is our Lord and we are His people

God has chosen to show His power and His personality in the lives of the people who live for Him. The problems you face are just opportunities for God to show His character. It's a chance for Him to show what He can do (His awesome power) and what He will do (His incredible kindness and mercy).

In his second letter to the Christians who lived Corinth, Paul gave a long list of the difficulties he had faced. One thing in particular seemed to bother him, though he didn't say what it was. He just said that he had asked the Lord three times to change things. But God answered, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). When you feel weak or overwhelmed in your life, be disciplined enough to read and learn God's Word. Spend time praying and ask Him to help you. The only place to find real strength is in the presence of God.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 68:35; Habakkuk 3:19; 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10; Philippians 4:13



2 Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has
fallen,
Because the mighty *trees* are ruined.
Wail, O oaks of Bashan,
For the thick forest has come down.
3 *There is* the sound of wailing
shepherds!
For their glory is in ruins.
There is the sound of roaring lions!
For the pride[a] of the Jordan is in ruins.

Zechariah 11:3

In ancient Israel, lions were known to spring from their hiding places among the thickets near the Jordan River to pounce on people passing by.

PROPHECY OF THE SHEPHERDS

4 Thus says the LORD my God, "Feed the flock for slaughter, 5 whose owners slaughter them and feel no guilt; those who sell them say, 'Blessed be the LORD, for I am rich'; and their shepherds do not pity them. 6 For I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land," says the LORD. "But indeed I will give everyone into his neighbor's hand and into the hand of his king. They shall attack the land, and I will not deliver *them* from their hand."

7 So I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular the poor of the flock.[a] I took for myself two staffs: the one I called Beauty,[b] and the other I called Bonds;[c] and I fed the flock. 8 I dismissed the three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. 9 Then I said, "I will not feed you. Let what is dying die, and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other's flesh." 10 And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples. 11 So it was broken on that day. Thus the poor[a] of the flock, who were watching me, knew that it *was* the word

11:3 [a]Or *floodplain, thicket* **11:7** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *for the Canaanites.* [b]Or *Grace,* and so in verse 10 [c]Or *Unity,* and so in verse 14 **11:11** [a]Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *the Canaanites.*

of the LORD. 12Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give *me* my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty *pieces* of silver.

13And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty *pieces* of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter. 14Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

15And the LORD said to me, "Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. 16For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land *who* will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces.

17"Woe to the worthless shepherd,
Who leaves the flock!
A sword *shall be* against his arm
And against his right eye;
His arm shall completely wither,
And his right eye shall be totally
blinded."

Zechariah 12:2

A cup that came from God's hand was a common symbol in ancient times for a person's (or a nation's) destiny. A cup of His anger symbolized punishment for a sin. A cup of His blessing symbolized a bright future.

THE COMING DELIVERANCE OF JUDAH

12 The burden[a] of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: 2"Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. 3And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. 4In that day," says the LORD, "I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. 5And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem *are* my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.' 6In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem.

7"The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. 8In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David *shall be* like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. 9It shall be in that day *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

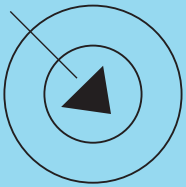
MOURNING FOR THE PIERCED ONE

10"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son,* and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. 11In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.[a] 12And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; 13the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; 14all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.

IDOLATRY CUT OFF

13 "In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

12:1 [a]Or *oracle* **12:11** [a]Hebrew *Megiddon*



PROMISE

God promises to refine and test His people.

"I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The LORD is my God'" (Zech. 13:9).

Imagine you bought a ring that was supposed to be pure gold, but when you wore it, it made your finger turn green. Why would such a thing happen? Because the ring wasn't pure gold. It didn't go through the refining process necessary to remove all the impurities from the metal. Maybe the ring looked beautiful in the case, but not on your green-fingered hand. Unfortunately, if a ring causes discolored digits, it's not pure gold; it's a fraud and full of other junky metals. What could have been a beautiful ring was ruined because the goldsmith didn't take the time or energy to purify the gold.

God wants you to be pure—in every way. He wants your thoughts to be pure. He wants your actions to be pure. He wants you physically, morally, spiritually, and sexually pure. He doesn't want you just to look good. He wants you to be beautiful through and through.

Purification is a two-step process. *You* make the decision to allow the Lord to work in your life; then *He* does the purifying. He does it by renewing your mind with His Word and by speaking to you by His Spirit. The process may not always be pleasant for you, but God will not leave you in the fire to burn up. Just like a master goldsmith, He will only allow the fire to make you better and take away all the junky stuff in your life. Then He will bring you out at the perfect time and finish the process of making you into the beautiful person He created you to be.

When a ring is put on a finger, it's put to the test. If it's pure, it's beautiful. If it isn't, it will tarnish. When you've been purified by the Lord, you will be as beautiful as pure gold.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Jeremiah 9:7; Daniel 11:35; 12:10

2 "It shall be in that day," says the LORD
of hosts, "*that* I will cut off the names of
the idols from the land, and they shall no
longer be remembered. I will also cause the
prophets and the unclean spirit to depart
from the land. 3 It shall come to pass *that* if
anyone still prophesies, then his father and
mother who begot him will say to him, 'You
shall not live, because you have spoken lies
in the name of the LORD.' And his father
and mother who begot him shall thrust
him through when he prophesies.

4 "And it shall be in that day *that* every
prophet will be ashamed of his vision when
he prophesies; they will not wear a robe of
coarse hair to deceive. 5 But he will say, 'I
am no prophet, I *am* a farmer; for a man
taught me to keep cattle from my youth.'
6 And *one* will say to him, 'What are these
wounds between your arms?'[a] Then he will
answer, '*Those* with which I was wounded
in the house of my friends.'

THE SHEPHERD SAVIOR

7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,
Against the Man who is My
Companion,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"Strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep will be scattered;
Then I will turn My hand against the
little ones.
8 And it shall come to pass in all the
land,"
Says the LORD,
"*That* two-thirds in it shall be cut off
and die,
But *one*–third shall be left in it:

13:6 [a]Or *hands*

Zechariah 13:9
Just as a metalsmith working with gold or silver uses fire to purify the good and get rid of the bad, God uses the fire of His judgment to purify people and get rid of the bad.

9 I will bring the *one*–third through the fire,
Will refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.
They will call on My name,
And I will answer them.
I will say, 'This *is* My people';
And each one will say, 'The LORD *is* my God.'"

THE DAY OF THE LORD

14 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming,
And your spoil will be divided in your midst.
2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem;
The city shall be taken,
The houses rifled,
And the women ravished.
Half of the city shall go into captivity,
But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

3 Then the LORD will go forth
And fight against those nations,
As He fights in the day of battle.
4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,
Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,
From east to west,
Making a very large valley;
Half of the mountain shall move toward the north
And half of it toward the south.

5 Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley,
For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.
Yes, you shall flee
As you fled from the earthquake
In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.

Thus the LORD my God will come,
And all the saints with You.[a]

6 It shall come to pass in that day
That there will be no light;
The lights will diminish.
7 It shall be one day
Which is known to the LORD—
Neither day nor night.
But at evening time it shall happen
That it will be light.

8 And in that day it shall be
That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem,
Half of them toward the eastern sea
And half of them toward the western sea;
In both summer and winter it shall occur.
9 And the LORD shall be King over all the earth.
In that day it shall be—
"The LORD *is* one,"[a]
And His name one.

10 All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. *Jerusalem*[a] shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and *from* the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses.

11 *The people* shall dwell in it;
And no longer shall there be utter destruction,
But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

12 And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem:

Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet,
Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets,
And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

13 It shall come to pass in that day
That a great panic from the LORD will be among them.

14:5 [a]Or *you;* Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate read *Him.* **14:9** [a]Compare Deuteronomy 6:4
14:10 [a]Literally *She*

Everyone will seize the hand of his
neighbor,
And raise his hand against his
neighbor's hand;
14 Judah also will fight at Jerusalem.
And the wealth of all the surrounding
nations
Shall be gathered together:
Gold, silver, and apparel in great
abundance.

15 Such also shall be the plague
On the horse *and* the mule,
On the camel and the donkey,
And on all the cattle that will be in
those camps.
So *shall* this plague *be.*

THE NATIONS WORSHIP THE KING

16 And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 And it shall be *that* whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. 18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they *shall have* no *rain;* they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

20 In that day "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be *engraved* on the bells of the horses. The pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. 21 Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts.[a] Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

14:21 [a]Or *on every pot . . . shall be (engraved) "HOLINESS TO THE LORD OF HOSTS"*

Malachi

DATE OF WRITING: 430 B.C.
AUTHOR: THE PROPHET MALACHI
THEME: BE ASSURED OF GOD'S LOVE AND JUSTICE
PURPOSE: WE NEED TO MAKE SURE GOD HAS FIRST PLACE IN OUR LIVES.

OUTLINE

1:1–5 .....God's Love for Israel
1:6—2:9 .....Judgment Against the Priests
2:10–17.....Broken Covenants
3:1–4 .....The Lord, Whom You Seek, Will Come
3:5–15 .....Don't Rob God
3:16—4:6 .....The Lord Will Reward the Righteous and Punish the Wicked

KEY VERSE:

"The Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts (Malachi 3:1).

THEN ///

Have you ever been excited about something, like a family trip or a party with friends, and it turns out to be nothing like you had thought? Maybe you'd been looking forward to the trip for a long time. Maybe you had imagined how fun it was going to be and how everyone would enjoy it. But, when reality happened, it just wasn't as bright and shiny as it was in your head.

That's how the Hebrews felt at the point when Malachi preached and wrote his message. They had struggled through some *extremely* hard times. After being exiled from their country, they returned, resettled, and rebuilt the temple and the city walls. All that involved years of work.

When it was done they expected that God would bless them and their lives would be like the "good old days" when they were happy and rich and in God's favor.

The problem was that they were still missing the point about obedience to God. They were halfhearted followers. They were sitting back expecting God to fix everything. They halfheartedly did what they needed to do, but they weren't *being* the people they needed to be.

NOW ///

When God originally established the customs of the Hebrews (this was back in the days of Moses), He taught them to offer their best to Him. This established God as top priority in their lives. It taught them not to put their trust in their crops or their riches but in God.

During the days of Malachi, the people were going through the motions of bringing sacrifices; but instead of bringing their best offerings, they were bringing their damaged goods. This kind of sacrificing was just a shadow of obedience, not the real thing. They weren't establishing their lives around God's truth; they were fitting Him in where it worked for them. This was their error. If we look, we can see that same error in our world today.

REALITY CHECK ///

We don't know much about the prophet Malachi. In fact, we don't know anything more than what is revealed in this book: he was a man who spoke out for God and who called people to serve God wholeheartedly.

Malachi spoke God's truth. We don't know anything else about him, but his life can inspire us to do the same thing. Wouldn't it be great to be known only for what we said for God? How wonderful it would be to be remembered for the times we spread His Word. If being remembered for the way you shared God's truth with the world were your goal, how would your life change?

The burden[a] of the word of the LORD
to Israel by Malachi.

ISRAEL BELOVED OF GOD

2"I have loved you," says the LORD.
"Yet you say, 'In what way have You
loved us?'
Was not Esau Jacob's brother?"
Says the LORD.
"Yet Jacob I have loved;
3But Esau I have hated,
And laid waste his mountains and his
heritage
For the jackals of the wilderness."

4Even though Edom has said,
"We have been impoverished,
But we will return and build the
desolate places,"

Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"They may build, but I will throw down;
They shall be called the Territory of
Wickedness,
And the people against whom the
LORD will have indignation
forever.

1:1 [a]Or *oracle*

Malachi 1:2

Jacob and Esau were the two sons of Isaac. As the older brother, Esau was legally entitled to the larger inheritance from his father. Yet God chose to bless Jacob, and he became Isaac's number one heir. God gave Jacob the name Israel. His twelve sons are the twelve tribes that made up the nation of Israel.

5 Your eyes shall see,
And you shall say,
'The LORD is magnified beyond the
border of Israel.'

POLLUTED OFFERINGS

6 "A son honors *his* father,
And a servant *his* master.
If then I am the Father,
Where *is* My honor?
And if I *am* a Master,
Where *is* My reverence?
Says the LORD of hosts
To you priests who despise My name.
Yet you say, 'In what way have we
despised Your name?'

7 "You offer defiled food on My altar,
But say,
'In what way have we defiled You?'
By saying,
'The table of the LORD is contemptible.'
8 And when you offer the blind as a
sacrifice,
Is it not evil?
And when you offer the lame and sick,
Is it not evil?
Offer it then to your governor!
Would he be pleased with you?
Would he accept you favorably?"
Says the LORD of hosts.

9 "But now entreat God's favor,
That He may be gracious to us.
While this is being *done* by your hands,
Will He accept you favorably?"
Says the LORD of hosts.
10 "Who *is there* even among you who
would shut the doors,
So that you would not kindle fire *on*
My altar in vain?
I have no pleasure in you,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"Nor will I accept an offering from your
hands.

REPUTATION
How great is God's reputation?
Malachi 1:11

11 For from the rising of the sun, even to
its going down,
My name *shall be* great among the
Gentiles;
In every place incense *shall be* offered
to My name,
And a pure offering;
For My name shall be great among the
nations,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

12 "But you profane it,
In that you say,
'The table of the LORD[a] is defiled;
And its fruit, its food, *is* contemptible.'
13 You also say,
'Oh, what a weariness!'
And you sneer at it,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"And you bring the stolen, the lame,
and the sick;
Thus you bring an offering!
Should I accept this from your hand?"
Says the LORD.
14 "But cursed *be* the deceiver
Who has in his flock a male,
And takes a vow,
But sacrifices to the Lord what is
blemished—
For I *am* a great King,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"And My name *is to be* feared among
the nations.

CORRUPT PRIESTS

2 "And now, O priests, this
commandment is for you.
2 If you will not hear,
And if you will not take *it* to heart,
To give glory to My name,"
Says the LORD of hosts,

1:12 [a]Following Bomberg; Masoretic Text reads *Lord.*

WORLD APP

Racism / Malachi 2:10

"Can't we all just get along?" Those words have become a pop culture catch phrase ever since they were uttered by a man who was attacked in the midst of high racial tension in our country. It seems like a simple question, but the answer can be complicated. Mistreatment of entire races of people has gone on all over the world, even here in America. Fortunately we've come a long way in the battle against racism. But we still have a ways to go.

We often encounter people who consider their race superior to every other race. They mistreat others in so many vile ways simply because of the color of their skin or their ethnic background. We keep asking, "Can't we all just get along?"

As Christians, we encounter a similar question in Malachi 2:10: "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another?"

Malachi was identifying a shortcoming in his culture, but it speaks to ours as well. We know that God created all of us—the human race (Gen. 1—2). Knowing that He is the Creator and the Father of us all, if we truly love God, how can we treat each other dishonestly and unjustly, especially based on something like race? That is the point Malachi is making—God created all of us and wants us to treat each other with the respect that comes from simply existing as a human being, a special creation of God.

"I will send a curse upon you,
And I will curse your blessings.
Yes, I have cursed them already,
Because you do not take *it* to heart.

3"Behold, I will rebuke your descendants
And spread refuse on your faces,
The refuse of your solemn feasts;
And *one* will take you away with it.
4Then you shall know that I have sent
this commandment to you,
That My covenant with Levi may
continue,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
5"My covenant was with him, *one* of life
and peace,
And I gave them to him *that he might*
fear *Me*;
So he feared Me
And was reverent before My name.
6The law of truth[a] was in his mouth,
And injustice was not found on his lips.
He walked with Me in peace and equity,
And turned many away from iniquity.

7"For the lips of a priest should keep
knowledge,
And *people* should seek the law from
his mouth;
For he is the messenger of the LORD
of hosts.
8But you have departed from the way;
You have caused many to stumble at
the law.
You have corrupted the covenant of
Levi,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
9"Therefore I also have made you
contemptible and base
Before all the people,
Because you have not kept My ways
But have shown partiality in the law."

TREACHERY OF INFIDELITY

10Have we not all one Father?
Has not one God created us?
Why do we deal treacherously with
one another
By profaning the covenant of the
fathers?
11Judah has dealt treacherously,
And an abomination has been
committed in Israel and in
Jerusalem,
For Judah has profaned
The LORD's holy *institution* which He
loves:
He has married the daughter of a
foreign god.
12May the LORD cut off from the tents
of Jacob
The man who does this, being awake
and aware,[a]
Yet who brings an offering to the LORD
of hosts!

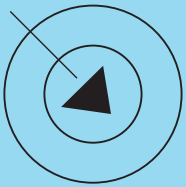
13And this is the second thing you do:
You cover the altar of the LORD with
tears,
With weeping and crying;
So He does not regard the offering
anymore,
Nor receive *it* with goodwill from your
hands.
14Yet you say, "For what reason?"
Because the LORD has been witness
Between you and the wife of your
youth,
With whom you have dealt
treacherously;
Yet she is your companion
And your wife by covenant.
15But did He not make *them* one,
Having a remnant of the Spirit?
And why one?
He seeks godly offspring.
Therefore take heed to your spirit,
And let none deal treacherously with
the wife of his youth.

MARRIAGE
What does God think of divorce?
Malachi 2:16

16"For the LORD God of Israel says
That He hates divorce,
For it covers one's garment with
violence,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"Therefore take heed to your spirit,
That you do not deal treacherously."

17You have wearied the LORD with your
words;
Yet you say,

2:6 [a]Or *true instruction* **2:12** [a]Talmud and Vulgate read *teacher and student.*



PROMISE

God promises not to change.

"For I am the LORD, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts (Mal. 3:6, 7a).

Athletes, even great ones, have their "off" days, days when the star basketball player can't rise above the other team and score enough points to win the game, when the best running back in the league fumbles inside the ten-yard line, when the sprinter who hasn't lost a race in seventy-six starts suddenly finds himself in second place.

You have your "off" days, too. There are days when you feel like being nice to everyone and days when you want everyone to just get out of your face. Some days it seems easy to do what God wants you to do; other days it seems hard to even care. This moodiness is part of human nature; our feelings can get in our way and keep us from doing what we know is right.

But God isn't ruled by feelings and He doesn't change. He is totally consistent. He's not kind one day and selfish the next. He is always faithful. He never does wrong. You can count on His power, His love, and His goodness, day in and day out.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 102:27; Hebrews 1:12; 13:8

"In what way have we wearied *Him?*"
In that you say,
"Everyone who does evil
Is good in the sight of the LORD,
And He delights in them,"
Or, "Where *is* the God of justice?"

THE COMING MESSENGER

3 "Behold, I send My messenger,
And he will prepare the way
before Me.
And the Lord, whom you seek,
Will suddenly come to His temple,
Even the Messenger of the covenant,
In whom you delight.
Behold, He is coming,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

2 "But who can endure the day of His
coming?
And who can stand when He appears?
For He *is* like a refiner's fire
And like launderers' soap.
3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier
of silver;
He will purify the sons of Levi,
And purge them as gold and silver,
That they may offer to the LORD
An offering in righteousness.

4 "Then the offering of Judah and
Jerusalem
Will be pleasant to the LORD,
As in the days of old,
As in former years.

JUDGMENT
What does God condemn?
Malachi 3:5

5 And I will come near you for
judgment;
I will be a swift witness
Against sorcerers,
Against adulterers,
Against perjurers,
Against those who exploit wage
earners and widows and
orphans,
And against those who turn away an
alien—
Because they do not fear Me,"
Says the LORD of hosts.



WORLD APP

Morality / Malachi 3:6

Morality is behavior that is right or proper. To be moral is to choose to do those things that are right.

We can all agree that doing the right thing is the correct choice. But there seems to be a problem when we try to agree on exactly what that right behavior should be. The world has published books, created Internet sites, and mass-produced countless magazine articles about the right way to live. Some say there is no "right" that's always right and no absolute concept of wrong. According to this idea, right and wrong can change based on the circumstance—killing is wrong, but if you're pregnant and don't want to be, ending the unborn life is okay. This way of thinking can also affect the small things in life—cheating is wrong, but you didn't have time to study for the test, so copying your friend's answers this one time is okay.

The concept of right and wrong shouldn't be based on any person's mistaken idea of correct behavior. And morality shouldn't be changed to fit a difficult situation. Right and wrong must be based on truth, and truth never changes. That's why we should always turn to God to determine right conduct and to define "morality." God is the only One who knows every truth. He is the only completely constant thing in the universe—He never changes. He is the only One who can always make the right call when we are confused and don't know the moral direction we should take.

6"For I *am* the LORD, I do not change;
Therefore you are not consumed,
O sons of Jacob.
7Yet from the days of your fathers
You have gone away from My
ordinances
And have not kept *them*.
Return to Me, and I will return to you,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"But you said,
'In what way shall we return?'

DO NOT ROB GOD

8"Will a man rob God?
Yet you have robbed Me!
But you say,
'In what way have we robbed You?'
In tithes and offerings.
9You are cursed with a curse,
For you have robbed Me,
Even this whole nation.

Malachi 3:10

The Israelites were commanded to give ten percent (a tithe) of everything they had—including crops, livestock, and money—to God. The Israelites gave their tithes to the Levites, the people who worked in the temple. The Levites, in turn, gave ten percent of everything they received to the priests. The priests offered a sacrifice to the Lord for their tithe. The third-year tithe was given to help support the poor and needy.

10Bring all the tithes into the
storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the windows
of heaven
And pour out for you *such* blessing
That *there will* not *be room* enough *to
receive it.*

11"And I will rebuke the devourer for your
sakes,
So that he will not destroy the fruit of
your ground,
Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for
you in the field,"
Says the LORD of hosts;
12"And all nations will call you blessed,
For you will be a delightful land,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN HARSHLY

13"Your words have been harsh against
Me,"
Says the LORD,
"Yet you say,
'What have we spoken against You?'
14You have said,
'It is useless to serve God;
What profit *is it* that we have kept His
ordinance,
And that we have walked as
mourners
Before the LORD of hosts?
15So now we call the proud blessed,
For those who do wickedness are
raised up;
They even tempt God and go free.'"

DEVOTION

What lies ahead as we follow God?

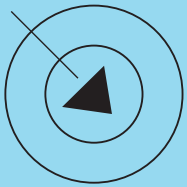
Malachi 3:16–18

A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

16Then those who feared the LORD
spoke to one another,
And the LORD listened and heard
them;
So a book of remembrance was
written before Him
For those who fear the LORD
And who meditate on His name.

17"They shall be Mine," says the LORD of
hosts,
"On the day that I make them My
jewels.[a]
And I will spare them
As a man spares his own son who
serves him."
18Then you shall again discern
Between the righteous and the
wicked,
Between one who serves God
And one who does not serve Him.

3:17 [a]Literally *special treasure*



PROMISE

God promises victory for those who honor His name.

"But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves" (Mal. 4:2).

Read Malachi 4:1 and look at the contrast between the people mentioned there and those described in verse 2. The difference between these two groups of people begins in their hearts. The people in verse 1 are proud. They believe in themselves more than anything else. They think they deserve the best. Of course, their attitude spills over into their actions. Since they trust themselves and not God, they do some things God doesn't like. It's a way of life for them.

But the people in verse 2 have a different attitude. They know that God is better and stronger than they could ever be. They praise His greatness and feel honored that God wants to be their friend. They want to please Him, and they work hard at doing the things that make Him happy. Their record isn't perfect, but what God sees in their hearts makes Him smile.

The Day of Judgment will not be a good day for proud, sinful people. But the people who honor the Lord "shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves." In other words, peace and security await those who love and fear the Lord.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 31:19; 34:9; Ecclesiastes 8:12

THE GREAT DAY OF GOD

4 "For behold, the day is coming,
Burning like an oven,
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"That will leave them neither root nor branch.
2 But to you who fear My name
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise
With healing in His wings;
And you shall go out
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.
3 You shall trample the wicked,
For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet
On the day that I do *this,*"
Says the LORD of hosts.

4 "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,
With the statutes and judgments.
5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.
6 And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

The New Testament

Matthew

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 50S OR 60S
AUTHOR: MOST LIKELY MATTHEW
THEME: JESUS IS THE FULFILLMENT OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE MESSIAH; HIS DISCIPLES ARE CALLED TO A NEW COVENANT, TO LIVE AT A HIGHER DIMENSION THAN THE OLD EVER REALIZED
PURPOSE: KING JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO LIVE AS GOOD CITIZENS IN HIS KINGDOM.

OUTLINE

1:1—2:23 ..... The Ancestors and Birth of Jesus
3:1–12 ..... The Message of John the Baptist
3:13—4:11 ..... The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus
4:12—18:35 ..... Jesus in Galilee
19:1—20:34 ..... Jesus Goes from Galilee to Jerusalem
21:1—27:66 ..... Jesus' Last Week: His Trial and Death
28:1–15 ..... Jesus Is Alive
28:16–20 ..... Jesus Appears to His Disciples and Gives the Great Commission

KEY VERSE:

Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

THEN /// Matthew is a great book to start the New Testament because Matthew opens by referring to the Old Testament. He uses the prophecies of the Old Testament to convince his readers of one thing: Jesus is the Messiah who was prophesied for centuries. He is the One the world has been waiting for.

Matthew's point in writing his biography of Jesus' ministry is to show the connection between the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament and the life and ministry of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Because of this, Matthew's Gospel is full of Old Testament prophecy. He logically and painstakingly writes Jesus' story in an effort to say, "Jesus is the One we've been waiting for! Put your trust in Him."

NOW /// If you haven't already, you will eventually learn about "If-Then" statements. It might be in a math class or a logic class or a philosophy class, but they'll come up. *If* a=b and b=c, *then* a=c. It's like this: *if* a dog is a four-legged animal that barks and *if* Maggie is a four-legged animal that barks, *then* Maggie is probably a dog. If-then statements are the way we put together information and come to a conclusion.

The Book, or Gospel, of Matthew is an if-then kind of book. Basically Matthew's message is, "*If* all these prophecies that we have studied and believed are fulfilled in this one Man, *then* Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah!"

REALITY CHECK /// The Pharisees were religious leaders of Jesus' day; but they were hypocrites. They had their religious ideas backward. Instead of glorifying God, they glorified themselves. Instead of leading out of humility, they led out of pride. Instead of expecting to serve people, they expected to be served. Jesus said they looked good on the outside, but inside they were dirty (Matt. 23:25). He called them whitewashed graves (23:27) and poisonous snakes (23:33). Even though the Pharisees were religious leaders, they were Jesus' worst enemies. They didn't want to admit Jesus was the Son of God because they would lose their control over the Hebrews. They missed the point entirely.

Jesus made it clear that rules won't save us. He also taught clearly that we should live our lives with humility and always consider others as more important than ourselves. True spirituality is about a relationship with God, not following rules or acting holy. Take the Sermon on the Mount for instance (chapters 5—7). In one simple talk, Jesus changed the whole definition of spirituality. He wanted everyone to understand that the rules won't save us; your faith will save you. The rules show you that you need God. Jesus made a lot of people mad by saying these things. In the process, He started a revolution called Christianity.

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST

1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus
Christ, the Son of David, the Son of
Abraham:

2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. 3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. 4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. 5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife*[a] of Uriah. 7 Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa.[a] 8 Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. 9 Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. 10 Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon,[a] and Amon begot Josiah. 11 Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

1:6 [a]Words in italic type have been added for clarity. They are not found in the original Greek. **1:7** [a]NU-Text reads *Asaph.* **1:10** [a]NU-Text reads *Amos.*

Matthew 1:11

More than six hundred years before Jesus was born, King Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army destroyed the city of Jerusalem and carried away most of its inhabitants, forcing them to live hundreds of miles from home as prisoners in Babylon. Their captivity lasted seventy years.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. 13 Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. 14 Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. 15 Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. 16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations.

CHRIST BORN OF MARY

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man,* and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 *"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,"*[a] which is translated, "God with us."

24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son.[a] And he called His name JESUS.

Matthew 2:1

At the time of Jesus' birth, the Roman Empire included pretty much the entire known world. Obviously, that's a lot of area to rule. To maintain control, the Roman senate selected governors to rule over various regions in the empire. Herod was selected to rule Judea in 37 B.C. Look up the word *paranoid* in the dictionary and you may find a picture of Herod next to it. He was so desperate to hang on to the throne that he killed anyone he suspected of even wanting to become king. That included three of his own sons.

WISE MEN FROM THE EAST

2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

3 When Herod the king heard *this,* he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

6 *'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,*
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
For out of you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.' "[a]

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them

1:23 [a]Isaiah 7:14. Words in oblique type in the New Testament are quoted from the Old Testament. **1:25** [a]NU-Text reads *a Son.* **2:6** [a]Micah 5:2



PROFILE
MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS

We can learn a lot about ourselves and other people by the way we act when we're surprised. The unexpected doesn't give us time to pretend or disguise our response. Fear, confidence, courage, and cowardice are frequently revealed by sudden, unexpected events. We know little about the character of Mary, the mother of Jesus, other than what we see through her responses to some huge surprises in her life. It was through her responses that she made a difference.

An angel's visit ranks high on the list of the unexpected. Mary was startled at the angel's sudden appearance, but even more so by what he said—she was to have a child. Her initial response was a single question of amazement, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" (Luke 1:34). Mary knew how things worked. She was a child of a culture whose history was filled with women who gave birth with God's help. But husbands had always been involved. She didn't have one yet. So, how was this to come about?

Gabriel's instructions were very specific. Mary was not to do anything; God's Spirit would do it all. Again, we are not told what Mary thought or how she felt. We only know her obedient response: "Let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). As soon as God let her know she didn't have to worry about the details, Mary left things in God's hands. That's how she made a difference. She participated and cooperated in God's wonderful plan. She didn't try to take control or run in fear from a startling message from God.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Mary can teach us a lot about faith and trust in God. And we can gauge our level of faith and trust by how we react to the unexpected. You may have to ask other people to help you see yourself. If you are responding well to the unexpected, congratulations! You are on track. You will probably find, though, that sometimes your responses will indicate an area in which you need to grow. Do you get angry, discouraged, doubtful, fearful, or completely confused by the unexpected? What do these responses tell you about your life of faith?

God wants to make a difference in and through your life. Expect God to guide you. Consider that His guidance may come in surprising or unexpected ways. Learn to respond to His guidance with the same faith and trust Mary had when she simply said, "Let it be."

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

We learn about Mary in all four Gospels (accounts of the Good News): Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. She takes center stage in Luke 1:26—2:52.

Mary's real and honest faith opened the door to the miraculous. Her faith made a difference. Yours can, too!

to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him,* bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

9When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. 11And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

12Then, being divinely warned in a dream
that they should not return to Herod, they
departed for their own country another
way.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

13Now when they had departed, behold, an
angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a
dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child
and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay
there until I bring you word; for Herod will
seek the young Child to destroy Him."
14When he arose, he took the young
Child and His mother by night and de-
parted for Egypt, 15and was there until the
death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled
which was spoken by the Lord through the
prophet, saying, *"Out of Egypt I called My
Son."*[a]

MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

16Then Herod, when he saw that he was
deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly
angry; and he sent forth and put to death
all the male children who were in Bethle-
hem and in all its districts, from two years
old and under, according to the time which
he had determined from the wise men.
17Then was fulfilled what was spoken by
Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

18 *"A voice was heard in Ramah,*
Lamentation, weeping, and great
mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted,
Because they are no more."[a]

THE HOME IN NAZARETH

19Now when Herod was dead, behold, an
angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to
Joseph in Egypt, 20saying, "Arise, take the
young Child and His mother, and go to
the land of Israel, for those who sought
the young Child's life are dead." 21Then
he arose, took the young Child and His
mother, and came into the land of Israel.
22But when he heard that Archelaus was
reigning over Judea instead of his father
Herod, he was afraid to go there. And be-
ing warned by God in a dream, he turned
aside into the region of Galilee. 23And he
came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth,
that it might be fulfilled which was spo-
ken by the prophets, "He shall be called a
Nazarene."

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

3 In those days John the Baptist came
preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
2and saying, "Repent, for the king-
dom of heaven is at hand!" 3For this is he
who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah,
saying:

"The voice of one crying in the
wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make His paths straight.'"[a]

4Now John himself was clothed in cam-
el's hair, with a leather belt around his
waist; and his food was locusts and wild
honey. 5Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all
the region around the Jordan went out to
him 6and were baptized by him in the Jor-
dan, confessing their sins.

Matthew 3:7

Think of the Pharisees and Sadducees as rival gangs. Instead of fighting with guns and knives, though, these rivals fought with words and ideas. These two groups of Jewish scholars interpreted Scripture differently and argued over issues such as the resurrection of the dead and the existence of angels. Because they knew so much about Scripture, members of both groups tended to take pride in themselves and to criticize others.

7But when he saw many of the Phari-
sees and Sadducees coming to his bap-
tism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers!
Who warned you to flee from the wrath to
come? 8Therefore bear fruits worthy of re-
pentance, 9and do not think to say to your-
selves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father.'
For I say to you that God is able to raise
up children to Abraham from these stones.
10And even now the ax is laid to the root
of the trees. Therefore every tree which
does not bear good fruit is cut down and

2:15 [a]Hosea 11:1 **2:18** [a]Jeremiah 31:15
3:3 [a]Isaiah 40:3

MAKING IT REAL // MATTHEW 3:16

Baptism Baptism is an important step to take after you accept Jesus as your Savior. When you get baptized, you are following Jesus' example, as He was baptized publicly. Getting baptized tells the world about your faith in Jesus as your Savior. This lets people know that you're serious about your relationship with God, and that you're going to live for Him, with courage and excitement! Not only does God want you to profess Him by being baptized in water but He also wants you to be a witness for Him by being filled daily with His Holy Spirit. Why do we need the Holy Spirit? Because we need the power we receive from Him. Acts 1:8 says, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." We don't need to depend on our own strength and ability. God makes unlimited strength and power available to us through His Holy Spirit. You need that power to make a difference for Him. Everyone does. Jesus is the Baptizer. Let Him baptize you with His power today! (See also: Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38; 8:12; Rom. 6:3–5.)

Words to Live By

Baptized: The word translated as "baptized" in Matthew 3:16 comes from the Greek word *baptizo* (bap-tid'-zo). It carries the idea of being dipped, immersed, or washed. When we are baptized, it is an outward sign that shows what has happened on the inside—that we have been washed clean of all our sins by the blood of Jesus.

thrown into the fire. 11I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.[a] 12His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

JOHN BAPTIZES JESUS

13Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 14And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

15But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

16When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He[a] saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

SATAN TEMPTS JESUS

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

4But He answered and said, "It is written, *'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'* "[a]

5Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

> *'He shall give His angels charge over you,'*

and,

> *'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'* "[a]

3:11 [a]M-Text omits *and fire.* **3:16** [a]Or *he*
4:4 [a]Deuteronomy 8:3 **4:6** [a]Psalm 91:11, 12

LIFE APP

Worship / Matthew 4:8–10

One of the most common Hebrew words for *worship* literally means to fall face-first, flat down on the ground. In ancient times, if a person came before someone with higher status, they would fall down in front of them, much like the way that people will often bow in front of a king, to show their submission to his authority. So it makes sense that worship is about more than expressing love; it's also about bowing ourselves in submission.

In Matthew 4:8–10, we read how Jesus was tempted by Satan just before He began His earthly ministry. He had already resisted the enemy's temptations twice by quoting Scripture. Finally, Satan tempted Jesus to commit the ultimate sin—to bow down and worship him. Had Jesus done as Satan wanted, He would have submitted Himself to Satan's authority rather than to God the Father's authority, and it would have put an end to His entire mission on earth—to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).

But Jesus would not worship Satan or submit to him in any way. Once again, He fought the enemy with Scripture: "For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve'" (Luke 4:8). Jesus knew that His worship and submission belonged only to God the Father. The same is true for us.

The enemy is still in this world, and he continually tempts God's people to worship things other than God. He may try to tempt you with drugs or alcohol. You may think you are using them, only to realize later that you've submitted to their authority in your life and they are using you. He may try to tempt you to worship at the altar of popularity or fame or money. Whatever the temptation, always remember that all your worship is owed to the one true God: the God who made you, saved you, and loves you. No other person or thing is worthy of your worship. So don't be distracted or deceived. Worship the Lord your God.

MAKING IT REAL // MATTHEW 5:13, 14

Salt and Light Jesus teaches in Matthew 5:13, 14 that part of being a Christian is being salt and light to this world. Salt is used to preserve foods and to add flavor to them. As Christians, that is the same effect we should have on the world—we should lead people to new life in Christ, and our behavior should flavor (change) the world around us. When you meet someone who is different and has godly qualities, you want to know why that person is different. Have you ever met someone who was really cool, had a great attitude even when life was hard, and did nice things for no obvious reason, and you later found out that he was a Christian? That explained it. That person was being salt. He helped people and made a difference in the world, just by how he lived every day.

How about light? A light shines and gives direction. Do you know Christians who radiate Jesus? Others are drawn to them. Their lives are examples that many want to follow. People see their goodness and know it is Jesus who lives in them. Jesus says don't hide who you are. Don't put your light under a basket where others can't see it. Go boldly into the world and show them Jesus. You are bound to make a difference wherever you are when others see Jesus in you. (See also: Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34; Phil. 2:15.)

Words to Live By

Hidden: In Matthew 5:14, the word translated as "hidden" comes from the Greek word *krupto* (kroop'-to). It carries the meaning of something being concealed or kept secret. When we belong to Christ and are dedicated to following Him, our lives will show it. No circumstances or tricks of the enemy will be able to hide the light of Christ that is shining out from us.

7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again,
'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"[a]
8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him
all the kingdoms of the world and their
glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things
I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."
10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you,[a]
Satan! For it is written, *'You shall worship
the LORD your God, and Him only you shall
serve.'*"[b]
11 Then the devil left Him, and behold,
angels came and ministered to Him.

JESUS BEGINS HIS GALILEAN MINISTRY

12 Now when Jesus heard that John had
been put in prison, He departed to Galilee.
13 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt
in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the
regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 that
it might be fulfilled which was spoken by
Isaiah the prophet, saying:

Matthew 4:12, 13

Galilee, a Roman province in northern Palestine, was the setting for most of Jesus' ministry of teaching and miracles on earth. Jesus' hometown of Nazareth was located in Galilee; most of His disciples came from the region. The city of Capernaum, which became the headquarters of Jesus' ministry, was located on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

15 *"The land of Zebulun and the land of
Naphtali,
By the way of the sea, beyond the
Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles:*
16 *The people who sat in darkness have
seen a great light,*

4:7 [a]Deuteronomy 6:16 **4:10** [a]M-Text reads *Get behind Me.* [b]Deuteronomy 6:13

And upon those who sat in the region
and shadow of death
Light has dawned."[a]

17From that time Jesus began to preach
and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of
heaven is at hand."

FOUR FISHERMEN CALLED AS DISCIPLES

18And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee,
saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and
Andrew his brother, casting a net into the
sea; for they were fishermen. 19Then He
said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make
you fishers of men." 20They immediately
left *their* nets and followed Him.
21Going on from there, He saw two
other brothers, James *the son* of Zebedee,
and John his brother, in the boat with
Zebedee their father, mending their nets.
He called them, 22and immediately they
left the boat and their father, and fol-
lowed Him.

JESUS HEALS A GREAT MULTITUDE

23And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching
in their synagogues, preaching the gospel
of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of
sickness and all kinds of disease among
the people. 24Then His fame went through-
out all Syria; and they brought to Him all
sick people who were afflicted with vari-
ous diseases and torments, and those who
were demon-possessed, epileptics, and
paralytics; and He healed them. 25Great
multitudes followed Him—from Galilee,
and *from* Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and
beyond the Jordan.

THE BEATITUDES

5 And seeing the multitudes, He went
up on a mountain, and when He was
seated His disciples came to Him.
2Then He opened His mouth and taught
them, saying:

3"Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of
heaven.
4Blessed *are* those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.
5Blessed *are* the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.
6Blessed *are* those who hunger and
thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.
7Blessed *are* the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.
8Blessed *are* the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.
9Blessed *are* the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of
God.
10Blessed *are* those who are
persecuted for righteousness'
sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11"Blessed are you when they revile and
persecute you, and say all kinds of evil
against you falsely for My sake. 12Rejoice
and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your
reward in heaven, for so they persecuted
the prophets who were before you.

BELIEVERS ARE SALT AND LIGHT

13"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt
loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It
is then good for nothing but to be thrown
out and trampled underfoot by men.
14"You are the light of the world. A city
that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Nor
do they light a lamp and put it under a bas-
ket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light
to all *who are* in the house. 16Let your light
so shine before men, that they may see
your good works and glorify your Father in
heaven.

CHRIST FULFILLS THE LAW

17"Do not think that I came to destroy the
Law or the Prophets. I did not come to de-
stroy but to fulfill. 18For assuredly, I say to
you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot
or one tittle will by no means pass from the
law till all is fulfilled. 19Whoever therefore
breaks one of the least of these command-
ments, and teaches men so, shall be called
least in the kingdom of heaven; but who-
ever does and teaches *them,* he shall be
called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20For
I say to you, that unless your righteousness
exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and
Pharisees, you will by no means enter the
kingdom of heaven.

4:16 [a]Isaiah 9:1, 2

MURDER
What is the same as murder in God's eyes?
Matthew 5:21, 22

MURDER BEGINS IN THE HEART

21"You have heard that it was said to those
of old, *'You shall not murder,*[a] and whoever
murders will be in danger of the judgment.'
22But I say to you that whoever is angry
with his brother without a cause[a] shall
be in danger of the judgment. And who-
ever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in
danger of the council. But whoever says,
'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.
23Therefore if you bring your gift to the al-
tar, and there remember that your brother
has something against you, 24leave your
gift there before the altar, and go your way.
First be reconciled to your brother, and
then come and offer your gift. 25Agree with
your adversary quickly, while you are on
the way with him, lest your adversary de-
liver you to the judge, the judge hand you
over to the officer, and you be thrown into
prison. 26Assuredly, I say to you, you will by
no means get out of there till you have paid
the last penny.

Matthew 5:23
An altar was a platform used to hold things people offered to God. Offerings of fruit and vegetables were made by people who wanted to show their appreciation to God for a healthy herd or a good crop. Animal offerings were made as substitute payments for sin.

ADULTERY IN THE HEART

27"You have heard that it was said to those
of old,[a] *'You shall not commit adultery.'*[b]
28But I say to you that whoever looks at a
woman to lust for her has already com-
mitted adultery with her in his heart. 29If
your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it
out and cast *it* from you; for it is more
profitable for you that one of your mem-
bers perish, than for your whole body to
be cast into hell. 30And if your right hand
causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it*
from you; for it is more profitable for you
that one of your members perish, than for
your whole body to be cast into hell.

SEX
Where do sexual sins begin?
Matthew 5:27–30

MARRIAGE IS SACRED AND BINDING

31"Furthermore it has been said, 'Who-
ever divorces his wife, let him give her a
certificate of divorce.' 32But I say to you
that whoever divorces his wife for any
reason except sexual immorality[a] causes
her to commit adultery; and whoever
marries a woman who is divorced com-
mits adultery.

JESUS FORBIDS OATHS

33"Again you have heard that it was said to
those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely,
but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'
34But I say to you, do not swear at all: nei-
ther by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35nor
by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by
Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great
King. 36Nor shall you swear by your head,
because you cannot make one hair white
or black. 37But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and
your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than
these is from the evil one.

GO THE SECOND MILE

38"You have heard that it was said, *'An eye
for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'*[a] 39But
I tell you not to resist an evil person. But
whoever slaps you on your right cheek,
turn the other to him also. 40If anyone
wants to sue you and take away your tunic,
let him have *your* cloak also. 41And who-
ever compels you to go one mile, go with
him two. 42Give to him who asks you, and
from him who wants to borrow from you
do not turn away.

5:21 [a]Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17 **5:22** [a]NU-Text omits *without a cause.* **5:27** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to those of old.* [b]Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18 **5:32** [a]Or *fornication* **5:38** [a]Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21

LOVE
Should we really love our enemies?
Matthew 5:43, 44

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

43"You have heard that it was said, *'You shall love your neighbor*[a] and hate your enemy.' 44But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,[a] 45that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47And if you greet your brethren[a] only, what do you do more *than others?* Do not even the tax collectors[b] do so? 48Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

DO GOOD TO PLEASE GOD

6 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 3But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.[a]

THE MODEL PRAYER

5"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place;* and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.[a] 7And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do.* For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

PRAYER
What is the Lord's Prayer?
Matthew 6:9–13

8"Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. 9In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
10Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.
11Give us this day our daily bread.
12And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
13And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.
Amen.[a]

14"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

FASTING TO BE SEEN ONLY BY GOD

16"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place;* and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.[a]

5:43 [a]Compare Leviticus 19:18 **5:44** [a]NU-Text omits three clauses from this verse, leaving, *"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."* **5:47** [a]M-Text reads *friends.* [b]NU-Text reads *Gentiles.* **6:4** [a]NU-Text omits *openly.* **6:6** [a]NU-Text omits *openly.* **6:13** [a]NU-Text omits *For Yours* through *Amen.* **6:18** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *openly.*



WORLD APP

World Financial Crises / Matthew 6:19–21, 25–34

Banks need bailouts. Car companies need bailouts. An entire country needs a bailout. It seems that there is a new global financial crisis popping up every week.

It can make you a little nervous if you start thinking about all the tiny cracks that seem to be growing into gaping crevices in the world's financial system. If those who have dedicated their lives to developing and maintaining a strong financial system can't quite keep it together in this modern economy, should we be worried? Not according to Matthew 6:25–34. In this passage, Jesus tells us that our heavenly Father knows what's going on in our lives. He maintains the entire world—He can look after His children. This isn't to say that times will always be easy. We still live in a broken world, and as long as we do, there will always be struggles. But God knows what we need and wants us to trust Him to provide for us. Every moment we spend worrying is a moment we aren't seeking Him.

This doesn't mean that we should not be aware of what's going on in the world and shouldn't handle our personal finances wisely. We should do both things. But we should seek God first, and trust Him to guide us through the rest. Earlier in Matthew 6, Jesus tells us to lay up treasures in heaven that can't be destroyed rather than treasures on earth that can be destroyed (Matt. 6:19–21). If we focus on following Christ, we will be laying up treasures in heaven. We will also gain wisdom in how to deal with finances here on earth. But we will have the assurance that earthly finances are not where we find our security. Our security is held by our heavenly Father, who also holds each of us in His hand. The world's financial system may falter, but God's power never wavers.

MAKING IT REAL // MATTHEW 6:33

Seek the Kingdom We all have decisions to make in life. Some seem fairly simple, like what status to post this morning or which math class to take. Some are not so easy, like what college to attend or what career to pursue. No matter what the decision, you can take your advice from Matthew 6:33 and do what Jesus said: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." When trying to decide which option is best or what path to choose, ask yourself, "Which way would bring God glory?" God should be honored by any decision you make. So before you decide, continue to pray, seek the opinion of someone you trust, and then choose the option that seems best to you.

God hasn't put you on earth to make you miserable. A lot of Christians mistakenly think that God's will is always going to be the hardest, most miserable option. That's simply not true. God has given you preferences and passions on purpose. He knows you will accomplish more for the kingdom when you are working in an area you love. If bringing God glory is your first priority, then you will always make wise decisions. They may sometimes be tough, but in the end, you will have made the right choice. (See also: Luke 12:31.)

Words to Live By

Seek: The word translated as "seek" in Matthew 6:33 is the Greek word *zeteo* (dzay-teh'-o). It draws the picture of searching for something specific, in order to find it. When we seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, we're not randomly looking around for a vague answer. Rather, we pray directly to God and we read His Word. We specifically want to know Him more and be more like Him. That is how we actively seek Him.

LAY UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures
on earth, where moth and rust destroy
and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but
lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,
where neither moth nor rust destroys and
where thieves do not break in and steal.
21 For where your treasure is, there your
heart will be also.

MONEY
What's most important in life?
Matthew 6:19, 20

THE LAMP OF THE BODY

22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body
will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad,
your whole body will be full of darkness.
If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

YOU CANNOT SERVE GOD AND RICHES

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either
he will hate the one and love the other,
or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and
mammon.

DO NOT WORRY

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry
about your life, what you will eat or what
you will drink; nor about your body, what
you will put on. Is not life more than food
and the body more than clothing? 26 Look
at the birds of the air, for they neither sow
nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your
heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not
of more value than they? 27 Which of you by
worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

28 "So why do you worry about clothing?
Consider the lilies of the field, how they
grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I
say to you that even Solomon in all his glory
was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if

God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?

31"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

HYPOCRISY

What should we do when we're tempted to judge others?

Matthew 7:3–5

DO NOT JUDGE

7 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? 5Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

6"Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

KEEP ASKING, SEEKING, KNOCKING

7"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! 12Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

THE NARROW WAY

13"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14Because[a] narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

YOU WILL KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS

15"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. 19Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

HEAVEN

Who will enter the kingdom of heaven?

Matthew 7:21

I NEVER KNEW YOU

21"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

BUILD ON THE ROCK

24"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him

7:14 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *How . . . !*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // MATTHEW 7:12

The Golden Rule Matthew 7:12 is a famous verse and has been called the "Golden Rule." People the world over have recognized the straightforward wisdom in this verse. It's as valuable as gold and it'll work every time you use it. It's been quoted and misquoted for years. It goes far beyond just being nice to people because you want them to be nice to you. Consider what Jesus said leading up to this statement. Love people who are against you; pray for the person who's mean to you; if someone wants to borrow something, give him more than what he asks for and don't ask him to give it back. You wouldn't dare *ask* anyone to treat you that well—you'd feel like you were using them—but you'd like it if they did treat you that way, right? Jesus isn't telling you to be a doormat. He's showing you how to follow His example. His whole life was about two things: pleasing God and helping other people. He wants you to be more concerned about others than you are about yourself. Don't be afraid to look out for others and trust God to look out for you. (See also: Zech. 8:16; Luke 6:31; 2 John 5, 6; Rom. 13:9.)

Words to Live By

The Law and the Prophets: When Jesus says, "This is the Law and the Prophets," He's reminding us that what He is teaching lines up with the Old Testament (where we find the Law and the writings of the prophets). Just as the Old Testament told us to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18), so Jesus is reinforcing the importance of this command.

to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26"But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

28And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

JESUS CLEANSES A LEPER

8 When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. 2And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

3Then Jesus put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

JESUS HEALS A CENTURION'S SERVANT

5Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, 6saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

7And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

8The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. 9For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *one,* 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it.*"

10When Jesus heard *it,* He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! 11And I say to you that many will come from east and west,

MAKING IT REAL // MATTHEW 7:29

Word of God This passage of Scripture tells us that the crowds were surprised because Jesus taught with authority. He wasn't just an interesting teacher, He spoke with power! There is power in the words of Jesus. There is also power in every word of the Bible. Consider what Hebrews 4:12 says: "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." This means that when you have the Word of God in your mind and heart, when troubles come against you, you can use God's Word like a sword to defend and protect yourself.

When the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness, what did Jesus do? He spoke the Word of God. He said, "It is written . . ." (Matt. 4:4, 6, 10). And you know what? The devil couldn't stand against the power in the Word of God. We can follow Jesus' example when we're tempted.

John 1:1 tells us, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Jesus is the Word, and He wants to teach you today. As you begin to study the Scriptures, you will start to gain greater understanding of what they mean. This will help you live faithfully every day and cause you to walk in victory! You'll never know the power of the Word until you grab hold and learn its power. Let Jesus teach you how to fight with the only weapon that is always victorious! (See also: Matt. 4:1–11; 2 Tim. 2:15.)

Words to Live By

Authority: The word translated as "authority" in Matthew 7:29 is *exousia* (ex-oo-see'-ah), and can also mean "power" or "right." As God in human form, Jesus had the absolute right to teach the Scriptures and the power to teach them in a way no one had ever heard before. The Scriptures were inspired by God Himself, so Jesus (being God's Son) had the utmost authority, power, and right to teach them in a way no one else ever could.

and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, *so* let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

HELL
What will hell be like?
Matthew 8:12

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW HEALED

14Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. 15So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.[a]

MANY HEALED IN THE EVENING

16When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, 17that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

> "*He Himself took our infirmities*
> *And bore our sicknesses.*"[a]

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

18And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. 19Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

8:15 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Him.*
8:17 [a]Isaiah 53:4

[20]And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head."

[21]Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

[22]But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

WIND AND WAVE OBEY JESUS

[23]Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. [24]And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. [25]Then His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"

[26]But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. [27]So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

TWO DEMON-POSSESSED MEN HEALED

[28]When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes,[a] there met Him two demon-possessed *men,* coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. [29]And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

[30]Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. [31]So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away[a] into the herd of swine."

[32]And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

[33]Then those who kept *them* fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what *had happened* to the demon-possessed *men.* [34]And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged *Him* to depart from their region.

JESUS FORGIVES AND HEALS A PARALYTIC

9 So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. [2]Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

[3]And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"

[4]But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? [5]For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? [6]But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." [7]And he arose and departed to his house.

[8]Now when the multitudes saw *it,* they marveled[a] and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

Matthew 9:9

The Roman Empire had a tax-happy government. The Romans taxed everything from property to imported goods to fishing rights. They even collected taxes from the Jews for worshiping at the temple! The Romans claimed the money was used to pay for the upkeep of the building. Some Bible experts have estimated the average Jewish household lost as much as forty percent of their income to taxes.

MATTHEW THE TAX COLLECTOR

[9]As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

[10]Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. [11]And when the Pharisees saw *it,* they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

[12]When Jesus heard *that,* He said to

8:28 [a]NU-Text reads *Gadarenes.* **8:31** [a]NU-Text reads *send us.* **9:8** [a]NU-Text reads *were afraid.*

them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13But go and learn what *this* means: *'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'*[a] For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."[b]

JESUS IS QUESTIONED ABOUT FASTING

14Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often,[a] but Your disciples do not fast?"

15And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. 17Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

> ***Matthew 9:17***
> What's a wineskin? Good question. A wineskin was a bag used for storing liquids in the days before bottles. It was like a canteen made of the hide (or skin) of a goat or another animal. When grape juice was stored in a new wineskin, the fermentation process (the chemical changes that causes grape juice to become wine) made the wineskin stretch and swell. The more a wineskin aged, the more stiff and brittle it became. When grape juice was poured into an old wineskin, often the container would break.

A GIRL RESTORED TO LIFE AND A WOMAN HEALED

18While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live." 19So Jesus arose and followed him, and so *did* His disciples.

20And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. 21For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well." 22But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.

23When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, 24He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him. 25But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. 26And the report of this went out into all that land.

TWO BLIND MEN HEALED

27When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

28And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

29Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." 30And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See *that* no one knows *it*." 31But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

A MUTE MAN SPEAKS

32As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. 33And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

34But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."

THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

35Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.[a] 36But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion

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9:13 [a]Hosea 6:6 [b]NU-Text omits *to repentance.*
9:14 [a]NU-Text brackets *often* as disputed.
9:35 [a]NU-Text omits *among the people.*



LIFE APP

Trust / Matthew 10:16

Is there someone in your life you trust completely? Ask yourself why you trust them. What is it about them that causes you to feel confident in relying on them? More than likely, they have proven to you that they will always try to do what is right; they will always say what they mean and mean what they say. A trustworthy person will always try to do what Jesus said: "Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No,' 'No'" (Matt. 5:37). The kind of person Jesus was talking about is someone who tells the truth. Liars are not trustworthy. You never know if what they say is true.

Not only should we choose to trust only those people who are trustworthy, we should live our lives in such a way that others can depend on us. When we say yes, we should mean it; when we say no, others should be able to believe our word. If we lie, we prove that others cannot depend on us and we cannot be trusted.

But no person is perfect. None of us can always follow through on what we say—things happen and circumstances change without warning, and we end up unable to do what we say. There is only One who can always be trusted to do exactly as He says *every time*—God. He will never let us down. In Numbers 23:19 we are told, "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do?" What God has told us in His Word is absolutely true and God never lies. Whatever you are facing in life, you can trust God to be there for you.

for them, because they were weary[a] and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. 38Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

10 And when He had called His twelve disciples to *Him,* He gave them power *over* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. 2Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was[a] Thaddaeus; 4Simon the Cananite,[a] and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

SENDING OUT THE TWELVE

5These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. 6But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead,[a] cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. 9Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, 10nor bag for *your* journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

11"Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. 12And when you go into a household, greet it. 13If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. 15Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

PERSECUTIONS ARE COMING

16"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

HATRED

What happens for Christians who endure hatred from the world?

Matthew 10:22

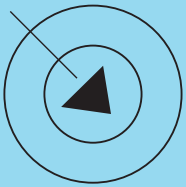
21"Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

24"A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,[a] how much more *will they call* those of his household! 26Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

JESUS TEACHES THE FEAR OF GOD

27"Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. 28And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to

9:36 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *harassed.*
10:3 [a]NU-Text omits *Lebbaeus, whose surname was.* **10:4** [a]NU-Text reads *Cananaean.*
10:8 [a]NU-Text reads *raise the dead, cleanse the lepers;* M-Text omits *raise the dead.*
10:25 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Beelzebul.*



PROMISE

God promises to tell you what to say.

"For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you" (Matt. 10:20).

Have you ever been in a situation where you just didn't know what to say? Maybe you were in the middle of telling someone about faith in Jesus (witnessing) and suddenly you didn't know what to say next. Or maybe someone you know really needed help with a problem and you simply had no good advice to give. Finding ourselves at a loss for words is something that happens to everyone.

After Jesus had spent quite a bit of time teaching and training His first twelve disciples, He told them it was time for them to go tell others about Him. Jesus' disciples must have worried about whether they would have the right words to say, but He assured them they should not be worried about what to say or how to say it. Why? Because the Holy Spirit was going to give them the words to say.

One of the cool parts of being a Christian is that you don't have to live on your own. Jesus is right there with you. He's never going to leave you or stand you up. He's always ready to speak to you and through you. So the next time you're sharing Jesus with a friend, or someone at school is drilling you about Christianity, remember the Holy Spirit will give you the words to say. Just calm down, and let Him do it. He always will, because He tells us so in His Word and God's Word never fails!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// 2 Samuel 23:2; Acts 1:16; Romans 8:26

destroy both soul and body in hell. 29Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. 30But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Matthew 10:29

Sparrows were what people offered to God when they couldn't afford a goat or sheep. They were considered a "poor man's sacrifice."

CONFESS CHRIST BEFORE MEN

32"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

CHRIST BRINGS DIVISION

34"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35For I have come to *'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';* 36and *'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'*[a] 37He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

A CUP OF COLD WATER

40"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

10:36 [a]Micah 7:6

JOHN THE BAPTIST SENDS MESSENGERS TO JESUS

11 Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

2And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of[a] his disciples 3and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

4Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 5*The* blind see and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised up and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. 6And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

7As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. 9But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. 10For this is *he* of whom it is written:

'Behold, I send My messenger before
Your face,
Who will prepare Your way before
You.'[a]

11"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. 13For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14And if you are willing to receive *it,* he is Elijah who is to come. 15He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

16"But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, 17and saying:

'We played the flute for you,
And you did not dance;
We mourned to you,
And you did not lament.'

18For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."[a]

WOE TO THE IMPENITENT CITIES

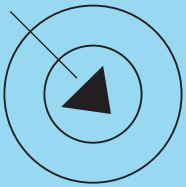
20Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 21"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be[a] brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

TRIALS
What does Christ promise us when we're dealing with trials?
Matthew 11:25–30

JESUS GIVES TRUE REST

25At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. 26Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 27All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him.* 28Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and

11:2 [a]NU-Text reads *by* for *two of.*
11:10 [a]Malachi 3:1 **11:19** [a]NU-Text reads *works.* **11:23** [a]NU-Text reads *will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be.*



PROMISE

God promises you rest.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

Have you ever been hiking in the mountains with a huge backpack strapped to your back all day long? What's the first thing you did when you finally reached your destination—the top? You unstrapped that pack, stretched out on the ground, and rested, right? Oh, what a feeling! At that very moment, there was nothing better than removing that weight, sitting down, and resting.

A lot of people carry around heavy backpacks every day of their lives. Now, they don't carry literal packs, but backpacks of sin, suitcases full of guilt, or huge loads of worry. Jesus wants to give us rest. He wants to help us. It's not worth carrying around a bunch of heavy junk when all we have to do is come to Jesus and let Him take the weight off our shoulders. He paid the price to carry it so we don't have to!

When He says that He will give you rest, He means it. If you can learn to rest in Jesus as a teenager, you'll be a step ahead of a lot of adults. The key is to really learn what Jesus has done for you—what burdens He bears for you—and then just let Him have them. When you do what you're supposed to do and let Him do what He's supposed to do, then you can rest in Him.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Exodus 33:14; Psalm 55:22; Matthew 11:28–30

lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

JESUS IS LORD OF THE SABBATH

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. 2And when the Pharisees saw *it,* they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"

3But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? 5Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? 6Yet I say to you that in this place there is *One* greater than the temple. 7But if you had known what *this* means, *'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,'*[a] you would not have condemned the guiltless. 8For the Son of Man is Lord even[a] of the Sabbath."

Matthew 12:9–14

God felt so strongly about honoring the Sabbath that He included it as one of the Ten Commandments. The logical question, then, is how to honor it. The Jews set aside the last day of each week for worshiping God. During the Sabbath, people were allowed to work only in cases of emergency.

HEALING ON THE SABBATH

9Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. 10And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—that they might accuse Him.

11Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift *it* out? 12Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

12:7 [a]Hosea 6:6 **12:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *even.*

13Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and it was restored as whole as the other. 14Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

BEHOLD, MY SERVANT

15But when Jesus knew *it,* He withdrew from there. And great multitudes[a] followed Him, and He healed them all. 16Yet He warned them not to make Him known, 17that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

18 *"Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,*
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!
I will put My Spirit upon Him,
And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.
19 *He will not quarrel nor cry out,*
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
20 *A bruised reed He will not break,*
And smoking flax He will not quench,
Till He sends forth justice to victory;
21 *And in His name Gentiles will trust."*[a]

A HOUSE DIVIDED CANNOT STAND

22Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and[a] mute man both spoke and saw. 23And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

24Now when the Pharisees heard *it* they said, "This *fellow* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub,[a] the ruler of the demons."

25But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. 30He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

31"Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy *against* the Spirit will not be forgiven men. 32Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come.

A TREE KNOWN BY ITS FRUIT

33"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by *its* fruit. 34Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35A good man out of the good treasure of his heart[a] brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

JUDGMENT
Will God judge the words we speak?
Matthew 12:36

THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES ASK FOR A SIGN

38Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

39But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

12:15 [a]NU-Text brackets *multitudes* as disputed. **12:21** [a]Isaiah 42:1–4 **12:22** [a]NU-Text omits *blind and.* **12:24** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Beelzebul.* **12:35** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of his heart.*

40For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here. 42The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon *is* here.

AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT RETURNS

43"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order. 45Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

JESUS' MOTHER AND BROTHERS SEND FOR HIM

46While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. 47Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

48But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" 49And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 50For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

13 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. 2And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. 7And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. 8But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES

10And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

11He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
15*For the hearts of this people have grown dull.*
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should[a] *heal them.'*[b]

16But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it,* and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it.*

13:15 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *would.*
[b]Isaiah 6:9, 10

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED

18"Therefore hear the parable of the sower:
19When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it,* then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. 22Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it,* who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES

24Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;
25but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. 26But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."' "

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

31Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

33Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures[a] of meal till it was all leavened."

PROPHECY AND THE PARABLES

34All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, 35that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

> *"I will open My mouth in parables;*
> *I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."*[a]

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES EXPLAINED

36Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

37He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.
38The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one.* 39The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,
42and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

44"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found

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13:33 [a]Greek *sata,* approximately two pecks in all **13:35** [a]Psalm 78:2

and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

45"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

THE PARABLE OF THE DRAGNET

47"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 48which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

51Jesus said to them,[a] "Have you understood all these things?"

They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."[b]

52Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning[a] the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old."

Matthew 13:54

Because the temple was located in Jerusalem, many Jews had to travel a long way to "officially" worship God. As a result, many of them could not visit the temple on a regular basis. Instead, they formed small, local meeting places called synagogues. At first, the synagogues were simply places people met to read God's law and pray together. Eventually, though, they became centers of community life.

JESUS REJECTED AT NAZARETH

53Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. 54When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works? 55Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses,[a] Simon, and Judas? 56And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?" 57So they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." 58Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Matthew 14:1

Herod the Great, the ruler of Judea, died when Jesus was very young. His kingdom was divided among his three sons. Antipas was the name of the son who inherited the region of Galilee, the place where both Jesus and John the Baptist lived most of their adult lives. Whenever "Herod" is mentioned in the Bible, it usually refers to Antipas. Not only was Antipas the one who had John the Baptist murdered, he also played a part in Jesus' trial and death.

JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED

14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus 2and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." 3For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. 4Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." 5And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

6But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. 7Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

8So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter."

13:51 [a]NU-Text omits *Jesus said to them.* [b]NU-Text omits *Lord.* **13:52** [a]Or *for*
13:55 [a]NU-Text reads *Joseph.*

9And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded *it* to be given to *her.* 10So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. 11And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought *it* to her mother. 12Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

13When Jesus heard *it,* He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. 14And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. 15When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

16But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

17And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

18He said, "Bring them here to Me." 19Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. 20So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. 21Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA

22Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. 23And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. 24But the boat was now in the middle of the sea,[a] tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

25Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. 26And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

27But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

28And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

29So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30But when he saw that the wind *was* boisterous,[a] he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

31And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33Then those who were in the boat came and[a] worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

MANY TOUCH HIM AND ARE MADE WELL

34When they had crossed over, they came to the land of[a] Gennesaret. 35And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, 36and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* were made perfectly well.

DEFILEMENT COMES FROM WITHIN

15 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 2"Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

3He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? 4For God commanded, saying, *'Honor your father and your mother'*;[a] and, *'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'*[b] 5But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or

14:24 [a]NU-Text reads *many furlongs away from the land.* **14:30** [a]NU-Text brackets *that* and *boisterous* as disputed. **14:33** [a]NU-Text omits *came and.* **14:34** [a]NU-Text reads *came to land at.* **15:4** [a]Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16 [b]Exodus 21:17

mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* a gift *to God*"— 6then he need not honor his father or mother.'[a] Thus you have made the commandment[b] of God of no effect by your tradition. 7Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 *'These* people *draw near to Me with*
their mouth,
And[a] *honor Me with their lips,*
But their heart is far from Me.
9 *And in vain they worship Me,*
Teaching as doctrines the
commandments of men.' "[a]

10When He had called the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear and understand: 11Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

Matthew 15:11

Jewish people weren't allowed to eat things like pork or shellfish because those foods were considered unclean. The Pharisees taught that anyone who ate unclean food could not take part in religious ceremonies.

12Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

13But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

15Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain this parable to us."

16So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? 18But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. 19For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. 20These are *the things* which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

DISOBEDIENCE

Where does disobedience start?

Matthew 15:18–20

A GENTILE SHOWS HER FAITH

21Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

23But He answered her not a word.

And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

24But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

25Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

26But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

27And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

28Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

JESUS HEALS GREAT MULTITUDES

29Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. 30Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them *the* lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. 31So the multitude marveled when they saw *the* mute speaking, *the* maimed made whole, *the* lame walking, and *the* blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

FEEDING THE FOUR THOUSAND

32Now Jesus called His disciples to *Himself* and said, "I have compassion on the

15:6 [a]NU-Text omits *or mother.* [b]NU-Text reads *word.* **15:8** [a]NU-Text omits *draw near to Me with their mouth, And.* **15:9** [a]Isaiah 29:13

multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

33Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"

34Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?"

And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish."

35So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. 36And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples; and the disciples *gave* to the multitude. 37So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. 38Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. 39And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.[a]

THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES SEEK A SIGN

16 Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. 2He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, '*It will be* fair weather, for the sky is red'; 3and in the morning, '*It will be* foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites![a] You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times. 4A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet[a] Jonah." And He left them and departed.

THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

5Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. 6Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

7And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "*It is* because we have taken no bread."

8But Jesus, being aware of *it,* said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?[a] 9Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? 10Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? 11How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—*but* to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12Then they understood that He did not tell *them* to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

PETER CONFESSES JESUS AS THE CHRIST

13When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

14So they said, "Some *say* John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Matthew 16:16

Many Jews were waiting for God to send them a special person they called the "Messiah," (a Hebrew word meaning "anointed one." The English word *Christ* comes from the Greek word for *Messiah.*) In Old Testament times, kings, priests, and prophets were all anointed, which means they had oil poured on their heads to show they were specially chosen by God. The Jews of Jesus' day believed the Messiah would become their earthly king and free them from the control of the Roman Empire.

17Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on

15:39 [a]NU-Text reads *Magadan.* **16:3** [a]NU-Text omits *Hypocrites.* **16:4** [a]NU-Text omits *the prophet.* **16:8** [a]NU-Text reads *you have no bread.*

this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed[a] in heaven."

20Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

21From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

23But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

TAKE UP THE CROSS AND FOLLOW HIM

24Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. 28"Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

JESUS TRANSFIGURED ON THE MOUNT

17 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. 3And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us[a] make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" 6And when the disciples heard *it,* they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. 7But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." 8When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

9Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

10And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

11Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first[a] and will restore all things. 12But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." 13Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

A BOY IS HEALED

14And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, 15"Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic[a] and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. 16So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

17Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." 18And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

19Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"

20So Jesus said to them, "Because of your

16:19 [a]Or *will have been bound . . . will have been loosed* **17:4** [a]NU-Text reads *I will.* **17:11** [a]NU-Text omits *first.* **17:15** [a]Literally *moonstruck*

unbelief;[a] for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."[a]

JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

22Now while they were staying[a] in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, 23and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

PETER AND HIS MASTER PAY THEIR TAXES

24When they had come to Capernaum,[a] those who received the *temple* tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the *temple* tax?"

25He said, "Yes."

And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?"

26Peter said to Him, "From strangers."

Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. 27Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money;[a] take that and give it to them for Me and you."

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

2Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, 3and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

JESUS WARNS OF OFFENSES

6"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

8"If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. 9And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

10"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. 11For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.[a]

12"What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? 13And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that *sheep* than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. 14Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

DEALING WITH A SINNING BROTHER

15"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that *'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'*[a] 17And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

17:20 [a]NU-Text reads *little faith.*
17:21 [a]NU-Text omits this verse.
17:22 [a]NU-Text reads *gathering together.*
17:24 [a]NU-Text reads *Capharnaum* (here and elsewhere). **17:27** [a]Greek *stater,* the exact amount to pay the temple tax (didrachma) for two **18:11** [a]NU-Text omits this verse.
18:16 [a]Deuteronomy 19:15

18"Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you
bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and
whatever you loose on earth will be loosed
in heaven.
19"Again I say[a] to you that if two of you
agree on earth concerning anything that
they ask, it will be done for them by My Fa-
ther in heaven. 20For where two or three are
gathered together in My name, I am there
in the midst of them."

FORGIVENESS
How many times should I forgive someone?
Matthew 18:21–35

THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

21Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord,
how often shall my brother sin against me,
and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"
22Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you,
up to seven times, but up to seventy times
seven. 23Therefore the kingdom of heaven
is like a certain king who wanted to settle
accounts with his servants. 24And when
he had begun to settle accounts, one was
brought to him who owed him ten thou-
sand talents. 25But as he was not able to
pay, his master commanded that he be
sold, with his wife and children and all that
he had, and that payment be made. 26The
servant therefore fell down before him,
saying, 'Master, have patience with me,
and I will pay you all.' 27Then the master of
that servant was moved with compassion,
released him, and forgave him the debt.
28"But that servant went out and found
one of his fellow servants who owed him
a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on
him and took *him* by the throat, saying,
'Pay me what you owe!' 29So his fellow ser-
vant fell down at his feet[a] and begged him,
saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will
pay you all.'[b] 30And he would not, but went
and threw him into prison till he should
pay the debt. 31So when his fellow servants
saw what had been done, they were very
grieved, and came and told their master
all that had been done. 32Then his master,
after he had called him, said to him, 'You
wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt
because you begged me. 33Should you not
also have had compassion on your fellow
servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34And his
master was angry, and delivered him to the
torturers until he should pay all that was
due to him.
35"So My heavenly Father also will do to
you if each of you, from his heart, does not
forgive his brother his trespasses."[a]

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

19 Now it came to pass, when Jesus
had finished these sayings, *that*
He departed from Galilee and
came to the region of Judea beyond the Jor-
dan. 2And great multitudes followed Him,
and He healed them there.
3The Pharisees also came to Him, test-
ing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful
for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any
reason?"
4And He answered and said to them,
"Have you not read that He who made[a]
them at the beginning *'made them male
and female,'*[b] 5and said, *'For this reason a
man shall leave his father and mother and
be joined to his wife, and the two shall be-
come one flesh'*?[a] 6So then, they are no lon-
ger two but one flesh. Therefore what God
has joined together, let not man separate."
7They said to Him, "Why then did Moses
command to give a certificate of divorce,
and to put her away?"
8He said to them, "Moses, because of the
hardness of your hearts, permitted you to
divorce your wives, but from the begin-
ning it was not so. 9And I say to you, who-
ever divorces his wife, except for sexual
immorality,[a] and marries another, com-
mits adultery; and whoever marries her
who is divorced commits adultery."
10His disciples said to Him, "If such is
the case of the man with *his* wife, it is bet-
ter not to marry."

JESUS TEACHES ON CELIBACY

11But He said to them, "All cannot accept
this saying, but only *those* to whom it has
been given: 12For there are eunuchs who

18:19 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Again, assuredly, I say.* **18:29** [a]NU-Text omits *at his feet.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *all.* **18:35** [a]NU-Text omits *his trespasses.*
19:4 [a]NU-Text reads *created.* [b]Genesis 1:27; 5:2
19:5 [a]Genesis 2:24 **19:9** [a]Or *fornication*

were born thus from *their* mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept *it,* let him accept *it.*"

JESUS BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN

13Then little children were brought to Him that He might put *His* hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. 14But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." 15And He laid *His* hands on them and departed from there.

JESUS COUNSELS THE RICH YOUNG RULER

16Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good[a] Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

17So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good?[a] No one *is* good but One, *that is,* God.[b] But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

18He said to Him, "Which ones?"

Jesus said, "'*You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,'* 19*'Honor your father and your mother,'*[a] and, *'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* "[b]

20The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth.[a] What do I still lack?"

21Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

22But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

23Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

25When His disciples heard *it,* they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

26But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

27Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"

28So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife[a] or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. 30But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.

THE PARABLE OF THE WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

20 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. 5Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. 6And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle,[a] and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' 7They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'[a]

8"So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them *their* wages, beginning with the last to the first.' 9And when those came who *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. 10But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more;

19:16 [a]NU-Text omits *Good.* **19:17** [a]NU-Text reads *Why do you ask Me about what is good?* [b]NU-Text reads *There is One who is good.* **19:19** [a]Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20 [b]Leviticus 19:18 **19:20** [a]NU-Text omits *from my youth.* **19:29** [a]NU-Text omits *or wife.* **20:6** [a]NU-Text omits *idle.* **20:7** [a]NU-Text omits the last clause of this verse.

and they likewise received each a denarius.
11And when they had received *it,* they complained against the landowner, 12saying, 'These last *men* have worked *only* one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'
13But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14Take *what is* yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man *the same* as to you. 15Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' 16So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."[a]

JESUS A THIRD TIME PREDICTS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

17Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, 18"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, 19and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."

GREATNESS IS SERVING

20Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

21And He said to her, "What do you wish?"

She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

22But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"[a]

They said to Him, "We are able."

23So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with;[a] but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared by My Father."

24And when the ten heard *it,* they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. 25But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—
28just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

LEADERSHIP
Do leaders have to serve others?
Matthew 20:26–28

TWO BLIND MEN RECEIVE THEIR SIGHT

29Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. 30And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

31Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

32So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

33They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." 34So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

21 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage,[a] at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose *them* and bring *them* to Me.
3And if anyone says anything to you, you

20:16 [a]NU-Text omits the last sentence of this verse. **20:22** [a]NU-Text omits *and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.* **20:23** [a]NU-Text omits *and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.* **21:1** [a]M-Text reads *Bethsphage.*

shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

4All[a] this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

5 *"Tell the daughter of Zion,*
'Behold, your King is coming to you,
Lowly, and sitting on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.'"[a]

6So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. 7They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set *Him*[a] on them. 8And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. 9Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'[a]
Hosanna in the highest!"

10And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?"

11So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

Matthew 21:12

Coins with pagan symbols on them could not be used in the temple. They had to be exchanged for acceptable coins. Likewise, only certain animals could be offered as sacrifices. People who were too poor to own a goat or a sheep could offer a dove as a sacrifice. Local businessmen saw these restrictions as an opportunity to make money. They set up tables in the temple courtyard and sold approved coins and doves for outrageous prices.

JESUS CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

12Then Jesus went into the temple of God[a] and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. 13And He said to them, "It is written, *'My house shall be called a house of prayer,'*[a] but you have made it a *'den of thieves.'*"[b]

14Then *the* blind and *the* lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. 15But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant 16and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?"

And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read,

'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants
You have perfected praise'?"[a]

17Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

THE FIG TREE WITHERED

18Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. 19And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.

THE LESSON OF THE WITHERED FIG TREE

20And when the disciples saw *it,* they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

21So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. 22And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

JESUS' AUTHORITY QUESTIONED

23Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"

21:4 [a]NU-Text omits *All.* **21:5** [a]Zechariah 9:9 **21:7** [a]NU-Text reads *and He sat.*
21:9 [a]Psalm 118:26 **21:12** [a]NU-Text omits *of God.* **21:13** [a]Isaiah 56:7 [b]Jeremiah 7:11
21:16 [a]Psalm 8:2

24But Jesus answered and said to them,
"I also will ask you one thing, which if you
tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what au-
thority I do these things: 25The baptism of
John—where was it from? From heaven or
from men?"

And they reasoned among themselves,
saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say
to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'
26But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the mul-
titude, for all count John as a prophet." 27So
they answered Jesus and said, "We do not
know."

And He said to them, "Neither will I tell
you by what authority I do these things.

THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

28"But what do you think? A man had two
sons, and he came to the first and said,
'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' 29He
answered and said, 'I will not,' but after-
ward he regretted it and went. 30Then he
came to the second and said likewise. And
he answered and said, 'I *go,* sir,' but he did
not go. 31Which of the two did the will of
his father?"

They said to Him, "The first."

Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to
you that tax collectors and harlots enter
the kingdom of God before you. 32For John
came to you in the way of righteousness,
and you did not believe him; but tax col-
lectors and harlots believed him; and when
you saw *it,* you did not afterward relent and
believe him.

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED VINEDRESSERS

33"Hear another parable: There was a cer-
tain landowner who planted a vineyard
and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress
in it and built a tower. And he leased it to
vinedressers and went into a far country.
34Now when vintage-time drew near, he
sent his servants to the vinedressers, that
they might receive its fruit. 35And the vine-
dressers took his servants, beat one, killed
one, and stoned another. 36Again he sent
other servants, more than the first, and
they did likewise to them. 37Then last of
all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They
will respect my son.' 38But when the vine-
dressers saw the son, they said among
themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us
kill him and seize his inheritance.' 39So they
took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard
and killed *him.*

40"Therefore, when the owner of the
vineyard comes, what will he do to those
vinedressers?"

41They said to Him, "He will destroy
those wicked men miserably, and lease *his*
vineyard to other vinedressers who will
render to him the fruits in their seasons."

42Jesus said to them, "Have you never
read in the Scriptures:

> *'The stone which the builders rejected*
> *Has become the chief cornerstone.*
> *This was the* LORD*'s doing,*
> *And it is marvelous in our eyes'*?[a]

43"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of
God will be taken from you and given to a
nation bearing the fruits of it. 44And who-
ever falls on this stone will be broken; but
on whomever it falls, it will grind him to
powder."

45Now when the chief priests and Phari-
sees heard His parables, they perceived
that He was speaking of them. 46But when
they sought to lay hands on Him, they
feared the multitudes, because they took
Him for a prophet.

THE PARABLE OF THE WEDDING FEAST

22 And Jesus answered and spoke
to them again by parables and
said: 2"The kingdom of heaven
is like a certain king who arranged a mar-
riage for his son, 3and sent out his servants
to call those who were invited to the wed-
ding; and they were not willing to come.
4Again, he sent out other servants, saying,
'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have pre-
pared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle
are killed, and all things *are* ready. Come
to the wedding."' 5But they made light
of it and went their ways, one to his own
farm, another to his business. 6And the rest
seized his servants, treated *them* spitefully,
and killed *them.* 7But when the king heard
about it, he was furious. And he sent out his
armies, destroyed those murderers, and
burned up their city. 8Then he said to his
servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those

21:42 [a]Psalm 118:22, 23

who were invited were not worthy. 9Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' 10So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests.

11"But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and[a] cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14"For many are called, but few *are* chosen."

THE PHARISEES: IS IT LAWFUL TO PAY TAXES TO CAESAR?

15Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in *His* talk. 16And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. 17Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

18But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, *you* hypocrites? 19Show Me the tax money."

So they brought Him a denarius.

20And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription *is* this?"

21They said to Him, "Caesar's."

And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 22When they had heard *these words,* they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

THE SADDUCEES: WHAT ABOUT THE RESURRECTION?

23The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, 24saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 25Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. 26Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. 27Last of all the woman died also. 28Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her."

ANGELS
Do angels get married?
Matthew 22:30

29Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God[a] in heaven. 31But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 32*'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'*?[a] God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." 33And when the multitudes heard *this,* they were astonished at His teaching.

THE SCRIBES: WHICH IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT OF ALL?

34But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35Then one of them, a lawyer, asked *Him a question,* testing Him, and saying, 36"Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?"

37Jesus said to him, "*'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'*[a] 38This is *the* first and great commandment. 39And *the* second *is* like it: *'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*[a] 40On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

JESUS: HOW CAN DAVID CALL HIS DESCENDANT LORD?

41While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?"

22:13 [a]NU-Text omits *take him away, and.* **22:30** [a]NU-Text omits *of God.* **22:32** [a]Exodus 3:6, 15 **22:37** [a]Deuteronomy 6:5 **22:39** [a]Leviticus 19:18

MAKING IT REAL // MATTHEW 22:36, 37

Love God This is it. Matthew 22:36, 37 tell us *the* most important commandment. If you've decided to get serious about your relationship with God, then this commandment is the place to start. Every element of being Christlike is built on this principle. Learning to love the Lord with your heart, soul, and mind will be a continual process that lasts your whole life.

So what does it look like to love the Lord with every part of you? It means that you begin to love the way God loves, think the way God thinks, act the way God acts, and hate the things God hates. Don't hold back. His love for you has no limits or hesitations. You have absolutely nothing to lose and everything to gain by going for it.

Don't be disappointed if you're not an overnight sensation. Remember, this is a process—learning to spend time with Him; giving and receiving grace; working on areas of your life that don't look anything like God; forgiving and being forgiven; trusting; slowly, ever so wonderfully, looking more and more like the One you love. Imitation is the highest form of adoration. Be an imitator of God. (See also: Deut. 6:5; Mark 12:32, 33; Eph. 5:1, 2.)

Words to Live By

Heart, soul, and mind: These words describe all aspects of your being. When you are truly committed to God, there's no part of you that's left out. Everything you think or feel or desire or do should begin with loving God. It's not just about acknowledging Him intellectually or getting warm fuzzy feelings during worship on Sundays. Rather, it's about loving Him 24/7 in every part of your personality and self. Every thought, feeling, and action should filter through your love for God.

They said to Him, "*The Son* of David."

43He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him *'Lord,'* saying:

44 *'The LORD said to my Lord,*
"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your
footstool"'?[a]

45If David then calls Him *'Lord,'* how is He his Son?" 46And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

WOE TO THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

23 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3Therefore whatever they tell you to observe,[a] *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. 5But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 6They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' 8But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ,[a] and you are all brethren. 9Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

13"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in

22:44 [a]Psalm 110:1 **23:3** [a]NU-Text omits *to observe.* **23:8** [a]NU-Text omits *the Christ.*

MAKING IT REAL // MATTHEW 23:8, 9

Equality As you learn about Jesus' life on earth, one thing you notice is that He seemed to enjoy hanging around notorious sinners more than He did the Jewish religious leaders. To thieves and prostitutes He said, "Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48), but He warned the Pharisees and teachers, "Woe to you" (Matt. 23:16).

The Pharisees were snobs. These religious leaders actually thought they were better than the rest of the Jewish people. Because they knew a lot about Scripture and religious customs, they figured God liked them more than He liked everyone else. Jesus could see their conceited attitudes and He hated it. Jesus told His disciples that God's kingdom is not made up of special people and regular people. The people who follow Jesus are all equal, and He loves each one exactly the same.

If you've struggled with feelings of inferiority or insecurity, know that God never sees you as inferior to anyone. If you've gotten an attitude about how cool you are, God isn't impressed. God can peer into a high school classroom and see the most popular student in school sitting beside the biggest outcast; yet He loves them both the same. No matter how you feel, God thinks you're awesome—just as awesome as the next person. Everybody's equal with Him. (See also: Job 34:19; 36:5; Acts 13:39.)

Words to Live By

Brethren: The Greek word translated as "brethren" in Matthew 23:8 is *adelphos* (adel-fos'), and literally means "a brother." When Jesus tells us that we are all brothers, He's reminding us that all His followers come together to form His family. Just like everyone in your family is not identical, everyone in God's family is different because we're supposed to be. Different doesn't always mean better or worse. Sometimes different is just different. Jesus reminds us in this passage that, in His family, popularity and status don't matter. We are all family. So let's appreciate each other for whatever roles we're each designed to play.

yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. [14]Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.[a]

[15]"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

[16]"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged *to perform it.*' [17]Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies[a] the gold? [18]And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged *to perform it.*' [19]Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? [20]Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. [21]He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells[a] in it. [22]And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

[23]"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. [24]Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

[25]"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of

23:14 [a]NU-Text omits this verse.
23:17 [a]NU-Text reads *sanctified.* **23:21** [a]M-Text reads *dwelt.*

MAKING IT REAL // MATTHEW 24:4

Don't Be Deceived In Matthew 24, Jesus is foretelling some of the things that are going to happen before He comes back to the earth—wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, and so on. He goes on to tell us not to worry or be afraid because these things must happen before He comes back. But before describing these events, He warns us that there will be people who come out and claim to be Christ; people who claim to be speaking in Jesus' name. He wants us to be on guard so we will not be deceived by such people. You've probably seen examples of these kinds of "false christs" (v. 24). Unfortunately, more than one newscast has shown us cults whose members all committed suicide or other sad acts because they were so misguided by their so-called leaders.

Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden because they allowed themselves to be fooled (Gen. 3). Samson lost his strength and his life because he allowed himself to be fooled (Judg. 16). You don't have to allow yourself to be fooled by some false prophet who claims to be Jesus or claims to be from God. If something doesn't line up with the Word of God, then don't believe it. Jesus is coming back. No one knows exactly when, so stay close with God and don't be fooled! (See also: Matt. 7:15; 24:11, 24; Luke 21:8; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 4:1.)

Words to Live By

Deceives: The Greek word translated as "deceives" in Matthew 24:4 is *planao* (plan-ah'-o). It carries the idea of being led astray, or going away from the truth. It draws a picture of traveling the right road, but being led down a wrong path toward a different destination. Jesus wants us to remain on the way of truth and not to be distracted by or led off-course by those who would try to deceive us.

the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.[a] 26Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones and all uncleanness. 28Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

PURITY
Can outward purity substitute for inner purity?
Matthew 23:25–28

29"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'

31"Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' *guilt.* 33Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? 34Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

23:25 [a]M-Text reads *unrighteousness.*

JESUS LAMENTS OVER JERUSALEM

37"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who
kills the prophets and stones those who are
sent to her! How often I wanted to gather
your children together, as a hen gathers her
chicks under *her* wings, but you were not
willing! 38See! Your house is left to you des-
olate; 39for I say to you, you shall see Me no
more till you say, *'Blessed is He who comes
in the name of the LORD!'* "[a]

JESUS PREDICTS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

24 Then Jesus went out and de-
parted from the temple, and
His disciples came up to show
Him the buildings of the temple. 2And Je-
sus said to them, "Do you not see all these
things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one*
stone shall be left here upon another, that
shall not be thrown down."

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES AND THE END OF THE AGE

3Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the
disciples came to Him privately, saying,
"Tell us, when will these things be? And
what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of
the end of the age?"

4And Jesus answered and said to them:
"Take heed that no one deceives you. 5For
many will come in My name, saying, 'I am
the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6And
you will hear of wars and rumors of wars.
See that you are not troubled; for all[a] *these
things* must come to pass, but the end is
not yet. 7For nation will rise against nation,
and kingdom against kingdom. And there
will be famines, pestilences,[a] and earth-
quakes in various places. 8All these *are* the
beginning of sorrows.

9"Then they will deliver you up to tribu-
lation and kill you, and you will be hated
by all nations for My name's sake. 10And
then many will be offended, will betray one
another, and will hate one another. 11Then
many false prophets will rise up and de-
ceive many. 12And because lawlessness will
abound, the love of many will grow cold.
13But he who endures to the end shall be
saved. 14And this gospel of the kingdom
will be preached in all the world as a wit-
ness to all the nations, and then the end
will come.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

15"Therefore when you see the *'abomina-
tion of desolation,'*[a] spoken of by Daniel the
prophet, standing in the holy place" (who-
ever reads, let him understand), 16"then let
those who are in Judea flee to the moun-
tains. 17Let him who is on the housetop not
go down to take anything out of his house.
18And let him who is in the field not go
back to get his clothes. 19But woe to those
who are pregnant and to those who are
nursing babies in those days! 20And pray
that your flight may not be in winter or on
the Sabbath. 21For then there will be great
tribulation, such as has not been since the
beginning of the world until this time, no,
nor ever shall be. 22And unless those days
were shortened, no flesh would be saved;
but for the elect's sake those days will be
shortened.

23"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look,
here *is* the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe
it. 24For false christs and false prophets will
rise and show great signs and wonders to
deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25See, I
have told you beforehand.

26"Therefore if they say to you, 'Look,
He is in the desert!' do not go out; *or* 'Look,
He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe *it.*
27For as the lightning comes from the east
and flashes to the west, so also will the
coming of the Son of Man be. 28For wher-
ever the carcass is, there the eagles will be
gathered together.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

29"Immediately after the tribulation of
those days the sun will be darkened, and
the moon will not give its light; the stars
will fall from heaven, and the powers of the
heavens will be shaken. 30Then the sign of
the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and
then all the tribes of the earth will mourn,
and they will see the Son of Man coming
on the clouds of heaven with power and
great glory. 31And He will send His angels
with a great sound of a trumpet, and they
will gather together His elect from the
four winds, from one end of heaven to the
other.

23:39 [a]Psalm 118:26 **24:6** [a]NU-Text omits *all.* **24:7** [a]NU-Text omits *pestilences.* **24:15** [a]Daniel 11:31; 12:11

WORLD APP

War / Matthew 24:6

As senseless and brutal as it seems, war is a fact of life on this earth. It has been since not long after God created the world, and according to Jesus' words in Matthew 24:6, it will continue until He returns and this world ends. You may wonder why war continues and how it can be avoided. No doubt, we would all prefer a peaceful world. But sometimes, war cannot be avoided. Fighting against those who will stop at nothing to get their own way may even be the only right course to follow.

Not too long ago, our own nation was attacked by terrorists—hijacked jets on suicide missions flew into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Thousands of innocent people lost their lives—men, women, children, the very young, and the elderly. They were murdered simply because they were Americans. As a result, the United States declared war on terrorism. The only other choice would have been to ignore the attack and risk the lives of yet more innocent people.

As long as sin is in the world, there will be people who are ruled by their own ideas of right and wrong. Right is whatever they desire and wrong is everything that keeps them from getting it. Wars happen when a group of people attempts to force, by any means, their opinions, values, beliefs, lifestyle, or political agenda on others. Wars are also fought over boundaries or rights to natural resources. Whatever the cause, a war is always fought to win the right to decide what's right.

However, as Christians, we know that the only One who can truly make the call on right and wrong is God. If all people in the world turned to Him for the answers, wars would no longer be fought. But that day won't come until Jesus returns and God establishes His kingdom on the earth. Until then, it is our duty to always do as God says. When we obey Him, we can always be sure we are right.

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

32"Now learn this parable from the fig tree:
When its branch has already become tender
and puts forth leaves, you know that
summer *is* near. 33So you also, when you see
all these things, know that it[a] is near—at
the doors! 34Assuredly, I say to you, this
generation will by no means pass away till
all these things take place. 35Heaven and
earth will pass away, but My words will by
no means pass away.

NO ONE KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR

36"But of that day and hour no one knows,
not even the angels of heaven,[a] but My Father only. 37But as the days of Noah *were,* so
also will the coming of the Son of Man be.
38For as in the days before the flood, they
were eating and drinking, marrying and
giving in marriage, until the day that Noah
entered the ark, 39and did not know until
the flood came and took them all away, so
also will the coming of the Son of Man be.
40Then two *men* will be in the field: one will
be taken and the other left. 41Two *women will be* grinding at the mill: one will be
taken and the other left. 42Watch therefore,
for you do not know what hour[a] your Lord
is coming. 43But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the
thief would come, he would have watched
and not allowed his house to be broken
into. 44Therefore you also be ready, for the
Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not
expect.

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT AND THE EVIL SERVANT

45"Who then is a faithful and wise servant,
whom his master made ruler over his
household, to give them food in due season? 46Blessed *is* that servant whom his
master, when he comes, will find so doing.
47Assuredly, I say to you that he will make
him ruler over all his goods. 48But if that
evil servant says in his heart, 'My master
is delaying his coming,'[a] 49and begins to
beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and
drink with the drunkards, 50the master of
that servant will come on a day when he
is not looking for *him* and at an hour that
he is not aware of, 51and will cut him in
two and appoint *him* his portion with the
hypocrites. There shall be weeping and
gnashing of teeth.

> ***Matthew 25:1***
> The lamps of New Testament times looked like miniature teapots. A wick was placed in the spout and olive oil was poured through a hole in the top. A lamp with one wick and a full load of oil could burn for about four hours.

THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

25 "Then the kingdom of heaven
shall be likened to ten virgins
who took their lamps and went
out to meet the bridegroom. 2Now five
of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.
3Those who *were* foolish took their lamps
and took no oil with them, 4but the wise
took oil in their vessels with their lamps.
5But while the bridegroom was delayed,
they all slumbered and slept.

6"And at midnight a cry was *heard:* 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming;[a] go out to
meet him!' 7Then all those virgins arose and
trimmed their lamps. 8And the foolish said
to the wise, 'Give us *some* of your oil, for our
lamps are going out.' 9But the wise answered,
saying, '*No,* lest there should not be enough
for us and you; but go rather to those who
sell, and buy for yourselves.' 10And while
they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and
those who were ready went in with him to
the wedding; and the door was shut.

11"Afterward the other virgins came also,
saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' 12But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I
do not know you.'

13"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour[a] in which the Son
of Man is coming.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

14"For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a man
traveling to a far country, *who* called his
own servants and delivered his goods to

24:33 [a]Or *He* **24:36** [a]NU-Text adds *nor the Son.* **24:42** [a]NU-Text reads *day.* **24:48** [a]NU-Text omits *his coming.* **25:6** [a]NU-Text omits *is coming.* **25:13** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.



LIFE APP

Talent / Matthew 25:14–29

The parable Jesus told in Matthew 25:14–29 is actually about a quantity of ancient money. A talent was equal to the amount of money a person could earn in a lifetime—about one and a half million dollars! For most of us, it's hard to even imagine that huge amount of money.

Though Jesus was talking about money and responsibility in this parable, we can also find another message that's a bit more personal. If you think of the talents Jesus talked about as actual abilities and gifts we've been given, the parable still makes a lot of sense.

God gave each of us special skills—things we were born with. Maybe you're good with numbers or have an excellent singing voice. Whatever your gift, it was given to you to use, not hide. By working hard and learning well, you can turn your math ability into a lucrative career. By applying yourself and maybe taking lessons, you can use your singing ability to really bless other people. But no matter how gifted you are, if you do nothing with the talents God gave you, you're a lot like the wicked and lazy servant in Jesus' story. You will have your talent, but you will have nothing to show for it in the end.

All the gifts God has given us are meant to be used for ourselves and for others. We don't live in this world alone. And no matter how you look at it, each person's life affects the world around them. God didn't give any one person all the gifts. He shared them among all of us. If we don't use the ones He gave us, the world will suffer. Just imagine if President Lincoln hadn't shared his gifts with the world. Or even Bill Gates; what would our world look like if he hadn't found a way for everyone to use a computer easily? One life can make a huge difference to the entire world. Use your gifts and develop your abilities. You, too, have something the world needs.

them. 15And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. 18But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. 19After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

20"So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' 21His lord said to him, 'Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 22He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' 23His lord said to him, 'Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

24"Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is* yours.'

26"But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28Therefore take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents.

29'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

THE SON OF MAN WILL JUDGE THE NATIONS

31"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy[a] angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. 33And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36I *was* naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

37"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You,* or thirsty and give *You* drink? 38When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You?* 39Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.'

SICKNESS
How can believers show compassion?
Matthew 25:34–40

41"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

44"Then they also will answer Him,[a] saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.' 46And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

25:31 [a]NU-Text omits *holy.* **25:44** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Him.*

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

26 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, *that* He said to His disciples, 2"You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

3Then the chief priests, the scribes,[a] and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill *Him.* 5But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY

6And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, 7a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured *it* on His head as He sat *at the table.* 8But when His disciples saw *it,* they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? 9For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the* poor."

10But when Jesus was aware of *it,* He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. 11For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. 12For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My burial. 13Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS

14Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. 16So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

JESUS CELEBRATES PASSOVER WITH HIS DISCIPLES

17Now on the first *day of the Feast* of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

18And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples."' "

19So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

20When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. 21Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

22And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?"

23He answered and said, "He who dipped *his* hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. 24The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

25Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?"

He said to him, "You have said it."

> ***Matthew 26:26***
> Bread was a major part of the Jewish diet in New Testament times. Often it was served with a stew or sauce. Several people would share one bowl of sauce, taking turns dipping their bread into it before each bite.

JESUS INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER

26And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed[a] and broke *it,* and gave *it* to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

27Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28For this is My blood of the new[a] covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

30And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL

31Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written:

26:3 [a]NU-Text omits *the scribes.* **26:26** [a]M-Text reads *gave thanks for.* **26:28** [a]NU-Text omits *new.*



WORLD APP

Poverty / Matthew 26:11

Some people believe God will give them everything they want—a luxury car, a huge bank account, or any of the things the world calls "treasures." But the Bible says, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:3). God is not some kind of magical genie who will give you whatever you wish. He is a loving Father who provides everything His children *need*; but our *wants* are an entirely different thing.

Yet some continue to believe God will grant their wishes as long as they have enough faith to believe. They read Jesus' words in John 14:14, "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it," and think God will grant any selfish desire. But as Christians, our focus should not be on things but on God (Matt. 6:33). When we pray, we should make sure we are praying things that are what God wants, not just what we think will make us happy.

Can you even imagine what effect it has on Christians in poverty-stricken countries when they hear about other Christians who believe they can get whatever they want if they have enough faith? Do Christians who don't have enough food or water wonder if they suffer so much need because their faith is too weak?

The fact of the matter is that poverty will never disappear. Jesus said, "For you have the poor with you always" (Matt. 26:11). As long as sin is in the world, there will be those who have far too much and others who have far too little. Sin causes people to care too much about themselves and too little about anyone else.

So is there an answer to poverty? Consider what would happen if every Christian throughout the world decided to give a part of his or her money to those in need. Many sources report that there are over two billion Christians in the world; about one billion children live in poverty. What difference could all the Christians in the world make if we decided to treat others as Jesus wants us to?

'I will strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep of the flock will be
scattered.'[a]

[32]But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

[33]Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."

[34]Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

[35]Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"

And so said all the disciples.

THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

[36]Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." [37]And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. [38]Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

[39]He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*."

[40]Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? [41]Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

[42]Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless[a] I drink it, Your will be done." [43]And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

[44]So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. [45]Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are *you* still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. [46]Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

BETRAYAL AND ARREST IN GETHSEMANE

[47]And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

[48]Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him." [49]Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

[50]But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?"

Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. [51]And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

[52]But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish[a] by the sword. [53]Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? [54]How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

[55]In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. [56]But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

JESUS FACES THE SANHEDRIN

[57]And those who had laid hold of Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. [58]But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

[59]Now the chief priests, the elders,[a] and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, [60]but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.[a] But at last two false witnesses[b] came forward [61]and said, "This *fellow* said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"

26:31 [a]Zechariah 13:7 **26:42** [a]NU-Text reads *if this may not pass away unless.* **26:52** [a]M-Text reads *die.* **26:59** [a]NU-Text omits *the elders.* **26:60** [a]NU-Text puts a comma after *but found none,* does not capitalize *Even,* and omits *they found none.* [b]NU-Text omits *false witnesses.*

62And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?" 63But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

64Jesus said to him, "*It is as* you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

65Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! 66What do you think?"

They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."

67Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands, 68saying, "Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"

PETER DENIES JESUS, AND WEEPS BITTERLY

69Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee."

70But he denied it before *them* all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."

71And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, "This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth."

72But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"

73And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are *one* of them, for your speech betrays you."

74Then he began to curse and swear, *saying,* "I do not know the Man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. 75And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

JESUS HANDED OVER TO PONTIUS PILATE

27 When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. 2And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius[a] Pilate the governor.

JUDAS HANGS HIMSELF

3Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood."

And they said, "What *is that* to us? You see *to it!*"

5Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." 7And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

9Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, *"And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced,* whom they of the children of Israel priced, 10*and gave them for the potter's field, as the* LORD *directed me."*[a]

> ***Matthew 27:11–14***
> Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea and Samaria from A.D. 26 to 36. Pilate lived in Samaria, so you may be wondering what he was doing in Jerusalem. He and his troops were in town for the Passover Feast to prevent rioting among the thousands of Jews who had traveled to the city for the annual holiday.

JESUS FACES PILATE

11Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

Jesus said to him, "*It is as* you say." 12And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.

13Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not

27:2 [a]NU-Text omits *Pontius.* **27:10** [a]Jeremiah 32:6–9

hear how many things they testify against You?" 14But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

TAKING THE PLACE OF BARABBAS

15Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. 16And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas.[a] 17Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

19While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."

20But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. 21The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?"

They said, "Barabbas!"

22Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

23Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

24When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather *that* a tumult was rising, he took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person.[a] You see *to it.*"

25And all the people answered and said, "His blood *be* on us and on our children."

26Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *Him* to be crucified.

THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

27Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. 28And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. 29When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put *it* on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. 31And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His *own* clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

THE KING ON A CROSS

32Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. 33And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, 34they gave Him sour[a] wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted *it,* He would not drink.

35Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots,[a] that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:

> *"They divided My garments among them,*
> *And for My clothing they cast lots."*[b]

36Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. 37And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

39And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads 40and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

41Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders,[a] said, 42"He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel,[a] let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.[b] 43He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

27:16 [a]NU-Text reads *Jesus Barabbas.* **27:24** [a]NU-Text omits *just.* **27:34** [a]NU-Text omits *sour.* **27:35** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the rest of this verse. [b]Psalm 22:18 **27:41** [a]M-Text reads *with the scribes, the Pharisees, and the elders.* **27:42** [a]NU-Text reads *He is the King of Israel!* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *we will believe in Him.*

44Even the robbers who were crucified
with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

45Now from the sixth hour until the ninth
hour there was darkness over all the land.
46And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out
with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sa-
bachthani?" that is, *"My God, My God, why
have You forsaken Me?"*[a]
47Some of those who stood there, when
they heard *that,* said, "This Man is calling
for Elijah!" 48Immediately one of them ran
and took a sponge, filled *it* with sour wine
and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him
to drink.
49The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see
if Elijah will come to save Him."
50And Jesus cried out again with a loud
voice, and yielded up His spirit.
51Then, behold, the veil of the temple
was torn in two from top to bottom; and
the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,
52and the graves were opened; and many
bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep
were raised; 53and coming out of the graves
after His resurrection, they went into the
holy city and appeared to many.
54So when the centurion and those with
him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the
earthquake and the things that had hap-
pened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly
this was the Son of God!"
55And many women who followed Je-
sus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were
there looking on from afar, 56among whom
were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of
James and Joses,[a] and the mother of Zebe-
dee's sons.

JESUS BURIED IN JOSEPH'S TOMB

57Now when evening had come, there
came a rich man from Arimathea, named
Joseph, who himself had also become a
disciple of Jesus. 58This man went to Pi-
late and asked for the body of Jesus. Then
Pilate commanded the body to be given to
him. 59When Joseph had taken the body,
he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60and
laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn
out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone
against the door of the tomb, and departed.
61And Mary Magdalene was there, and the
other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

PILATE SETS A GUARD

62On the next day, which followed the Day
of Preparation, the chief priests and Phari-
sees gathered together to Pilate, 63saying,
"Sir, we remember, while He was still alive,
how that deceiver said, 'After three days I
will rise.' 64Therefore command that the
tomb be made secure until the third day,
lest His disciples come by night[a] and steal
Him *away,* and say to the people, 'He has
risen from the dead.' So the last deception
will be worse than the first."
65Pilate said to them, "You have a guard;
go your way, make *it* as secure as you know
how." 66So they went and made the tomb se-
cure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

HE IS RISEN

28 Now after the Sabbath, as the
first *day* of the week began to
dawn, Mary Magdalene and the
other Mary came to see the tomb. 2And be-
hold, there was a great earthquake; for an
angel of the Lord descended from heaven,
and came and rolled back the stone from
the door,[a] and sat on it. 3His countenance
was like lightning, and his clothing as
white as snow. 4And the guards shook for
fear of him, and became like dead *men.*
5But the angel answered and said to the
women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that
you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6He is
not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come,
see the place where the Lord lay. 7And go
quickly and tell His disciples that He is
risen from the dead, and indeed He is go-
ing before you into Galilee; there you will
see Him. Behold, I have told you."
8So they went out quickly from the tomb
with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His
disciples word.

THE WOMEN WORSHIP THE RISEN LORD

9And as they went to tell His disciples,[a]
behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!"
So they came and held Him by the feet and
worshiped Him. 10Then Jesus said to them,
"Do not be afraid. Go *and* tell My brethren
to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

27:46 [a]Psalm 22:1 **27:56** [a]NU-Text reads *Joseph.* **27:64** [a]NU-Text omits *by night.* **28:2** [a]NU-Text omits *from the door.* **28:9** [a]NU-Text omits the first clause of this verse.

MAKING IT REAL // MATTHEW 28:19

Make Disciples Notice what this verse is saying. It instructs us to go and make disciples—not just converts, but disciples. We want to see people give their hearts to the Lord, but we don't want it to end there. We want the people we reach to understand that the reward of heaven is going to be amazing, but eternal life with God starts here and now. We want to help them mature and grow in Him. Aren't you glad that someone helped you? When you gave your heart to Jesus, God just didn't throw you out and say, "Okay, you're on your own now."

If people are going to grow into mature disciples, they have to be taught and guided by other (more mature) disciples. What is a disciple? A disciple is more than a follower of Christ. A disciple is someone who is continually learning. If we're continually learning about Christ and growing closer to Him, we will continually want to share His love. As we do that, we will continue to spread the Gospel and help other people become disciples as well. We want to see people get saved and stick with it. Let's help our friends develop and grow so they can help others! (See also: Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46, 47; John 20:21; Acts 5:42.)

Words to Live By

Go, Baptizing, Teaching: The Greek words for "go," "baptizing," and "teaching" in Matthew 28:19, 20 all imply a continuous action. We don't just go out once and lead someone to Christ, teach them something, and then retire. The idea is ongoing action—we are to be continually reaching out to others, spreading the gospel of Christ, and teaching people how to grow in their relationships with Him. It's not a one-time mission; it is a way of life.

THE SOLDIERS ARE BRIBED

11 Now while they were going, behold,
some of the guard came into the city and
reported to the chief priests all the things
that had happened. 12 When they had as-
sembled with the elders and consulted
together, they gave a large sum of money
to the soldiers, 13 saying, "Tell them, 'His
disciples came at night and stole Him *away*
while we slept.' 14 And if this comes to the
governor's ears, we will appease him and
make you secure." 15 So they took the money
and did as they were instructed; and this
saying is commonly reported among the
Jews until this day.

WITNESSING
What was Jesus' final command to His followers?
Matthew 28:16–20

THE GREAT COMMISSION

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into
Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had
appointed for them. 17 When they saw Him,
they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

LONELINESS
Are we ever alone?
Matthew 28:20

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them,
saying, "All authority has been given to Me
in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore[a]
and make disciples of all the nations, bap-
tizing them in the name of the Father and
of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching
them to observe all things that I have com-
manded you; and lo, I am with you always,
even to the end of the age." Amen.[a]

28:19 [a]M-Text omits *therefore*. **28:20** [a]NU-Text omits *Amen*.

Mark

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 60S
AUTHOR: MARK
THEME: THE SUFFERING SON OF MAN WHO IS, IN FACT, THE SON OF GOD
PURPOSE: A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD CALLS FOR COMPLETE COMMITMENT TO DOING HIS WILL.

OUTLINE

1:1–8 .....The Message of John the Baptist
1:9–13.....The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus
1:14—9:50.....Jesus in Galilee
10:1–52.....Jesus Goes from Galilee to Jerusalem
11:1—15:47 .....Jesus' Last Week: His Trial and Death
16:1–8 .....Jesus Is Alive
16:9–20.....Jesus Appears to His Followers

KEY VERSE:

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34).

THEN /// Mark wrote his Gospel at a time when Rome controlled most of the world—including Israel. Roman soldiers were stationed in Israel to keep an eye on everything there. Many of the Hebrews resented the Romans. They wanted them to go back to Rome and leave Israel alone.

Even though the Romans were certainly not Israel's favorite people, Mark wrote his account of Jesus' life in a way that the Romans could understand. The Romans didn't grow up reading the Old Testament and weren't familiar with Hebrew prophecies, so they wouldn't care that Jesus fulfilled those prophecies. But Mark realized they would be interested in the miracles Jesus performed and the power that flowed through His life. So, in his Gospel of action, Mark wrote mostly about what Jesus did rather than just about what He said.

NOW /// It seems we can no longer turn on the TV without seeing some kind of reality show. There are dating, singing, dancing, and entertainment contests. There are shows about managing misbehaving children, surviving in the wilderness, decorating your house—the list is practically endless. Those shows may be real for the ones whose lives are being filmed; but for the rest of us, they are purely entertainment (or not), and are far removed from our "reality."

In his Gospel, Mark wrote about the most powerful reality. He told the story of Jesus' life—all the amazing things He did when He walked the earth. Mark wanted his readers to understand that Jesus was exactly who He claimed to be, the Son of God. Mark wanted to make it clear that, through His life, Jesus showed the world what God is like. Through His death, He showed the world the reality of God's love—the ultimate show of reality.

REALITY CHECK /// Mark is famous for portraying Jesus as a servant. He highlights the fact that Jesus did not come into the world to change it through power and strength but through gentleness and love.

Jesus spent His life on earth reaching out to those who needed Him; the sick, the lonely, and the misunderstood were the very ones Jesus seemed most drawn to. He not only loved those people, He served them by meeting their needs.

As Christians, we are called to live our lives on earth as Jesus lived His—reaching out in love to those around us. We should be servants just as Jesus was. Can you imagine what would happen to the world if everyone lived lives of love and service? It truly would change the world. And that change could happen. It could start with you.

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus
Christ, the Son of God. 2As it is written in the Prophets:[a]

"Behold, I send My messenger before
Your face,
Who will prepare Your way before
You."[b]
3 *"The voice of one crying in the*
wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make His paths straight.'"[a]

4John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

6Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. 8I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

JOHN BAPTIZES JESUS

9It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was

1:2 [a]NU-Text reads *Isaiah the prophet.*
[b]Malachi 3:1 **1:3** [a]Isaiah 40:3

MIR MAKING IT REAL // MARK 1:10, 11

Jesus' Hometown One of the first things we ask when we meet someone new is, "Where are you from?" Knowing where people are from tells us a lot about them—why they have a particular accent, what kind of climate they're used to, which sports teams they might like the most. We can ask questions about where they live and about their family. Those answers tell us a lot about a person we are trying to get to know.

The Son of God is from heaven, and there is so much we can know about Him because we know where He's from. He comes from a home outside of space and time. He has been there with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit from eternity. Heaven is God's home and the place He created for those who know Him. To live in heaven is an honor—a gift to those who accept Jesus here on earth. In heaven, the Lord is continually being praised by the angels. There is no sickness or sadness there. We know that Jesus is God's Son. We know He is perfect and worthy of our praise because His hometown is the perfect place of heaven. He once walked among us, but the way He talked and the way He lived proved He was not just a citizen of this world—He came from a place where life is lived in a whole other way. (See also: Matt. 3:16; John 1:1; Acts 10:38.)

Words to Live By

Beloved: The Greek word translated as "beloved" in Mark 1:11 is *agapetos* (ag-ap-ay-tos'), and means "well-loved" or "dear." Not only was Jesus willing to leave His perfect home in Heaven to come live on our imperfect earth, but God the Father was willing to let His own Son, whom He loved so well and so fully, leave the security and bliss of heaven to face suffering and persecution on the earth. They were willing to make these sacrifices to save us from our sins, and to let us know, in no uncertain terms, that we are beloved by the God who reigns from heaven.

baptized by John in the Jordan. 10And immediately, coming up from[a] the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. 11Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

SATAN TEMPTS JESUS

12Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. 13And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

JESUS BEGINS HIS GALILEAN MINISTRY

14Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom[a] of God, 15and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

FOUR FISHERMEN CALLED AS DISCIPLES

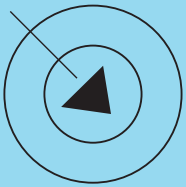
16And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 17Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." 18They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

19When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets. 20And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

JESUS CASTS OUT AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

21Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the

1:10 [a]NU-Text reads *out of.* **1:14** [a]NU-Text omits *of the kingdom.*



PROMISE

God promises to bring good news.

He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth" (Mark 1:38).

Not too long after Jesus started traveling around telling people about God's kingdom, He visited His hometown. On the Sabbath, He went to the local synagogue, where someone asked Him to read from the Scriptures. He read from the Book of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD" (Luke 4:16–19). When Jesus finished reading, He said, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (v. 21). Jesus wanted the people to know that what seemed impossible was possible with God. When matters seemed hopeless, God was able to turn things around.

Jesus knew why He was on earth and put His whole heart into fulfilling the purpose God had given Him. That's still His purpose today. What He came to earth to do then in the flesh, His Word and His Spirit continue to do today. Be serious about reading His Word. If you want to know what Jesus said and did when He lived on earth, read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. See what good news He has for you!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Luke 20:1; John 5:19, 20

synagogue and taught. 22And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

23Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24saying, "Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

25But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" 26And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine *is* this? For with authority[a] He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." 28And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW HEALED

29Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. 31So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

DEMONS

Did Jesus have power over demons?

Mark 1:34

MANY HEALED AFTER SABBATH SUNSET

32At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. 33And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

1:27 [a]NU-Text reads *What is this? A new doctrine with authority.*

PREACHING IN GALILEE

35Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. 36And Simon and those *who were* with Him searched for Him. 37When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

38But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth."

39And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

JESUS CLEANSES A LEPER

40Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

41Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out *His* hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." 42As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. 43And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, 44and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

45However, he went out and began to proclaim *it* freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.

JESUS FORGIVES AND HEALS A PARALYTIC

2 And again He entered Capernaum after *some* days, and it was heard that He was in the house. 2Immediately[a] many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive *them,* not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. 3Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four *men.* 4And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

5When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

6And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7"Why does this *Man* speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

8But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? 9Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, '*Your* sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? 10But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, 11"I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." 12Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw *anything* like this!"

MATTHEW THE TAX COLLECTOR

13Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. 14As He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

> ***Mark 2:16***
> You name it, and the Roman Empire probably charged a tax for it. The Jews expected to be taxed for everything they did, whether it was buying property or worshiping at the temple. To collect these outrageous taxes, the Romans hired local Jewish citizens. These collectors were known for charging their fellow Jews more money than they really owed and keeping the extra cash for themselves. Because of this, and because the collectors worked for the hated Roman government, taxmen were despised and seen as traitors to their people.

15Now it happened, as He was dining in *Levi's* house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. 16And when the scribes

2:2 [a]NU-Text omits *Immediately.*

MAKING IT REAL // MARK 2:7

Sins Erased Has anyone ever done something wrong to you and tried to make up for it by doing something nice, instead of just saying they were sorry? How did that make you feel? Really, you just wanted them to be sorry for what they'd done and to promise to never do it again, right?

Well, some people treat God the same way. Instead of telling Him they're sorry for sin and deciding to never again act in such a way, they try to do things to make Him happy with them again. There are a lot of people who believe they can do enough good things to earn their way into heaven or that God will love them more if they do enough things for Him. They believe they'll be rewarded because of their good deeds. But it just doesn't work that way.

There are still others who take it to another extreme. These are the kind of people who believe they have to suffer as much as possible to earn forgiveness, so they torture themselves physically, mentally, or emotionally, thinking this will make them more worthy of God's mercy.

Both of these ways are false. Forgiveness is freely offered by God, but it can't be earned. You can't get His forgiveness from your parents or from the people you hang out with. Sure, they can (and should) forgive you when you mess up and hurt them, but only God can permanently erase sin from your record. All you have to do is confess your sins to Him and repent, and—instantly—they're gone forever. Confess your sins to the Lord today. He's the only One who can get rid of them for you! (See also: Matt. 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:20, 24; Eph. 2:8, 9.)

Words to Live By

Can forgive: The two Greek words used together in Mark 2:7, translated as "can forgive," are *dunamai* (doo'-nah-mi) and *aphiemi* (af-fee'-ay-mee). They can mean "able to send away or forgive." It's the idea of having the power or capability (*dunamai*) to truly forgive our sins and delete them or send them away (*aphiemi*) forever. Only God has the power to truly take away our sins and make it as if they never happened.

and[a] Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How *is it* that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?"

17When Jesus heard *it,* He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance."[a]

JESUS IS QUESTIONED ABOUT FASTING

18The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

19And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. 20But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. 21No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. 22And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins."

JESUS IS LORD OF THE SABBATH

23Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as

2:16 [a]NU-Text reads *of the.* **2:17** [a]NU-Text omits *to repentance.*

MAKING IT REAL // MARK 2:17

Who Needs a Doctor? The Pharisees were the elite Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day, and they didn't understand what Jesus was all about. For one thing, He hung out with known sinners—people they would have crossed the street to avoid. The Pharisees thought they were way too holy to rub elbows with those people. What Jesus said to them should be like music to your ears if you think you've done such horrible things that God could never love you. Jesus made it clear that He's more interested in changing sinners than in recruiting good, religious people to His cause.

But does that mean that Jesus isn't interested in you if you haven't gotten messed up in obvious sins like cheating or sex or drugs or breaking the law? Not at all. When He said He wasn't inviting "the righteous," He was talking about the attitude in people's hearts. People who consider themselves "righteous" (good), like the Pharisees, don't think they need Jesus. People who know they are sinners—whether their sins are obvious to everyone or the invisible sins of the heart that are just as bad—know they need Jesus. He welcomes all of us with open arms. (See also: Matt. 9:12, 13; Luke 5:31, 32; 19:10.)

Words to Live By

Sick: The Greek word translated as "sick" in Mark 2:17 is *kakos* (kak-oce'), and it carries the idea of being ill or diseased. Sin is a disease that infects our entire being and keeps us from a personal relationship with God. Jesus came to heal us from the disease of sin by sacrificing Himself for us and cleansing us with His righteousness. No more do we have to live weak, sick lives. Now we can have whole, full, and healthy lives in Christ.

they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. 24And the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

25But He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: 26how he went into the house of God *in the days* of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?"

27And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

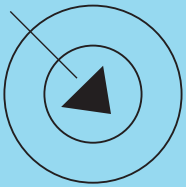
HEALING ON THE SABBATH

3 And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. 2So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. 3And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward." 4Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. 5And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.[a] 6Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

A GREAT MULTITUDE FOLLOWS JESUS

7But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea 8and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him. 9So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. 10For He healed many, so that as many as

3:5 [a]NU-Text omits *as whole as the other.*



PROMISE

God promises anything can be forgiven.

"Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter" (Mark 3:28).

Be encouraged! It doesn't matter what you've done in the past, where you've done it, or who you've done it with. God loves you and wants to forgive you. In fact, God has more grace than you can imagine. You may have blown it, big-time. It doesn't matter. Jesus is more than ready to give you a fresh start. He wants you to run to Him, not away from Him!

Remember when David blew it with Bathsheba? Then he blew it again by having her husband killed. David kept messing up trying to cover his sin. God sent the prophet Nathan to confront him. David's eyes were finally opened, and he repented. God forgave David (2 Sam. 11–12). Even with all the times David failed, in the Book of Acts he is called "a man after [God's] own heart" (Acts 13:22). God approved of David because David always admitted when he had sinned, repented, and asked God to forgive him. If God can forgive David for the horrible things he did, He can certainly forgive you. But the key is this: David repented. He didn't just apologize. He was truly sorry in his heart. To repent means to turn from sin and go the other direction. Whatever it is that you need to be forgiven from, give it to God right now. Ask for forgiveness: tell Him you're sorry, repent, and move on.

Even godly people may fall many times, but they will always go to God and trust Him to help them get back up. God will always forgive, no matter what you've done. He loves you!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 51; Proverbs 24:16; Jeremiah 33:8; Ezekiel 36:25–28; Titus 2:11–14; 1 John 1:7, 9

had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him. 11And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." 12But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

13And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. 14Then He appointed twelve,[a] that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, 15and to have power to heal sicknesses and[a] to cast out demons: 16Simon,[a] to whom He gave the name Peter; 17James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite; 19and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

A HOUSE DIVIDED CANNOT STAND

20Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21But when His own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

> ***Mark 3:22***
> The Jewish people believed Beelzebub to be king of the demons, the being in charge of all evil spirits. You might know him better as Satan, or the devil.

22And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and,

3:14 [a]NU-Text adds *whom He also named apostles.* **3:15** [a]NU-Text omits *to heal sicknesses and.* **3:16** [a]NU-Text reads *and He appointed the twelve: Simon . . . .*

MAKING IT REAL // MARK 3:35

Family of God Did you know that you belong to the family of Jesus Christ? The God who created the universe and all that exists is your Father. You are a brother or sister of Jesus Himself; and, as a member of His family, you are royal and privileged. Because you are a brother or sister of Christ, you are perfectly cared for and protected. Your earthly family may sometimes disappoint you, but this family will never let you down.

Some people in this world don't know who they belong to; or they don't feel like they belong to anyone. They certainly aren't living like brothers and sisters of Christ; His true brothers and sisters don't abuse their bodies, don't abuse people, and don't abuse privileges. His true brothers and sisters treat others with respect, compassion, and love because they're not driven by selfish ambition. Maybe you've been living like the rest of the world because you didn't know about your family—a family of grace, but a family of conviction and strong character. Once you're a brother or sister in this amazing family, you are called, and have the privilege, to carry on the heritage of the family of Christ. (See also: Matt. 12:48–50; 23:8.)

Words to Live By

My brother and my sister and mother: Just before Jesus made this statement in Mark 3:35, someone had told Him that His mother and brothers were looking for Him outside. Jesus took this opportunity to teach the people about the family of God. Those who follow Christ are just as much family members to Him as those people who were in His earthly family. True family in God's kingdom is not determined by DNA or birth certificates. Rather, it is determined by the love of God and His saving grace. Once we accept our salvation, we have a family just as real (if not more so) than the one we were born into.

"By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons."

23So He called them to *Himself* and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

28"Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"— 30because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

JESUS' MOTHER AND BROTHERS SEND FOR HIM

31Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. 32And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers[a] are outside seeking You."

33But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" 34And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 35For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

4 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a

3:32 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *and Your sisters.*

boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea.
2Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching:
3"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air[a] came and devoured it. 5Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. 6But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. 7And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. 8But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."
9And He said to them,[a] "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES

10But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. 11And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, 12so that

'Seeing they may see and not perceive,
And hearing they may hear and not
understand;
Lest they should turn,
And their sins be forgiven them.' "[a]

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED

13And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? 14The sower sows the word. 15And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. 18Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, 19and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 20But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it,* and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

LIGHT UNDER A BASKET

21Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? 22For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. 23If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."
24Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. 25For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

THE PARABLE OF THE GROWING SEED

26And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, 27and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. 28For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. 29But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

> ***Mark 4:31***
> The mustard seed is proof of the old saying, "Big things come in small packages." One tiny mustard seed—a seed much smaller than a kernel of corn—is capable of producing a plant up to fifteen feet high.

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

30Then He said, "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable

4:4 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of the air.* **4:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them.*
4:12 [a]Isaiah 6:9, 10

MAKING IT REAL // MARK 4:33, 34

Parables Think back to last week's sermon at church. Maybe your mind wandered for part of the time, but what made you look up and really listen? The story. Maybe it was funny, maybe tragic, but you were definitely listening. The pastor had your attention. Everyone likes a good story. We can relate to certain characters who remind us of ourselves or people we know. Sometimes the plot of the story reminds us of similar experiences we've had ourselves. And when the moral of the story is revealed, it can really hit home because it is something that we understand and relate to. We want to know the meaning of the story because we've invested our attention, time, and maybe even our emotions in it. There's a reason we still read books and go to the movies—we all love a good story.

Jesus was a great communicator. He knew that people love to listen to stories. He told the deep and incredible truths of His kingdom in the form of stories so that the people could understand what He was really saying. People listened to His parables and then retold them to their friends. Read the stories of Jesus and hear the truth He is speaking to you. (See also: Matt. 13.)

Words to Live By

Parable: The Greek word translated as "parable" in Mark 4:33, 34 is *parabole* (par-ab-ol-ay'), which can mean "a likeness or comparison." A *parabole* is often a story about everyday life that has symbolic content that can teach a lesson. Everyone can relate to a story that deals with things that are familiar to them, and that makes the truth they learn when they compare the story with their own lives even more powerful. So it's not surprising that Jesus used such wisdom in choosing to teach with parables, knowing how they could impact people in such personal and lasting ways.

shall we picture it? 31*It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; 32but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."

JESUS' USE OF PARABLES

33And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it.* 34But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.

WIND AND WAVE OBEY JESUS

35On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." 36Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

39Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How *is it* that you have no faith?"[a] 41And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN HEALED

5 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.[a] 2And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with

4:40 [a]NU-Text reads *Have you still no faith?*
5:1 [a]NU-Text reads *Gerasenes.*

an unclean spirit, 3who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him,[a] not even with chains, 4because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

6When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me."

8For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" 9Then He asked him, "What *is* your name?"

And he answered, saying, "My name *is* Legion; for we are many." 10Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

11Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. 12So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." 13And at once Jesus[a] gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

14So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. 15Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. 16And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. 17Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.

18And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. 19However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." 20And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

A GIRL RESTORED TO LIFE AND A WOMAN HEALED

21Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. 22And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet 23and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live." 24So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

25Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, 26and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. 27When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and touched His garment. 28For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

29Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the affliction. 30And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?"

31But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' "

32And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. 33But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. 34And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

35While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

36As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." 37And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. 38Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult

5:3 [a]NU-Text adds *anymore*. **5:13** [a]NU-Text reads *And He gave*.

WORLD APP

Missions / Mark 5:18–20

When we hear the word *missions* we often think of people who commit their lives to going into faraway and often dangerous places to spread the message of Jesus Christ. But what if you're still in school and not able to move to another part of the world to share Christ? Does that mean you can't be involved in missions? Absolutely not!

Missions happen everywhere. Consider the man whom Jesus healed from demon possession in Mark 5:1–20. After he was healed, he wanted to travel with Jesus, but instead Jesus called the man to start his mission somewhere else . . . his hometown! Jesus told him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you" (Mark 5:19). Rather than traveling the world right away, this man went home and shared his experience with Christ with everyone He encountered.

That's the heart of missions—sharing your life-changing experience with Christ with everyone you encounter, either at home or online or on a mission trip. One day, God may call you to go to a remote village in a third-world country. Or He may call you to reach people for Him as a nurse, a firefighter, a teacher, or whatever career you choose. But you don't have to wait for that. You can serve God through missions in your home, your neighborhood, and your school. You can share Christ now through social networking with your online friends.

Modern technology has made our world smaller than ever—with a quick look at our smartphones, we can see what's going on across the globe. We can support missionaries by following them online and giving them our prayers or financial support. As Christians, we are called to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). We can spread the message of Christ in every way we communicate with every person we meet, either in person or online. Don't wait to go on mission. Share Jesus now!

and those who wept and wailed loudly.
39When He came in, He said to them, "Why
make this commotion and weep? The child
is not dead, but sleeping."
40And they ridiculed Him. But when He
had put them all outside, He took the fa-
ther and the mother of the child, and those
who were with Him, and entered where the
child was lying. 41Then He took the child by
the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi,"
which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you,
arise." 42Immediately the girl arose and
walked, for she was twelve years *of age.* And
they were overcome with great amaze-
ment. 43But He commanded them strictly
that no one should know it, and said that
something should be given her to eat.

JESUS REJECTED AT NAZARETH

6 Then He went out from there and
came to His own country, and His
disciples followed Him. 2And when
the Sabbath had come, He began to teach
in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him*
were astonished, saying, "Where *did* this
Man *get* these things? And what wisdom
is this which is given to Him, that such
mighty works are performed by His hands!
3Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary,
and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Si-
mon? And are not His sisters here with us?"
So they were offended at Him.
4But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not
without honor except in his own country,
among his own relatives, and in his own
house." 5Now He could do no mighty work
there, except that He laid His hands on a
few sick people and healed *them.* 6And He
marveled because of their unbelief. Then
He went about the villages in a circuit,
teaching.

SENDING OUT THE TWELVE

7And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and
began to send them out two *by* two, and
gave them power over unclean spirits. 8He
commanded them to take nothing for the
journey except a staff—no bag, no bread,
no copper in *their* money belts— 9but to
wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.
10Also He said to them, "In whatever
place you enter a house, stay there till you
depart from that place. 11And whoever[a]
will not receive you nor hear you, when you
depart from there, shake off the dust under
your feet as a testimony against them.[b] As-
suredly, I say to you, it will be more toler-
able for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day
of judgment than for that city!"
12So they went out and preached that
people should repent. 13And they cast out
many demons, and anointed with oil many
who were sick, and healed *them.*

JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED

14Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His
name had become well known. And he
said, "John the Baptist is risen from the
dead, and therefore these powers are at
work in him."
15Others said, "It is Elijah."
And others said, "It is the Prophet, or[a]
like one of the prophets."

Mark 6:15

The prophet Elijah prophesied more than 850 years before Jesus. Why would anyone confuse him with John the Baptist? Perhaps it was because of the way Elijah's time on earth ended. You see, Elijah didn't die; he was taken directly to heaven. Some Old Testament writers predicted that the living, breathing Elijah would return to earth one day. The Jewish people expected him to return just before the Messiah came to set them free from Rome's control.

16But when Herod heard, he said, "This
is John, whom I beheaded; he has been
raised from the dead!" 17For Herod himself
had sent and laid hold of John, and bound
him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his
brother Philip's wife; for he had married
her. 18Because John had said to Herod, "It
is not lawful for you to have your brother's
wife."
19Therefore Herodias held it against him
and wanted to kill him, but she could not;
20for Herod feared John, knowing that he
was a just and holy man, and he protected
him. And when he heard him, he did many
things, and heard him gladly.

6:11 [a]NU-Text reads *whatever place.* [b]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **6:15** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *or.*



LIFE APP

Time Management / Mark 6:31, 32, 46

In just about three years of ministry, Jesus and His disciples were very busy. They were always traveling around as Jesus was healing, teaching, and preaching the gospel. But in the midst of all that, He still emphasized the need for some time away. In Mark 6, Jesus encouraged the disciples to take some time to go "by yourselves to a deserted place and rest awhile" (Mark 6:31). Later, in verse 46, He sent the multitudes away and went up on a mountain by Himself to pray. Jesus was in control of His time. Time was not in control of Him.

Time management is a huge issue for us. The world is electronically connected at hyperspeed. Everything is speeded up including our lives. So we need to be vigilant about being the masters of our own schedules, or our schedules will become our masters. That can get in the way of our relationship with God and also our relationships with our friends and families. If you're not purposeful about your schedule, you may end up with no time for God or the people you love. Your hectic life may end up controlling you to the point that you you can't even squeeze in an appointment with yourself!

During college years, the need to manage time starts to hit home with a lot of people. In college, you're on your own and your schedule is up to you. You are the one who must figure out how to fit everything in.

So it's good for you to learn now that you must sometimes opt out of something good, so you can fit in something better. You have to learn to prioritize your time with God and the other things that are most important. Without being decisive with your schedule, your schedule can take over and make your life way more exhausting than it has to be. Take a lesson from Jesus, don't let time rule you; take time to go away to the mountain.

MAKING IT REAL // MARK 6:50

No Fear Can you imagine sitting in a boat in the middle of a storm, trying desperately to row against the wind? You are doing your best to get to the other side of the lake, but you're not going anywhere. Then, all of a sudden, Jesus comes walking up toward the boat; literally walking on the water! This is exactly what happened to the disciples (Mark 6:45–52). At first, they flipped out, but Jesus said, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

When you're trying to get somewhere and it seems like you're stuck in the middle of all sorts of problems and nothing is going your way, you don't have to flip out and be terrified. There is no problem or storm life can throw at you that Jesus can't overcome. He will always show you a way through your storms.

And Jesus won't just stand by and reassure you; He'll actually grab your hands if you start to sink. Instead of being like Peter and getting fearful when chaos happens, you can not only ride out the storms, you can actually walk right through them. But only if you keep your eyes on Jesus.

You or someone you know may be sitting in a boat in the middle of a storm; trouble may be tossing you around like a ship in a hurricane. But Jesus is telling you not to worry because He is there with you. When the storm is over, just like Jesus' disciples in the story, you'll end up right where you're meant to be; and Jesus will still be there. (See also: Deut. 31:6; Josh. 1:5; Ps. 37:25, 28; Heb. 13:5.)

Words to Live By

Be of good cheer: The Greek word translated as "be of good cheer" in Mark 6:50 is *tharseo* (thar-seh'-o), and it also means "to have courage." It's not necessarily wrong to admit when you are afraid. Courage isn't pretending you have no fear. Rather, it is acknowledging the fear and facing the challenge anyway. Once you rely on the courage you get from the presence of Jesus, you will find your fear replaced by faith and your storms replaced by the peace only Jesus can bring.

21 Then an opportune day came when
Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his
nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men*
of Galilee. 22 And when Herodias' daughter
herself came in and danced, and pleased
Herod and those who sat with him, the
king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you
want, and I will give *it* to you." 23 He also
swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will
give you, up to half my kingdom."
24 So she went out and said to her
mother, "What shall I ask?"
And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!"
25 Immediately she came in with haste to
the king and asked, saying, "I want you to
give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."
26 And the king was exceedingly sorry;
yet, because of the oaths and because of
those who sat with him, he did not want
to refuse her. 27 Immediately the king sent
an executioner and commanded his head
to be brought. And he went and beheaded
him in prison, 28 brought his head on a
platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl
gave it to her mother. 29 When his disciples
heard *of it,* they came and took away his
corpse and laid it in a tomb.

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

30 Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and
told Him all things, both what they had
done and what they had taught. 31 And He
said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to
a deserted place and rest a while." For there
were many coming and going, and they
did not even have time to eat. 32 So they
departed to a deserted place in the boat by
themselves.

33But the multitudes[a] saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. 34And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. 35When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. 36Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread;[a] for they have nothing to eat."

37But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat."

And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?"

38But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see."

And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish."

39Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. 40So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. 41And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. 42So they all ate and were filled. 43And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. 44Now those who had eaten the loaves were about[a] five thousand men.

JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA

45Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. 46And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. 47Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. 48Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. 49And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; 50for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." 51Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. 52For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

MANY TOUCH HIM AND ARE MADE WELL

53When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. 54And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, 55ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 56Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.

DEFILEMENT COMES FROM WITHIN

7 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. 2Now when[a] they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. 4*When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

6He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

> *'This people honors Me with their lips,*
> *But their heart is far from Me.*

6:33 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *they.* **6:36** [a]NU-Text reads *something to eat* and omits the rest of this verse. **6:44** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *about.* **7:2** [a]NU-Text omits *when* and *they found fault.*

7 *And in vain they worship Me,*
Teaching as doctrines the
commandments of men.'[a]

8For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men[a] —the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9He said to them, "*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. 10For Moses said, *'Honor your father and your mother'*;[a] and, *'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'*[b] 11But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), 12then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, 13making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

14When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: 15There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. 16If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"[a]

17When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. 18So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, 19because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?"[a] 20And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. 21For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

A GENTILE SHOWS HER FAITH

24From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon.[a] And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be hidden. 25For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. 26The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

28And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs."

29Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter."

30And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

JESUS HEALS A DEAF-MUTE

31Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. 33And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. 34Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it.* 37And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

FEEDING THE FOUR THOUSAND

8 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2"I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now

7:7 [a]Isaiah 29:13 **7:8** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **7:10** [a]Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16 [b]Exodus 21:17 **7:16** [a]NU-Text omits this verse. **7:19** [a]NU-Text ends quotation with *eliminated,* setting off the final clause as Mark's comment that Jesus has declared all foods clean. **7:24** [a]NU-Text omits *and Sidon.*

MAKING IT REAL // MARK 8:29

Jesus, the Christ When Jesus was born, the Jews were living under the authority of the Roman government. They hated it. They had to pay ridiculously high taxes; they had no rights because they weren't Roman citizens. Israel's prophets had said that a Messiah, God's Chosen One, would come to set the people free. Most of the Jews believed that the Messiah would appear in power and glory, maybe even raise a large army, and overthrow the Roman government that had Israel under its thumb. They believed the Messiah would establish God's kingdom—an independent Jewish nation—on earth.

Jesus didn't exactly fit the bill. He came to set them free from their sins, their sicknesses, and the oppression of their real enemy (Satan) rather than from the Romans. Jesus never spoke against the Roman government and even suggested that God wanted them to pay taxes to Caesar. But Peter recognized Jesus as the Chosen One. He may not have understood (yet) that the kingdom Jesus had come to establish was not a political regime but a kingdom of the heart and of the spirit, but Peter recognized that Jesus was the One they had waited for.

Jesus *is* the Messiah. He has come to set us free from the power of sin and deliver us from the fear of death. Acknowledge Him as the Chosen One, the Christ. Accept the salvation and freedom He brings as you become a citizen of the eternal kingdom of God. (See also: John 1:41; 6:69; 11:27.)

Words to Live By

Christ: The Greek word for "Christ" in Mark 8:29 is *Christos* (khris-tos'). It means "anointed" and is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Messiah*. When Peter recognized Jesus as "the Christ," He was saying that Jesus was the Anointed One of God, who would bring deliverance to His people. He was God's own Son. There is no one else worthy or deserving of that title.

continued with Me three days and have
nothing to eat. 3And if I send them away
hungry to their own houses, they will faint
on the way; for some of them have come
from afar."
4Then His disciples answered Him,
"How can one satisfy these people with
bread here in the wilderness?"
5He asked them, "How many loaves do
you have?"
And they said, "Seven."
6So He commanded the multitude to
sit down on the ground. And He took
the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke
them and gave *them* to His disciples to
set before *them;* and they set *them* be-
fore the multitude. 7They also had a few
small fish; and having blessed them, He
said to set them also before *them.* 8So
they ate and were filled, and they took up
seven large baskets of leftover fragments.
9Now those who had eaten were about
four thousand. And He sent them away,
10immediately got into the boat with His
disciples, and came to the region of Dal-
manutha.

THE PHARISEES SEEK A SIGN

11Then the Pharisees came out and began
to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a
sign from heaven, testing Him. 12But He
sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why
does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly,
I say to you, no sign shall be given to this
generation."

BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND HEROD

13And He left them, and getting into the
boat again, departed to the other side.
14Now the disciples[a] had forgotten to take
bread, and they did not have more than

8:14 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *they.*



LIFE APP

Ambition / Mark 8:36

To have ambition is to want to accomplish something. Ambition is an interesting thing—in and of itself, it's not good or bad. The good or bad comes in with the direction you choose to go. You can have an ambition to do something great for God or you can have an ambition to do something that doesn't honor God.

Many people start out with ambitions to do good things. But sometimes, selfish motives pollute everything they do and they end up not accomplishing anything of lasting value. They may make a lot of money and have a lot of possessions, and maybe even power or fame. But they don't have what's most important—a life that is drenched in the love of Christ. All of their great accomplishments can't save their souls or give their lives true meaning. Only Christ can do that. Jesus said about ambition, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). No amount of money or possessions can help you at all when your life is over. Only having eternal life through Christ will matter then. And the only accomplishments that will count will be the ones with eternal significance because you achieved them by following God faithfully.

So what are your ambitions? Search your heart and determine the motives behind your hopes for your life. Do you want to find success in order to honor God and draw others to Him; or do you want to be successful so you can be well-known, popular, or wealthy? If you need an ambition adjustment, pray and ask God to help you. Your ambitions will change throughout your life. As your hopes and aspirations change, be sure to continually check your motives and talk to God about all your dreams and desires. Determine to make *His* ambitions for your life *your* ambitions for your life.

one loaf with them in the boat. 15Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

Mark 8:15

Have you ever seen yeast (leaven) in action? Just a tiny bit of yeast added to a loaf of bread will work wonders. As the yeast ferments, it makes the dough bubble and then rise. Before long, the entire loaf is affected. The fast-acting and wide-reaching effects of yeast may explain why the Bible uses it to symbolize sin or evil.

16And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "*It is* because we have no bread."

17But Jesus, being aware of *it,* said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still[a] hardened? 18Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? 19When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?"

They said to Him, "Twelve."

20"Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?"

And they said, "Seven."

21So He said to them, "How *is it* you do not understand?"

A BLIND MAN HEALED AT BETHSAIDA

22Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. 23So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

24And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."

25Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. 26Then He sent him away to his house, saying, "Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town."[a]

PETER CONFESSES JESUS AS THE CHRIST

27Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?"

28So they answered, "John the Baptist; but some *say,* Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."

29He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ."

30Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

31And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 33But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

TAKE UP THE CROSS AND FOLLOW HIM

34When He had called the people to *Himself,* with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 35For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? 37Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 38For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

9 And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till

8:17 [a]NU-Text omits *still.* **8:26** [a]NU-Text reads *"Do not even go into the town."*

MAKING IT REAL // MARK 9:7

Child of God Jesus and God the Father are one. Think about that for a moment. When you see Jesus ministering to the poor, touching the brokenhearted, and healing the sick, He is fulfilling the heart of the Father. Just like earthly sons sometimes work for their dads, Jesus worked for His Father, too. He did the things on earth that His Father wanted Him to do; that included making the way for us to have a relationship with our heavenly Father (through His own perfect life, death, and resurrection).

When you received Jesus, you received life and a relationship with God the Father! Because of the price that Jesus paid for you on the cross, and because you have received Him as your Savior, you have become God's very own child. Wow! And the exciting thing is we inherit His characteristics. Have you ever noticed how often children resemble their parents? They may even have a lot of the same mannerisms. It's that way because they inherited characteristics from their fathers. When you accepted Jesus as your Savior, you inherited some of your heavenly Father's characteristics—love, joy, and peace, to name a few (Gal. 5:22, 23). It's amazing—the more we spend time with God, the more of His ways we'll pick up! God has given us a great heritage. We are His children. Remember: "Like Father, like son (or daughter)!" (See also: Luke 12:32; Rom. 8:16, 17; Gal. 3:29; 4:7.)

Words to Live By

Hear: The Greek word translated as "hear" in Mark 9:7 is *akouo* (ak-oo'-o). It can carry a deeper meaning of understanding or considering what you're hearing. God was not suggesting it might be a good idea to think about listening to Jesus once in a while. It was imperative that the people listen intently and consider everything Jesus said. The same goes for us. When we read the words of Jesus, we need to pay special attention and do our best to consider and understand everything He taught. As we read the Bible prayerfully, the Spirit will reveal truth and meaning to us.

they see the kingdom of God present with power."

JESUS TRANSFIGURED ON THE MOUNT

2 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James,
and John, and led them up on a high
mountain apart by themselves; and He was
transfigured before them. 3 His clothes be-
came shining, exceedingly white, like snow,
such as no launderer on earth can whiten
them. 4 And Elijah appeared to them with
Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.
5 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus,
"Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let
us make three tabernacles: one for You,
one for Moses, and one for Elijah"— 6 be-
cause he did not know what to say, for they
were greatly afraid.

7 And a cloud came and overshadowed
them; and a voice came out of the cloud,
saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"
8 Suddenly, when they had looked around,
they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus
with themselves.

9 Now as they came down from the
mountain, He commanded them that they
should tell no one the things they had seen,
till the Son of Man had risen from the dead.
10 So they kept this word to themselves,
questioning what the rising from the dead
meant.

11 And they asked Him, saying, "Why do
the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

12 Then He answered and told them, "In-
deed, Elijah is coming first and restores all
things. And how is it written concerning
the Son of Man, that He must suffer many
things and be treated with contempt?
13 But I say to you that Elijah has also come,
and they did to him whatever they wished,
as it is written of him."

A BOY IS HEALED

14And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. 15Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to *Him,* greeted Him. 16And He asked the scribes, "What are you discussing with them?"

17Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. 18And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."

19He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." 20Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

21So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?"

And he said, "From childhood. 22And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

23Jesus said to him, "If you can believe,[a] all things *are* possible to him who believes."

24Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

25When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" 26Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." 27But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

28And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

29So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."[a]

JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

30Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *it.* 31For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day." 32But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

33Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" 34But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who *would be the* greatest. 35And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." 36Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, 37"Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

JESUS FORBIDS SECTARIANISM

38Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us."

39But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. 40For he who is not against us is on our[a] side. 41For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

GIVING

What is the result of giving to others?

Mark 9:41

JESUS WARNS OF OFFENSES

42"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it

9:23 [a]NU-Text reads *"'If You can!' All things. . . ."*
9:29 [a]NU-Text omits *and fasting.* **9:40** [a]M-Text reads *against you is on your side.*

would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. 43If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— 44where

'Their worm does not die
And the fire is not quenched.'[a]

45And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— 46where

'Their worm does not die,
And the fire is not quenched.'[a]

47And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire— 48where

'Their worm does not die
And the fire is not quenched.'[a]

TASTELESS SALT IS WORTHLESS

49"For everyone will be seasoned with fire,[a] and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. 50Salt *is* good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another."

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

10 Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again.

2The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?" testing Him.

3And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?"

4They said, "Moses permitted *a man* to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss *her*."

5And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6But from the beginning of the creation, God *'made them male and female.'*[a] 7*'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,* 8*and the two shall become one flesh'*;[a] so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

10In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same *matter.* 11So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. 12And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

JESUS BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN

13Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them.* 14But when Jesus saw *it,* He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 15Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." 16And He took them up in His arms, laid *His* hands on them, and blessed them.

MONEY
How can the love of money get in the way of our relationship with God?
Mark 10:17–24

JESUS COUNSELS THE RICH YOUNG RULER

17Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

18So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is,* God. 19You know the commandments: *'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,'*

9:44 [a]NU-Text omits this verse. **9:46** [a]NU-Text omits the last clause of verse 45 and all of verse 46. **9:48** [a]Isaiah 66:24 **9:49** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **10:6** [a]Genesis 1:27; 5:2 **10:8** [a]Genesis 2:24

'Do not defraud,' *'Honor your father and your mother.'* "[a]

[20]And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

[21]Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

[22]But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

[23]Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" [24]And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches[a] to enter the kingdom of God! [25]It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

[26]And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"

[27]But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men *it is* impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible."

[28]Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You."

[29]So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife[a] or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, [30]who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. [31]But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first."

JESUS A THIRD TIME PREDICTS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

[32]Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: [33]"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; [34]and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

GREATNESS IS SERVING

[35]Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

[36]And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

[37]They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."

[38]But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

[39]They said to Him, "We are able."

So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; [40]but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared."

[41]And when the ten heard *it,* they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. [42]But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. [43]Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. [44]And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. [45]For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

JESUS HEALS BLIND BARTIMAEUS

[46]Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. [47]And

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10:19 [a]Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20 **10:24** [a]NU-Text omits *for those who trust in riches.* **10:29** [a]NU-Text omits *or wife.*

MAKING IT REAL // MARK 10:27

All Things Are Possible with God Wow! What a promise! *God can do anything!* This Scripture should kick the limits right out of your dreams. There are plenty of things that you cannot do on your own, but with Christ *all* things are possible. Too many times we let our circumstances discourage us. We wear out, give up, and throw in the towel. But we don't have to let our circumstances dictate our dreams. Instead, we can grab hold of this verse and realize that Jesus is the One who can do anything!

It doesn't matter how challenging your circumstances are. Nothing is impossible for God. In fact, Romans 8:11 says that "the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you." Now that's power! The Bible teaches us not to give up when things get tough. Hold on to God. As you continue to seek Him, He can deliver you through any circumstance.

There's a story in Mark 10:46–52 about a blind man named Bartimaeus who needed a miracle. He heard that Jesus was passing by him and he began to cry out to Jesus, and the crowd told him to shut up. So he cried out even louder. Jesus stopped, turned around, and asked Bartimaeus a question that changed his life forever: "What do you want Me to do for you?" (v. 51). Bartimaeus told Jesus he wanted to see; and he got His miracle. So the next time your circumstances start to intimidate you, just stand your ground, tell Jesus what you need, and expect Him to answer. With Him, nothing is impossible! (See also: Matt. 17:20; Luke 1:37.)

Words to Live By

Impossible: The Greek word translated as "impossible" in Mark 10:27 is *adunatos* (ad-oo'-nat-os), which means "not having the strength." The opposite of *adunatos* is the word *dunatos*, which is translated as "possible" later in the verse. These words actually show us a picture of our strength versus God's strength. He is all powerful and has the strength and ability to do anything. Our strength and ability are severely limited. But God uses His *dunatos* in place of our *adunatos*. He uses His power to make His "possible" overtake our "impossible" in any situation.

when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

48Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

49So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called.

Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."

50And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

51So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

52Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

11 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage[a] and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; 2and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring *it.* 3And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here."

11:1 [a]M-Text reads *Bethsphage.*

4So they went their way, and found the[a] colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. 5But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?"

6And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go. 7Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. 8And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. 9Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna!
'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'[a]
10Blessed *is* the kingdom of our father David
That comes in the name of the Lord![a]
Hosanna in the highest!"

11And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

THE FIG TREE WITHERED

12Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. 13And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again."

And His disciples heard *it.*

JESUS CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

15So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. 16And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. 17Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, *'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'*?[a] But you have made it a *'den of thieves.'*"[b]

18And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching. 19When evening had come, He went out of the city.

THE LESSON OF THE WITHERED FIG TREE

20Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

22So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. 23For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them,* and you will have *them.*

FORGIVENESS AND PRAYER

25"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."[a]

JESUS' AUTHORITY QUESTIONED

27Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. 28And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"

29But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: 30The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me."

31And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 32But if we say, 'From men'"—they feared the people, for all counted John to have been

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11:4 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *a.* **11:9** [a]Psalm 118:26 **11:10** [a]NU-Text omits *in the name of the Lord.* **11:17** [a]Isaiah 56:7 [b]Jeremiah 7:11 **11:26** [a]NU-Text omits this verse.

MAKING IT REAL // MARK 11:25, 26

Forgive Jesus makes it pretty clear that Christians should live lives of forgiveness. But why? Mark 11:25, 26 say that we've got to forgive other people if we want God to forgive us. As in many other places in the Bible, God is calling us to be like Him.

God is ultimately forgiving and He wants to restore relationships. He wants you to be forgiving, too. A heart that's willing to forgive is like the heart of God—it is a heart that considers others more important and is ruled by love, not self-interest. No matter what your sin, God's forgiveness comes freely and wipes out whatever you've done. That doesn't mean you may not have to endure the consequences; it just means that God doesn't hold your sin against you.

When you refuse to forgive, you display an attitude that you and your feelings are more important than the other person. This attitude is directly opposite of the way God wants you to live your life. When you don't forgive others, your heart will be filled with anger and bitterness; it will eat you up on the inside. It can take over your life and even paralyze you emotionally. Forgiving frees both you and the one you forgive to get on with life.

So when a friend offends you, be quick to forgive and do all you can to forget the past. God always does the same for you. (See also: Matt. 6:14, 15; 18:21, 22; Luke 6:37; 2 Cor. 2:7.)

Words to Live By

Anything against anyone: Mark 11:25, 26 doesn't allow for conditional forgiveness. We're often very good at justifying our unforgiveness. Maybe the person we're angry with hurt our feelings and never apologized. Maybe we don't feel like the other person deserves forgiveness. But Jesus doesn't give exceptions here. Jesus says, if you have *anything* against *anyone*, forgive them, so you can also be forgiven by God.

a prophet indeed. 33So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know."

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED VINEDRESSERS

12 Then He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around *it,* dug *a place for* the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 2Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. 3And they took *him* and beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. 4Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones,[a] wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully treated. 5And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. 6Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 7But those vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 8So they took him and killed *him* and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

9"Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. 10Have you not even read this Scripture:

'The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone.
11 *This was the LORD's doing,*
And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"[a]

12:4 [a]NU-Text omits *and at him they threw stones.* **12:11** [a]Psalm 118:22, 23

12And they sought to lay hands on Him,
but feared the multitude, for they knew
He had spoken the parable against them.
So they left Him and went away.

THE PHARISEES: IS IT LAWFUL TO PAY TAXES TO CAESAR?

13Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in *His* words. 14When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? 15Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?"

But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see *it*." 16So they brought *it*.

And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription *is* this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's."

17And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

And they marveled at Him.

THE SADDUCEES: WHAT ABOUT THE RESURRECTION?

18Then *some* Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying: 19"Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves *his* wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 20Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring. 21And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise. 22So the seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. 23Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife."

24Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? 25For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 26But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the *burning* bush *passage,* how God spoke to him, saying, *'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?*[a] 27He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken."

THE SCRIBES: WHICH IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT OF ALL?

28Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving[a] that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"

> LOVE
> ***What is the most important command that God has given us?***
> Mark 12:29

29Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments *is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.* 30*And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'*[a] This *is* the first commandment.[b] 31And the second, like *it, is* this: *'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*[a] There is no other commandment greater than these."

> ***Mark 12:29, 30***
> If Jesus' words seem familiar, it's because they come from the Old Testament Book of Deuteronomy. Jesus was quoting what's known as the *Shema*, which was a summary (of sorts) of the main points of the Jewish faith. The *Shema* is still used today to call Jewish people to worship.

32So the scribe said to Him, "Well *said,* Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. 33And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the

12:26 [a]Exodus 3:6, 15 **12:28** [a]NU-Text reads *seeing.* **12:30** [a]Deuteronomy 6:4, 5 [b]NU-Text omits this sentence. **12:31** [a]Leviticus 19:18

soul,[a] and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

34Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

But after that no one dared question Him.

JESUS: HOW CAN DAVID CALL HIS DESCENDANT LORD?

35Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How *is it* that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? 36For David himself said by the Holy Spirit:

> *'The LORD said to my Lord,*
> *"Sit at My right hand,*
> *Till I make Your enemies Your*
> *footstool."'*[a]

37Therefore David himself calls Him *'Lord'*; how is He *then* his Son?"

And the common people heard Him gladly.

BEWARE OF THE SCRIBES

38Then He said to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, *love* greetings in the marketplaces, 39the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, 40who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

THE WIDOW'S TWO MITES

41Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many *who were* rich put in much. 42Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites,[a] which make a quadrans. 43So He called His disciples to *Himself* and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

JESUS PREDICTS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

13 Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*"

2And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not *one* stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Mark 13:1

It's no wonder this disciple was in awe of the temple. The building itself was a work of art, constructed over a thirty-year period on the orders of Herod the Great. The front columns stood forty feet high. Some of the marble stones used for the walls of the building were almost forty feet long! (Can you imagine how much they must have weighed?)

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES AND THE END OF THE AGE

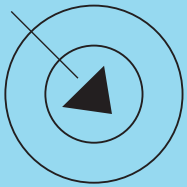
3Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 4"Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"

5And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 6For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He,*' and will deceive many. 7But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. 8For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles.[a] These *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

9"But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought[a] before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. 10And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11But when they arrest *you* and

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12:33 [a]NU-Text omits *with all the soul.*
12:36 [a]Psalm 110:1 **12:42** [a]Greek *lepta,* very small copper coins worth a fraction of a penny **13:8** [a]NU-Text omits *and troubles.*
13:9 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *will stand.*



PROMISE

God promises that the Good News will be preached to all nations.

"And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations" (Mark 13:10).

One of these days, the world as you know it won't even exist. One glorious day, everyone on earth will hear the blast of a trumpet and see Jesus returning through the clouds; that will be the end of the world as we know it. Whoa! Can you imagine what it's going to be like when Jesus Christ comes back and we all go to live with Him in His kingdom? There won't be any more violence on the streets. There won't be any more cancer to kill the people you love. Even the deepest, most private pain in your own heart will be gone. The devil won't be able to torment you and cause devastation anywhere, because he'll be burning in a lake of fire.

But some things have to happen before Jesus returns to rule with perfect peace and justice. He says that "the gospel must first be preached to all the nations." Now that's something you can help with! You can go on a mission trip while you're a teen. That's the best time to go! Or you may discover that God wants you to reach people for Him right where you live. Your own hometown can be your mission field. Start to pray about it now. Ask God where He wants to send you. One of the conditions for Jesus' return is that the Good News must be preached in all nations. You can be a part of making that happen!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Matthew 24:30, 31; Revelation 22:12–20

deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate[a] what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 13And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

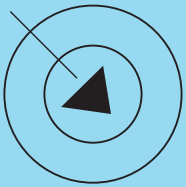
14"So when you see the *'abomination of desolation,'*[a] spoken of by Daniel the prophet,[b] standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. 16And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 17But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 18And pray that your flight may not be in winter. 19For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. 20And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

21"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or, 'Look, *He is* there!' do not believe it. 22For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 23But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

24"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great

13:11 [a]NU-Text omits *or premeditate.*
13:14 [a]Daniel 11:31; 12:11 [b]NU-Text omits *spoken of by Daniel the prophet.*



PROMISE

God promises his words will last forever.

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Mark 13:31).

The earth, the sky, the stars—they look like the strongest, most permanent things around. In fact, if there's one thing that most people will bet on, it's that—cloudy or clear—the sun will come out tomorrow. It's a lot easier to bank on the things you can see rather than on the things you can't see.

But Jesus looked at the huge blue sky above Him and the solid, dusty earth under His feet and told His disciples that the things He said would outlast the earth and sky. He wanted them to understand God's kingdom is more permanent, more sure, than anything they could see or touch.

It will be tempting for you to spend your time and your energy going after things that you can see—an education, a good job, a nice place to live, neat stuff to make your life comfortable, a family of your own eventually. There's certainly nothing wrong with those things. But Jesus is encouraging you, even warning you, to give the best and the most of your time and energy to the things that will last forever—His Word, His kingdom, and your relationship with Him.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Isaiah 40:8

power and glory. 27And then He will send
His angels, and gather together His elect
from the four winds, from the farthest part
of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

28"Now learn this parable from the fig tree:
When its branch has already become ten-
der, and puts forth leaves, you know that
summer is near. 29So you also, when you
see these things happening, know that it[a]
is near—at the doors! 30Assuredly, I say
to you, this generation will by no means
pass away till all these things take place.
31Heaven and earth will pass away, but My
words will by no means pass away.

NO ONE KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR

32"But of that day and hour no one knows,
not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son,
but only the Father. 33Take heed, watch and
pray; for you do not know when the time
is. 34*It is* like a man going to a far country,
who left his house and gave authority to his
servants, and to each his work, and com-
manded the doorkeeper to watch. 35Watch
therefore, for you do not know when the
master of the house is coming—in the
evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the
rooster, or in the morning— 36lest, coming
suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37And what
I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

14 After two days it was the Pass-
over and *the Feast* of Unleavened
Bread. And the chief priests and
the scribes sought how they might take
Him by trickery and put *Him* to death. 2But
they said, "Not during the feast, lest there
be an uproar of the people."

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY

3And being in Bethany at the house of Si-
mon the leper, as He sat at the table, a
woman came having an alabaster flask
of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she
broke the flask and poured *it* on His head.
4But there were some who were indignant
among themselves, and said, "Why was
this fragrant oil wasted? 5For it might have
been sold for more than three hundred
denarii and given to the poor." And they
criticized her sharply.

6But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do

13:29 [a]Or *He*

you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. 7For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. 8She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. 9Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS

10Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. 11And when they heard *it,* they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

JESUS CELEBRATES THE PASSOVER WITH HIS DISCIPLES

12Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover *lamb,* His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?"

13And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. 14Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' 15Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished *and* prepared; there make ready for us."

16So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

17In the evening He came with the twelve. 18Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me."

19And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, "*Is* it I?" And another *said,* "*Is* it I?"[a]

20He answered and said to them, "*It is* one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish. 21The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

JESUS INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER

22And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it,* and gave *it* to them and said, "Take, eat;[a] this is My body."

23Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. 24And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new[a] covenant, which is shed for many. 25Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

26And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL

27Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night,[a] for it is written:

> *'I will strike the Shepherd,*
> *And the sheep will be scattered.'*[b]

28"But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

29Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I *will* not *be.*"

30Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, *even* this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."

31But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"

And they all said likewise.

THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

32Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. 34Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch."

35He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36And He said, "Abba, Father, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nev-

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14:19 [a]NU-Text omits this sentence. **14:22** [a]NU-Text omits *eat.* **14:24** [a]NU-Text omits *new.* **14:27** [a]NU-Text omits *because of Me this night.* [b]Zechariah 13:7

ertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*."

37Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? 38Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

39Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. 40And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

41Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

BETRAYAL AND ARREST IN GETHSEMANE

43And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead *Him* away safely."

45As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

46Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. 47And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

48Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? 49I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

50Then they all forsook Him and fled.

A YOUNG MAN FLEES NAKED

51Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his* naked *body.* And the young men laid hold of him, 52and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

JESUS FACES THE SANHEDRIN

53And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. 54But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.

55Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. 56For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.

57Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 58"We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'" 59But not even then did their testimony agree.

60And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?" 61But He kept silent and answered nothing.

Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

> JESUS
> ***How will Jesus, the Messiah, come again?***
> Mark 14:61, 62

62Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

63Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? 64You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?"

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

65Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.[a]

PETER DENIES JESUS, AND WEEPS

66Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. 67And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth."

14:65 [a]NU-Text reads *received Him with slaps.*

68But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.

69And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is *one* of them." 70But he denied it again.

And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are *one* of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows *it.*"[a]

71Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"

72A second time *the* rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

JESUS FACES PILATE

15 Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led *Him* away, and delivered *Him* to Pilate. 2Then Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

He answered and said to him, "*It is as* you say."

3And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. 4Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!"[a] 5But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.

TAKING THE PLACE OF BARABBAS

6Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested. 7And there was one named Barabbas, *who was* chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion. 8Then the multitude, crying aloud,[a] began to ask *him to do* just as he had always done for them. 9But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" 10For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.

11But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. 12Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do *with Him* whom you call the King of the Jews?"

13So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"

14Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

15So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged *Him,* to be crucified.

THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

16Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. 17And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His *head,* 18and began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 19Then they struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. 20And when they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

THE KING ON A CROSS

21Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross. 22And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. 23Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take *it.* 24And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them *to determine* what every man should take.

25Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. 26And the inscription of His accusation was written above:

THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. 28So the Scripture was fulfilled[a] which says, *"And He was numbered with the transgressors."*[b]

29And those who passed by blasphemed

14:70 [a]NU-Text omits *and your speech shows it.*
15:4 [a]NU-Text reads *of which they accuse You.*
15:8 [a]NU-Text reads *going up.* **15:28** [a]Isaiah 53:12 [b]NU-Text omits this verse.



PROFILE
MARY MAGDALENE

At least six, maybe seven, different Marys are mentioned in the New Testament. Each one made a difference in her own way. We know very little about Mary of Magdala. Mark gives us a summary of what Jesus did for her, and Luke mentions her discipleship. All four accounts of the good news mention her part in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

We don't know how Mary Magdalene met Jesus, but we know she was possessed by seven demons at the time He entered her life. Since Jesus has total power over demons, the ones that possessed Mary had to vacate the premises when Jesus showed up. In their place we can only imagine the gratitude that flowed from this liberated woman. Jesus transformed her life; he changed her.

Mary's gratitude showed itself in action. She joined a group of seldom-mentioned women who apparently traveled with Jesus and the apostles. Several of them were wealthy enough to take care of the day-to-day traveling expenses. Luke briefly refers to their role in Luke 8:1–3.

Mary's consistent faithfulness put her right in the path of honor. Because of her love for Jesus, she was determined to anoint His body after His death on the cross. But when she arrived at Jesus' tomb, He was not there. Mary became the first eyewitness to the resurrection. She was the first to see the risen Christ! Did she make a difference? Her persuasive testimony helped ignite the movement of people who came to be known as Christians.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Mary was trying to make a difference in one way: by honoring Jesus' buried body. God had something even greater in mind. She set out to do what was right. That put her right in the middle of God's plan and pathway. Obedience will always lead to being in the right place at the right time.

This is why it's important to live for God and to be present wherever God is working, like in the church. When you make yourself available to God, He will use you! You may not be the first to see truth as Mary was, but when you spend time in God's presence, you will discover powerful truths of His kingdom, and lives may be changed when you share what you have learned.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The clearest glimpses of Mary Magdalene can be found in Matthew 27:55—28:11; Mark 15:40—16:11; Luke 8:1–3; 23:55—24:12; and John 19:25—20:18.

Mary Magdalene learned the most awesome truth of Christianity—Jesus conquered death! She shared her knowledge of the reality of new life and changed the world around her. You can, too!

Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! *You* who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, [30]save Yourself, and come down from the cross!"

[31]Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. [32]Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe."[a]

Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.

15:32 [a]M-Text reads *believe Him.*

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

33Now when the sixth hour had come, there
was darkness over the whole land until the
ninth hour. 34And at the ninth hour Jesus
cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi,
Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is trans-
lated, *"My God, My God, why have You
forsaken Me?"*[a]

35Some of those who stood by, when
they heard *that,* said, "Look, He is calling
for Elijah!" 36Then someone ran and filled
a sponge full of sour wine, put *it* on a reed,
and offered *it* to Him to drink, saying, "Let
Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to
take Him down."

37And Jesus cried out with a loud voice,
and breathed His last.

38Then the veil of the temple was torn
in two from top to bottom. 39So when the
centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw
that He cried out like this and breathed His
last,[a] he said, "Truly this Man was the Son
of God!"

40There were also women looking on
from afar, among whom were Mary Mag-
dalene, Mary the mother of James the Less
and of Joses, and Salome, 41who also fol-
lowed Him and ministered to Him when
He was in Galilee, and many other women
who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

> ***Mark 15:44***
> Crucifixion was usually not a quick way to die. Unless the crucified person had been severely beaten before being crucified, he could actually survive several days on the Cross! One of the most common causes of death among those who were crucified was suffocation. Because of the outstretched position, when the person became too exhausted to raise himself up to breathe, he simply suffocated.

JESUS BURIED IN JOSEPH'S TOMB

42Now when evening had come, because
it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day
before the Sabbath, 43Joseph of Arimathea,
a prominent council member, who was
himself waiting for the kingdom of God,
coming and taking courage, went in to Pi-
late and asked for the body of Jesus. 44Pilate
marveled that He was already dead; and
summoning the centurion, he asked him
if He had been dead for some time. 45So
when he found out from the centurion,
he granted the body to Joseph. 46Then he
bought fine linen, took Him down, and
wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him
in a tomb which had been hewn out of the
rock, and rolled a stone against the door
of the tomb. 47And Mary Magdalene and
Mary *the mother* of Joses observed where
He was laid.

HE IS RISEN

16 Now when the Sabbath was
past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the
mother* of James, and Salome
bought spices, that they might come and
anoint Him. 2Very early in the morning, on
the first *day* of the week, they came to the
tomb when the sun had risen. 3And they
said among themselves, "Who will roll
away the stone from the door of the tomb
for us?" 4But when they looked up, they saw
that the stone had been rolled away—for
it was very large. 5And entering the tomb,
they saw a young man clothed in a long
white robe sitting on the right side; and
they were alarmed.

6But he said to them, "Do not be
alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who
was crucified. He is risen! He is not here.
See the place where they laid Him. 7But
go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He
is going before you into Galilee; there you
will see Him, as He said to you."

8So they went out quickly[a] and fled
from the tomb, for they trembled and were
amazed. And they said nothing to anyone,
for they were afraid.

MARY MAGDALENE SEES THE RISEN LORD

9Now when *He* rose early on the first *day* of
the week, He appeared first to Mary Mag-
dalene, out of whom He had cast seven
demons. 10She went and told those who
had been with Him, as they mourned and
wept. 11And when they heard that He was
alive and had been seen by her, they did not
believe.

15:34 [a]Psalm 22:1 **15:39** [a]NU-Text reads *that He thus breathed His last.* **16:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *quickly.*

JESUS APPEARS TO TWO DISCIPLES

12After that, He appeared in another form
to two of them as they walked and went
into the country. 13And they went and told
it to the rest, *but* they did not believe them
either.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

14Later He appeared to the eleven as they
sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbe-
lief and hardness of heart, because they did
not believe those who had seen Him after
He had risen. 15And He said to them, "Go
into all the world and preach the gospel
to every creature. 16He who believes and
is baptized will be saved; but he who does
not believe will be condemned. 17And these
signs will follow those who believe: In My
name they will cast out demons; they will
speak with new tongues; 18they[a] will take
up serpents; and if they drink anything
deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they
will lay hands on the sick, and they will
recover."

CHRIST ASCENDS TO GOD'S RIGHT HAND

19So then, after the Lord had spoken to
them, He was received up into heaven, and
sat down at the right hand of God. 20And
they went out and preached everywhere,
the Lord working with *them* and confirm-
ing the word through the accompanying
signs. Amen.[a]

16:18 [a]NU-Text reads *and in their hands they will.* **16:20** [a]Verses 9–20 are bracketed in NU-Text as not original. They are lacking in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, although nearly all other manuscripts of Mark contain them.

Luke

DATE OF WRITING: EARLY A.D. 60S
AUTHOR: LUKE
THEME: JESUS IS THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD
PURPOSE: WE ARE TO LIVE AS JESUS DID, SHOWING CONCERN FOR ALL.

OUTLINE

1:1–4 .....Why Luke Wrote This Book
1:5—2:52 .....The Births of John the Baptist and Jesus
3:1–20 .....The Message of John the Baptist
3:21—4:13.....The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus
4:14—9:50.....Jesus' Ministry in Galilee
9:51—19:27 .....Jesus Goes from Galilee to Jerusalem
19:28—23:56.....Jesus' Last Week: His Trial and Death
24:1–12.....Jesus Is Alive
24:13–53 .....Jesus Appears and Is Taken to Heaven

KEY VERSE:

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

THEN /// Luke was a doctor—very detailed and organized. It makes perfect sense that he wrote his version of the Gospel by reporting the facts in great detail. It was important to him that all who would read his account of Jesus' life would know exactly how things happened.

Luke's main point in writing was this: even though Jesus was God, He was also really and truly human. He was born as a baby like we all were. He grew up as a child like we all do. He was a teenager before He was an adult. He had a human body. He had human emotions. If He cut Himself, it hurt physically. If His friend let Him down, it hurt emotionally.

As a doctor, Luke had spent his life learning to understand the human body so he could help heal illness and injury. It was important to him, then, to tell us that Jesus was miraculously all God and all human. That means Jesus knows everything about how humans work. He knows how it is to face life as a baby, as a child, as a teenager, as an adult. And He knows how to fix the problems that we face.

NOW /// Growing up is one of the most difficult things we ever have to do. There is so much to learn and it can seem there are so many expectations coming at us from every direction. Even worse is the feeling we sometimes get that others just don't understand us. It can be very lonely and frustrating, especially when it seems there's no one who really gets it.

That's one of the great things about Luke's Gospel—he tells us just how well Jesus understands. Jesus was a real person with real parents. He was born as a baby and had to learn everything, just like all of us. And Jesus was a teenager and knows just how crazy those years can be.

Jesus understands everything we go through in life. He knows pain, sorrow, joy, loneliness, and betrayal. He had to face life with all the good and the bad just as we do. And the best part is that He also knows how to make it through life perfectly. All we have to do is talk with Him and He'll help us with anything life has to offer.

REALITY CHECK /// The Gospel of Luke mentions women in ministry more than any other Gospel. You might already know that, when Jesus was alive, His culture didn't value women very much. Women were treated like second-class citizens—if they were treated like citizens at all. Jesus didn't treat women like that, though. He worked side by side with women, as well as with men. There were women who supported His ministry all the way through His death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus came into the world to knock down barriers—including the barriers that say "girls aren't as good as guys." With the Lord, no one is second class—He loves us all with a perfect, unconditional love that will last forever.

DEDICATION TO THEOPHILUS

1 Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled[a] among us, 2just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, 3it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, 4that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

JOHN'S BIRTH ANNOUNCED TO ZACHARIAS

5There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth. 6And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

1:1 [a]Or *are most surely believed*

8So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, 9according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. 11Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12And when Zacharias saw *him,* he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, *'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,'*[a] and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

18And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."

19And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. 20But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

21And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. 22But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

23So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. 24Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, 25"Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on *me,* to take away my reproach among people."

CHRIST'S BIRTH ANNOUNCED TO MARY

26Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name *was* Mary. 28And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored *one,* the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!"[a]

29But when she saw *him,*[a] she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

34Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

JESUS
What role does Jesus have in the Trinity?
Luke 1:35

35And the angel answered and said to her, "*The* Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37For with God nothing will be impossible."

38Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

MARY VISITS ELIZABETH

39Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of

1:17 [a]Malachi 4:5, 6 **1:28** [a]NU-Text omits *blessed are you among women.* **1:29** [a]NU-Text omits *when she saw him.*

Judah, [40]and entered the house of Zacharias
and greeted Elizabeth. [41]And it happened,
when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary,
that the babe leaped in her womb; and
Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.
[42]Then she spoke out with a loud voice and
said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and
blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! [43]But why
is this *granted* to me, that the mother of my
Lord should come to me? [44]For indeed, as
soon as the voice of your greeting sounded
in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for
joy. [45]Blessed *is* she who believed, for there
will be a fulfillment of those things which
were told her from the Lord."

THE SONG OF MARY

[46]And Mary said:

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
[47]And my spirit has rejoiced in God my
Savior.
[48]For He has regarded the lowly state of
His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations
will call me blessed.
[49]For He who is mighty has done great
things for me,
And holy *is* His name.
[50]And His mercy *is* on those who fear
Him
From generation to generation.
[51]He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered *the* proud in the
imagination of their hearts.
[52]He has put down the mighty from *their*
thrones,
And exalted *the* lowly.
[53]He has filled *the* hungry with good
things,
And *the* rich He has sent away empty.
[54]He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of *His* mercy,
[55]As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever."

[56]And Mary remained with her about
three months, and returned to her house.

BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

[57]Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to
be delivered, and she brought forth a son.
[58]When her neighbors and relatives heard
how the Lord had shown great mercy to
her, they rejoiced with her.

CIRCUMCISION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

[59]So it was, on the eighth day, that they
came to circumcise the child; and they
would have called him by the name of his
father, Zacharias. [60]His mother answered
and said, "No; he shall be called John."

[61]But they said to her, "There is no one
among your relatives who is called by this
name." [62]So they made signs to his father—
what he would have him called.

[63]And he asked for a writing tablet, and
wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they
all marveled. [64]Immediately his mouth
was opened and his tongue *loosed,* and he
spoke, praising God. [65]Then fear came on
all who dwelt around them; and all these
sayings were discussed throughout all the
hill country of Judea. [66]And all those who
heard *them* kept *them* in their hearts, say-
ing, "What kind of child will this be?" And
the hand of the Lord was with him.

ZACHARIAS' PROPHECY

[67]Now his father Zacharias was filled with
the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

[68]"Blessed *is* the Lord God of Israel,
For He has visited and redeemed His
people,
[69]And has raised up a horn of salvation
for us
In the house of His servant David,
[70]As He spoke by the mouth of His holy
prophets,
Who *have been* since the world
began,
[71]That we should be saved from our
enemies
And from the hand of all who hate us,
[72]To perform the mercy *promised* to our
fathers
And to remember His holy covenant,
[73]The oath which He swore to our
father Abraham:
[74]To grant us that we,
Being delivered from the hand of our
enemies,
Might serve Him without fear,
[75]In holiness and righteousness before
Him all the days of our life.

[76]"And you, child, will be called the
prophet of the Highest;

For you will go before the face of the
Lord to prepare His ways,
77To give knowledge of salvation to His
people
By the remission of their sins,
78Through the tender mercy of our God,
With which the Dayspring from on
high has visited[a] us;
79To give light to those who sit in
darkness and the shadow of
death,
To guide our feet into the way of
peace."

80So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

Luke 2:1

Ever heard of Julius Caesar? Augustus was not only his grand-nephew; he was also Caesar's chosen heir. When Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C., Augustus shared the throne of the Roman Empire with another famous character from history, Mark Antony, and a man named Lepidus. By 27 B.C., Augustus was the sole ruler of Rome.

CHRIST BORN OF MARY

2 And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

4Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife,[a] who was with child. 6So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

GLORY IN THE HIGHEST

8Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9And behold,[a] an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

14"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward
men!"[a]

15So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." 16And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. 17Now when they had seen *Him,* they made widely[a] known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. 20Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS

21And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child,[a] His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

JESUS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE

22Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to

1:78 [a]NU-Text reads *shall visit.* **2:5** [a]NU-Text omits *wife.* **2:9** [a]NU-Text omits *behold.* **2:14** [a]NU-Text reads *toward men of goodwill.* **2:17** [a]NU-Text omits *widely.* **2:21** [a]NU-Text reads *for His circumcision.*



PROFILE
JESUS

People talk a lot about Jesus the baby and Jesus the man. They don't say much about Jesus the teenager. What did the Son of God do when He was your age? His birth, death, and resurrection sure made a big difference—but did Jesus make a difference when He was young?

Yes, He did! By the time He was twelve, Jesus knew God's Word. He understood that obeying God's Word was the key to life. When He was at church, He listened to adults and asked good questions. He amazed the teachers. He practiced obeying God by obeying His parents. It wasn't easy, but he learned that life wasn't just about what He wanted to do. He knew it was important to cooperate with His parents. His decision paid off. Think about this summary of Jesus' teenage years: "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52).

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Being different is not the easy way, but it is the only way you will ever truly discover who you are. Dare to be different. Really allow yourself to get interested in school and shock your teachers with all you can learn. It takes work to learn—but the benefits are amazing. Asking questions and looking for the truth will make a big difference in at least one life—your own! Surprise your parents by obeying them without question. They won't know what hit them!

The description of Jesus' teenage years really can be the description of your life. Give it a try. Be the person God created you to be; you are one of a kind, not some type of group clone. It won't be long before you discover that Jesus Himself will help you as you seek to live like He lived.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Jesus and His life as a young man in Luke 2:41–52.

Jesus lived a life of obedience and respect, and He literally changed the world. He made a difference by giving His life over to God's plan. You can, too!

present *Him* to the Lord [23](as it is written in the law of the Lord, *"Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the* LORD*"*),[a] [24]and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, *"A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."*[a]

SIMEON SEES GOD'S SALVATION

[25]And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. [26]And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. [27]So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, [28]he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

[29]"Lord, now You are letting Your servant
depart in peace,
According to Your word;
[30]For my eyes have seen Your salvation
[31]Which You have prepared before the
face of all peoples,

2:23 [a]Exodus 13:2, 12, 15 **2:24** [a]Leviticus 12:8

32 A light to *bring* revelation to the
Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel."

33 And Joseph and His mother[a] marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against 35 (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

ANNA BEARS WITNESS TO THE REDEEMER

36 Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; 37 and this woman *was* a widow of about eighty-four years,[a] who did not depart from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day. 38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord,[a] and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

THE FAMILY RETURNS TO NAZARETH

39 So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their *own* city, Nazareth. 40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit,[a] filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

THE BOY JESUS AMAZES THE SCHOLARS

41 His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. 43 When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother[a] did not know *it;* 44 but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among *their* relatives and acquaintances. 45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. 46 Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. 48 So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" 50 But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

JESUS ADVANCES IN WISDOM AND FAVOR

51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

3 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests,[a] the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, 4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

"The voice of one crying in the
wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the LORD*;*
Make His paths straight.
5 *Every valley shall be filled*
And every mountain and hill brought
low;

2:33 [a]NU-Text reads *And His father and mother.* **2:37** [a]NU-Text reads *a widow until she was eighty-four.* **2:38** [a]NU-Text reads *to God.* **2:40** [a]NU-Text omits *in spirit.* **2:43** [a]NU-Text reads *And His parents.* **3:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.*

LIFE APP

The Trinity / Luke 3:21, 22

When we refer to the Holy Trinity, we are talking about one God who exists in three persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. With our limited human minds this "three-in-one" reality can be a difficult concept to grasp. One very clear picture showing the three distinct persons of the one true God is found at the baptism of Jesus.

Jesus (the Son), was being baptized by John the Baptist. After He came up out of the water, "the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.'" At this moment, we see all three persons of God interacting in the same place at the same time. The Son has been baptized, the Holy Spirit descends from heaven as a dove, and God the Father speaks clearly from heaven (Luke 3:21, 22; Matt. 3:16, 17; Mark 1:9–11).

This fellowship between the three persons of God is beautiful. The Son is being obedient to His mission of salvation. The Spirit shows up to magnify and encourage the Son on His mission. And the Father expresses His delight in the Son. Even now, when new Christians are baptized, each member of the Trinity is involved, as Jesus calls us to "go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

The Book of 1 John tells us much about how each member of the Trinity works with and through the others. For instance, God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, His Son (1 John 5:11); Jesus (the Son) is an Advocate for us with the Father (1 John 2:1); the Spirit bears witness to the truth and to Jesus Christ (1 John 5:6). Finally, 1 John 5:7 leaves no doubt as to the Trinity: "For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word [Jesus, the Son], and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one."

The crooked places shall be made straight
And the rough ways smooth;
6*And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"*[a]

JOHN PREACHES TO THE PEOPLE

7Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 9And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

10So the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?"

11He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise."

12Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"

13And he said to them, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you."

14Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?"

So he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."

15Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ *or* not, 16John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

18And with many other exhortations he preached to the people. 19But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,[a] and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.

JOHN BAPTIZES JESUS

21When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. 22And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST

23Now Jesus Himself began *His ministry at* about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) *the* son of Joseph, *the son* of Heli, 24*the son* of Matthat,[a] *the son* of Levi, *the son* of Melchi, *the son* of Janna, *the son* of Joseph, 25*the son* of Mattathiah, *the son* of Amos, *the son* of Nahum, *the son* of Esli, *the son* of Naggai, 26*the son* of Maath, *the son* of Mattathiah, *the son* of Semei, *the son* of Joseph, *the son* of Judah, 27*the son* of Joannas, *the son* of Rhesa, *the son* of Zerubbabel, *the son* of Shealtiel, *the son* of Neri, 28*the son* of Melchi, *the son* of Addi, *the son* of Cosam, *the son* of Elmodam, *the son* of Er, 29*the son* of Jose, *the son* of Eliezer, *the son* of Jorim, *the son* of Matthat, *the son* of Levi, 30*the son* of Simeon, *the son* of Judah, *the son* of Joseph, *the son* of Jonan, *the son* of Eliakim, 31*the son* of Melea, *the son* of Menan, *the son* of Mattathah, *the son* of Nathan, *the son* of David, 32*the son* of Jesse, *the son* of Obed, *the son* of Boaz, *the son* of Salmon, *the son* of Nahshon, 33*the son* of Amminadab, *the son* of Ram, *the son* of Hezron, *the son* of Perez, *the son* of Judah, 34*the son* of Jacob, *the son* of Isaac, *the son* of Abraham, *the son* of Terah, *the son* of Nahor, 35*the son* of Serug, *the son* of Reu, *the son* of Peleg, *the son* of Eber, *the son* of Shelah, 36*the son* of Cainan, *the son* of Arphaxad, *the son* of Shem, *the son* of Noah, *the son* of Lamech, 37*the son* of Methuselah, *the son* of Enoch, *the son* of Jared, *the son* of Mahalalel, *the son* of Cainan, 38*the son* of

3:6 [a]Isaiah 40:3–5 **3:19** [a]NU-Text reads *his brother's wife.* **3:24** [a]This and several other names in the genealogy are spelled somewhat differently in the NU-Text. Since the New King James Version uses the Old Testament spelling for persons mentioned in the New Testament, these variations, which come from the Greek, have not been footnoted.

MAKING IT REAL // LUKE 4:8

Resist the Enemy Jesus spent forty days in the desert, fasting and being tempted by Satan. Satan repeatedly tempted Him to take the easy way out—turn stones into bread instead of fasting; serve him (Satan) in return for glory and power; or jump off the temple, let the angels miraculously save Him, and prove to everyone He was worthy of worship. Jesus knew that the only way to accomplish His purpose of saving the souls of men and women was to suffer and go to the cross. It was the harder way, but it was the only right way. Jesus responded to Satan by quoting the truth of God's Word—a force Satan cannot oppose.

You are going to face incredible temptation in your life. You must know that Jesus has been there. He knows the battles you face. You've got the same spiritual resources that Jesus had. You have prayer and the love of your heavenly Father. The power of the Holy Spirit was with Jesus (Luke 4:1), and the Holy Spirit lives in you. Jesus quoted the Word of God to Satan, and you have the complete Word in your hands. Plus, you now have Jesus in heaven, interceding on your behalf (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25).

Satan wants to bring out the worst in us, but God can put the best in us. The next time you are up against the slick devices of Satan, quote a scripture to him and get away from the temptation. Do not play around with Satan. He knows your weakest places, and that's where he'll try to get the best of you. Stay on your toes. Keep alert. Serve God and flee the devil! (See also: Deut. 10:20; James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8, 9.)

Words to Live By

It is written: Jesus drew strength from the Word of God. Of all the things He could have said, or all the things He could have quoted, He went directly to the Scriptures. The Scripture was written once, but is still alive and active, even today. When we encounter the enemy or any other challenges, we too can draw the strength and wisdom we need directly from the Word of God.

Enosh, *the son* of Seth, *the son* of Adam, *the son* of God.

SATAN TEMPTS JESUS

4 Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into[a] the wilderness, 2being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

3And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

4But Jesus answered him, saying,[a] "It is written, *'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'*"[b]

5Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him[a] all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

8And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan![a] For[b] it is written, *'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'*"[c]

9Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. 10For it is written:

4:1 [a]NU-Text reads *in*. **4:4** [a]Deuteronomy 8:3 [b]NU-Text omits *but by every word of God*. **4:5** [a]NU-Text reads *And taking Him up, he showed Him*. **4:8** [a]NU-Text omits *Get behind Me, Satan*. [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *For*. [c]Deuteronomy 6:13

'He shall give His angels charge over
you,
To keep you,'

11 and,

'In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a
stone.'"[a]

12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, *'You shall not tempt the* LORD *your God.'"*[a]

13 Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.

JESUS BEGINS HIS GALILEAN MINISTRY

14 Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. 15 And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

Luke 4:17

In 1947, an ancient copy of the Book of Isaiah was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Experts estimate that the scroll came from the period of 150–50 B.C. It's ten inches high and twenty-four feet long when it's unrolled. Made of thin leather strips sewn together, the scroll is probably very similar to the one Jesus read from.

JESUS REJECTED AT NAZARETH

16 So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. 17 And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

18 *"The Spirit of the* LORD *is upon Me,*
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the
brokenhearted,[a]
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are
oppressed;
19 *To proclaim the acceptable year of the*
LORD."[a]

20 Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." 22 So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

23 He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum,[a] do also here in Your country.'" 24 Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; 26 but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath,[a] *in the region* of Sidon, to a woman *who was* a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

28 So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. 30 Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

JESUS CASTS OUT AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

31 Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. 32 And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority. 33 Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice,

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4:11 [a]Psalm 91:11, 12 **4:12** [a]Deuteronomy 6:16
4:18 [a]NU-Text omits *to heal the brokenhearted.*
4:19 [a]Isaiah 61:1, 2 **4:23** [a]Here and elsewhere the NU-Text spelling is *Capharnaum.*
4:26 [a]Greek *Sarepta*

34saying, "Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

35But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in *their* midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. 36Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this *is!* For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." 37And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW HEALED

38Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever, and they made request of Him concerning her. 39So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.

MANY HEALED AFTER SABBATH SUNSET

40When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. 41And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ,[a] the Son of God!"

And He, rebuking *them,* did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.

JESUS PREACHES IN GALILEE

42Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; 43but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." 44And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.[a]

FOUR FISHERMEN CALLED AS DISCIPLES

5 So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, 2and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing *their* nets. 3Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.

4When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

5But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." 6And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8When Simon Peter saw *it,* he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

9For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." 11So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

JESUS CLEANSES A LEPER

12And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on *his* face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

13Then He put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him. 14And He charged him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded."

15However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. 16So He Himself *often* withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

4:41 [a]NU-Text omits *the Christ.* **4:44** [a]NU-Text reads *Judea.*

Luke 5:17

The Pharisees were obsessive about following the Law of Moses. They lived by a strict code of conduct, going out of their way to make sure they honored the Sabbath and maintained their purity. They had elaborate rules concerning what they could and couldn't do—rules that ultimately didn't have much to do with the Spirit of God's Word. The Pharisees also had a tendency to look down on people who seemed to be less strict in following the Law of Moses.

JESUS FORGIVES AND HEALS A PARALYTIC

17 Now it happened on a certain day, as He
was teaching, that there were Pharisees
and teachers of the law sitting by, who had
come out of every town of Galilee, Judea,
and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord
was *present* to heal them.[a] 18 Then behold,
men brought on a bed a man who was
paralyzed, whom they sought to bring
in and lay before Him. 19 And when they
could not find how they might bring him
in, because of the crowd, they went up on
the housetop and let him down with *his*
bed through the tiling into the midst be-
fore Jesus.

20 When He saw their faith, He said to
him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees be-
gan to reason, saying, "Who is this who
speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins
but God alone?"

22 But when Jesus perceived their
thoughts, He answered and said to them,
"Why are you reasoning in your hearts?
23 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are for-
given you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'?
24 But that you may know that the Son
of Man has power on earth to forgive
sins"—He said to the man who was para-
lyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed,
and go to your house."

25 Immediately he rose up before them,
took up what he had been lying on, and
departed to his own house, glorifying
God. 26 And they were all amazed, and
they glorified God and were filled with
fear, saying, "We have seen strange things
today!"

MATTHEW THE TAX COLLECTOR

27 After these things He went out and saw
a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the
tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me."
28 So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

29 Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his
own house. And there were a great num-
ber of tax collectors and others who sat
down with them. 30 And their scribes and
the Pharisees[a] complained against His dis-
ciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink
with tax collectors and sinners?"

31 Jesus answered and said to them,
"Those who are well have no need of a phy-
sician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not
come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to
repentance."

JESUS IS QUESTIONED ABOUT FASTING

33 Then they said to Him, "Why do[a] the dis-
ciples of John fast often and make prayers,
and likewise those of the Pharisees, but
Yours eat and drink?"

34 And He said to them, "Can you make
the friends of the bridegroom fast while the
bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days
will come when the bridegroom will be
taken away from them; then they will fast
in those days."

36 Then He spoke a parable to them: "No
one puts a piece from a new garment on an
old one;[a] otherwise the new makes a tear,
and also the piece that was *taken* out of
the new does not match the old. 37 And no
one puts new wine into old wineskins; or
else the new wine will burst the wineskins
and be spilled, and the wineskins will be
ruined. 38 But new wine must be put into
new wineskins, and both are preserved.[a]
39 And no one, having drunk old *wine,* im-
mediately[a] desires new; for he says, 'The
old is better.'"[b]

5:17 [a]NU-Text reads *present with Him to heal.* **5:30** [a]NU-Text reads *But the Pharisees and their scribes.* **5:33** [a]NU-Text omits *Why do,* making the verse a statement. **5:36** [a]NU-Text reads *No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old one.* **5:38** [a]NU-Text omits *and both are preserved.* **5:39** [a]NU-Text omits *immediately.* [b]NU-Text reads *good.*

JESUS IS LORD OF THE SABBATH

6 Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first[a] that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate *them,* rubbing *them* in *their* hands. 2And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"

3But Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?" 5And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

HEALING ON THE SABBATH

6Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. 7So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him. 8But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, "Arise and stand here." And he arose and stood. 9Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?"[a] 10And when He had looked around at them all, He said to the man,[a] "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.[b] 11But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

12Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. 13And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself;* and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles: 14Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; 15Matthew and Thomas; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; 16Judas *the son* of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.

JESUS HEALS A GREAT MULTITUDE

17And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, 18as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. 19And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed *them* all.

THE BEATITUDES

20Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said:

"Blessed *are you* poor,
For yours is the kingdom of God.
21Blessed *are you* who hunger now,
For you shall be filled.
Blessed *are you* who weep now,
For you shall laugh.
22Blessed are you when men hate you,
And when they exclude you,
And revile *you,* and cast out your name as evil,
For the Son of Man's sake.
23Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!
For indeed your reward *is* great in heaven,
For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

JESUS PRONOUNCES WOES

24"But woe to you who are rich,
For you have received your consolation.
25Woe to you who are full,
For you shall hunger.
Woe to you who laugh now,
For you shall mourn and weep.
26Woe to you[a] when all[b] men speak well of you,
For so did their fathers to the false prophets.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

27"But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

6:1 [a]NU-Text reads *on a Sabbath.* **6:9** [a]M-Text reads *to kill.* **6:10** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *to him.* [b]NU-Text omits *as whole as the other.* **6:26** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to you.* [b]M-Text omits *all.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // LUKE 6:28, 35

Bless Them Luke says that God will bless those who have been mistreated because of Him. Proverbs 25:18–22 gives us some wisdom about people who tell lies about us or treat us badly. The wise advice is to do exactly the opposite of what those people do. It's not the easy advice or even the popular advice. But it is the godly advice. Even when you're disappointed and angry, you can still be Christlike. Matthew 5:11 says, "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely" because you love Jesus. By treating your enemy with compassion, "you will heap coals of fire on his head" (Prov. 25:22). Wow—that could be pretty tough guidance to follow, being compassionate to someone who considers you their enemy. When people tell lies or spread rumors about you, your reputation gets shattered, your pride gets wounded, and your heart gets broken. And God wants you to love those people anyway—even give food to them if they are hungry and pray for them, too. By doing so you prove the strength of your character and you overcome evil with good. God promises to reward you for that. (See also: Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:21.)

Words to Live By

Kind: The Greek word *chrestos* (khrase-tos') is translated as "kind" in Luke 6:35, and can also mean "useful," "good," or "gracious." This verse tells us that God is *chrestos* even to those who are unthankful and evil. As we become more like Christ, we will find that our kindness to others will not depend on how they treat us, because kindness will become a part of who we are and how we live.

[28]bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. [29]To him who strikes you on the *one* cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold *your* tunic either. [30]Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask *them* back. [31]And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

CARING
How should we treat our enemies?
Luke 6:27–31

[32]"But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. [33]And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. [34]And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. [35]But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. [36]Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

DO NOT JUDGE

[37]"Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. [38]Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

[39]And He spoke a parable to them: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? [40]A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher. [41]And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your

own eye? 42Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that *is* in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that *is* in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.

A TREE IS KNOWN BY ITS FRUIT

43"For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. 44For every tree is known by its own fruit. For *men* do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. 45A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart[a] brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

BUILD ON THE ROCK

46"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? 47Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.[a] 49But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell.[a] And the ruin of that house was great."

JESUS HEALS A CENTURION'S SERVANT

7 Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. 2And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. 3So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. 4And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, 5"for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue."

6Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. 7Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it*."

9When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" 10And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.[a]

JESUS RAISES THE SON OF THE WIDOW OF NAIN

11Now it happened, the day after, *that* He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. 12And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. 13When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." 14Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried *him* stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." 15So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

16Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." 17And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

JOHN THE BAPTIST SENDS MESSENGERS TO JESUS

18Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. 19And John, calling two of his disciples to *him,* sent *them* to Jesus,[a] saying, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

6:45 [a]NU-Text omits *treasure of his heart.*
6:48 [a]NU-Text reads *for it was well built.*
6:49 [a]NU-Text reads *collapsed.* **7:10** [a]NU-Text omits *who had been sick.* **7:19** [a]NU-Text reads *the Lord.*

20When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'" 21And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

22Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that *the* blind see, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised, *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. 23And blessed is *he* who is not offended because of Me."

24When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 25But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. 26But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. 27This is *he* of whom it is written:

> *'Behold, I send My messenger before*
> *Your face,*
> *Who will prepare Your way before*
> *You.'*[a]

28For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist;[a] but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

29And when all the people heard *Him,* even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. 30But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

31And the Lord said,[a] "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? 32They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying:

> 'We played the flute for you,
> And you did not dance;
> We mourned to you,
> And you did not weep.'

33For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' 34The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' 35But wisdom is justified by all her children."

A SINFUL WOMAN FORGIVEN

36Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. 37And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, 38and stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil. 39Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw *this,* he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman *this is* who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

40And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you."

So he said, "Teacher, say it."

41"There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

43Simon answered and said, "I suppose the *one* whom he forgave more."

And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." 44Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. 45You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. 46You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47Therefore I say to you, her sins, which *are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little."

48Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

7:27 [a]Malachi 3:1 **7:28** [a]NU-Text reads *there is none greater than John.* **7:31** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *And the Lord said.*

49And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

50Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

MANY WOMEN MINISTER TO JESUS

8 Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve *were* with Him, 2and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, 3and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him[a] from their substance.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

4And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 5"A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. 7And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. 8But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES

9Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?"

10And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is given* in parables, that

> *'Seeing they may not see,*
> *And hearing they may not*
> *understand.'*[a]

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED

11"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 13But the ones on the rock *are those* who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. 14Now the ones *that* fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15But the ones *that* fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep *it* and bear fruit with patience.

THE PARABLE OF THE REVEALED LIGHT

16"No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts *it* under a bed, but sets *it* on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. 17For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor *anything* hidden that will not be known and come to light. 18Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him *more* will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

JESUS' MOTHER AND BROTHERS COME TO HIM

19Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. 20And it was told Him *by some,* who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You."

21But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

WIND AND WAVE OBEY JESUS

22Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out. 23But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling *with water,* and were in jeopardy. 24And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"

8:3 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *them.*
8:10 [a]Isaiah 6:9

Luke 8:23

The physical surroundings of the Sea of Galilee are probably responsible for its dangerous reputation. The lake is surrounded on three sides by cliffs and mountains. The winds rushing down from those mountains can kick up a storm in the wink of an eye.

Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. 25But He said to them, "Where is your faith?"

And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"

A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN HEALED

26Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes,[a] which is opposite Galilee. 27And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes,[a] nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. 28When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" 29For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.

30Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?"

And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. 31And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

32Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. 33Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

34When those who fed *them* saw what had happened, they fled and told *it* in the city and in the country. 35Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. 36They also who had seen *it* told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. 37Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes[a] asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.

38Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, 39"Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

A GIRL RESTORED TO LIFE AND A WOMAN HEALED

40So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him. 41And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, 42for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. 43Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, 44came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped.

45And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?"

When all denied it, Peter and those with him[a] said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"[b]

46But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." 47Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the

8:26 [a]NU-Text reads *Gerasenes.* **8:27** [a]NU-Text reads *who had demons and for a long time wore no clothes.* **8:37** [a]NU-Text reads *Gerasenes.* **8:45** [a]NU-Text omits *and those with him.* [b]NU-Text omits *and You say, 'Who touched Me?'*

reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.

48And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer;[a] your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

49While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house,* saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher."[a]

50But when Jesus heard *it,* He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." 51When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in[a] except Peter, James, and John,[b] and the father and mother of the girl. 52Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." 53And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead.

54But He put them all outside,[a] took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise." 55Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given *something* to eat. 56And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

SENDING OUT THE TWELVE

9 Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. 2He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. 3And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.

4"Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. 5And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them."

6So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

HEROD SEEKS TO SEE JESUS

7Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, 8and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again. 9Herod said, "John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?" So he sought to see Him.

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

10And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. 11But when the multitudes knew *it,* they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing. 12When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here."

13But He said to them, "You give them something to eat."

And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people." 14For there were about five thousand men.

Then He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of fifty." 15And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave *them* to the disciples to set before the multitude. 17So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them.

PETER CONFESSES JESUS AS THE CHRIST

18And it happened, as He was alone praying, *that* His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"

19So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some *say* Elijah; and others *say* that one of the old prophets has risen again."

20He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."

8:48 [a]NU-Text omits *be of good cheer.* **8:49** [a]NU-Text adds *anymore.* **8:51** [a]NU-Text adds *with Him.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *Peter, John, and James.* **8:54** [a]NU-Text omits *put them all outside.*

MAKING IT REAL // LUKE 9:32

God's Glory Can you imagine waking up and seeing Jesus in His glory? Wow! That would be something—to see the all-powerful and majestic One right there beside you when you wake up! The fact is, we do serve a glorious God and, though we may not be able to see Him, we have the opportunity to wake up every morning and spend time with Him. That's why it's so important to reach over, grab the Word of God, and meditate on it every morning. It gets our thinking headed in the right direction. If we aren't reminded of the glory and power of God every morning, it can be so easy to get caught up in our everyday affairs to the point that we forget that the all powerful One is right beside us!

A good way to remind yourself of just how wonderful it is to have a relationship with God is to simply praise the Lord for who He is. He is so awesome—better than anyone or anything you can imagine. Even the heavens shout about His glory. The earth is filled with His glory. In fact, His Word tells us that we are crowned with His glory (Ps. 8:5; Heb. 2:7).

Take time out right now just to praise God. He's the King of glory. He is the Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the end of everything. He's the bright and morning star. He's our safe place and our strong place. He's a tower in which we can hide from our enemy. In Him we are more than winners. He's the glorious God who is more than enough. Take time to think about the Lord's glory every day. He is the One who is glorious! (See also: Ps. 19:1; 72:19; 92:1, 2.)

Words to Live By

Glory: The word translated as "glory" in Luke 9:32 is the Greek word *doxa* (dox'-ah), which also carries the idea of majesty and brightness. Every day they walked with Him, the disciples saw Jesus in his fully human body. They saw Him do miracles that only God could do, but He looked exactly like them. When they saw Him with His true nature revealed—clothed in His true, godly, heavenly glory, they were speechless! The majesty and brightness must have been completely overwhelming.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

21 And He strictly warned and commanded
them to tell this to no one, 22 saying, "The
Son of Man must suffer many things, and
be rejected by the elders and chief priests
and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the
third day."

TAKE UP THE CROSS AND FOLLOW HIM

23 Then He said to *them* all, "If anyone
desires to come after Me, let him deny him-
self, and take up his cross daily,[a] and follow
Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life
will lose it, but whoever loses his life for
My sake will save it. 25 For what profit is it
to a man if he gains the whole world, and
is himself destroyed or lost? 26 For whoever
is ashamed of Me and My words, of him
the Son of Man will be ashamed when He
comes in His *own* glory, and *in His* Father's,
and of the holy angels. 27 But I tell you truly,
there are some standing here who shall
not taste death till they see the kingdom
of God."

JESUS TRANSFIGURED ON THE MOUNT

28 Now it came to pass, about eight days af-
ter these sayings, that He took Peter, John,
and James and went up on the mountain
to pray. 29 As He prayed, the appearance of
His face was altered, and His robe *became*
white *and* glistening. 30 And behold, two
men talked with Him, who were Moses
and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and

9:23 [a] M-Text omits *daily.*

spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. 33Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, *that* Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said.

34While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. 35And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son.[a] Hear Him!" 36When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

A BOY IS HEALED

37Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. 38Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. 39And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams *at the mouth;* and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. 40So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."

41Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 42And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed *him.* Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father.

JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS HIS DEATH

43And they were all amazed at the majesty of God.

But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, 44"Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men." 45But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

46Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. 47And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, 48and said to them, "Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great."

JESUS FORBIDS SECTARIANISM

49Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us."

50But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid *him,* for he who is not against us[a] is on our side."[b]

Luke 9:52

To get from Judea to Galilee in New Testament times, you had to pass through Samaria or take the very long way around the place. The people of Samaria were not terribly popular with "pure-blooded" Jews. The reason? Samaritans were the descendants of mixed marriages between Jews and Gentiles. The Jews disliked the Samaritans not only for their mixed bloodlines, but also for their worship of pagan gods.

A SAMARITAN VILLAGE REJECTS THE SAVIOR

51Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, 52and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53But they did not receive Him, because His face was *set* for the journey to Jerusalem. 54And when His disciples James and John saw

9:35 [a]NU-Text reads *This is My Son, the Chosen One.* **9:50** [a]NU-Text reads *you.* [b]NU-Text reads *your.*

this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"[a]

55But He turned and rebuked them,[a] and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. 56For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save *them.*"[a] And they went to another village.

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

57Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, *that* someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go."

58And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head."

59Then He said to another, "Follow Me."

But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

60Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

61And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house."

62But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

THE SEVENTY SENT OUT

10 After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also,[a] and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. 2Then He said to them, "The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. 4Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. 5But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. 7And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. 8Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. 9And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11'The very dust of your city which clings to us[a] we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' 12But[a] I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city.

WOE TO THE IMPENITENT CITIES

13"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. 15And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades.[a] 16He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

DEMONS
Who do demons submit to?
Luke 10:17

THE SEVENTY RETURN WITH JOY

17Then the seventy[a] returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

18And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather[a] rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

JESUS REJOICES IN THE SPIRIT

21In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of

9:54 [a]NU-Text omits *just as Elijah did.* **9:55** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **9:56** [a]NU-Text omits the first sentence of this verse. **10:1** [a]NU-Text reads *seventy-two others.* **10:11** [a]NU-Text reads *our feet.* **10:12** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *But.* **10:15** [a]NU-Text reads *will you be exalted to heaven? You will be thrust down to Hades!* **10:17** [a]NU-Text reads *seventy-two.* **10:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *rather.*

LIFE APP

Community / Luke 10:25–37

A community is most often understood to be a group of people who are connected by common interests, government, or location. That type of community could be the student body of a school or the neighborhood in which you live. But true community is more than that simple understanding. True community isn't determined by location or even by shared circumstance. True community focuses on the last five letters of the word—"unity." To be in "community" is to live in unity with others; it means to realize we are all in this world together and life will be better for everyone if we work together.

In Luke 10:25–37, we read a story Jesus told when He was asked, "Who is my neighbor?" In the story a Jewish man had been beaten and left for dead on the side of the road. Many Jewish people passed by the wounded man and failed to give him any help. Finally, a Samaritan passed by and went out of his way to give the injured man the help he needed.

In Jesus' day, the Jews and the Samaritans hated each other. They were much like certain countries today who are sworn enemies. But the Samaritan in Jesus' story didn't see an enemy lying on the side of the road in pain; he saw a man in trouble. He was able to put any differences aside and just see a fellow human being in need. The Samaritan understood the true meaning of community—treating others as you would want them to treat you.

The Samaritan's thinking should seem very familiar to us. Jesus said it this way: "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matt. 7:12). In these few words, Jesus told us exactly how we should always treat others. We should always follow the example of the Good Samaritan and consider the needs of others before our own. Then we can live in true unity and experience the better life true community can bring.

heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 22All[a] things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him.*"

23Then He turned to *His* disciples and said privately, "Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things you see; 24for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen *it,* and to hear what you hear, and have not heard *it.*"

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

25And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading *of it?*"

27So he answered and said, " *'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,'*[a] and *'your neighbor as yourself.'*"[b]

28And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

29But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him,* and departed, leaving *him* half dead. 31Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35On the next day, when he departed,[a] he took out two denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"

37And he said, "He who showed mercy on him."

Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

MARY AND MARTHA WORSHIP AND SERVE

38Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus'[a] feet and heard His word. 40But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

41And Jesus[a] answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

THE MODEL PRAYER

11 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

2So He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Our Father in heaven,[a]
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.[b]
Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.
3Give us day by day our daily bread.
4And forgive us our sins,
For we also forgive everyone who is
indebted to us.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one."[a]

10:22 [a]M-Text reads *And turning to the disciples He said, "All . . .* **10:27** [a]Deuteronomy 6:5 [b]Leviticus 19:18 **10:35** [a]NU-Text omits *when he departed.* **10:39** [a]NU-Text reads *the Lord's.* **10:41** [a]NU-Text reads *the Lord.* **11:2** [a]NU-Text omits *Our* and *in heaven.* [b]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **11:4** [a]NU-Text omits *But deliver us from the evil one.*

A FRIEND COMES AT MIDNIGHT

5And He said to them, "Which of you shall
have a friend, and go to him at midnight
and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three
loaves; 6for a friend of mine has come to
me on his journey, and I have nothing to
set before him'; 7and he will answer from
within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the
door is now shut, and my children are with
me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? 8I
say to you, though he will not rise and give
to him because he is his friend, yet because
of his persistence he will rise and give him
as many as he needs.

KEEP ASKING, SEEKING, KNOCKING

9"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to
you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it
will be opened to you. 10For everyone who
asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and
to him who knocks it will be opened. 11If a
son asks for bread[a] from any father among
you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks*
for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead
of a fish? 12Or if he asks for an egg, will he
offer him a scorpion? 13If you then, being
evil, know how to give good gifts to your
children, how much more will *your* heav-
enly Father give the Holy Spirit to those
who ask Him!"

A HOUSE DIVIDED CANNOT STAND

14And He was casting out a demon, and it
was mute. So it was, when the demon had
gone out, that the mute spoke; and the
multitudes marveled. 15But some of them
said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub,[a]
the ruler of the demons."

16Others, testing *Him,* sought from Him
a sign from heaven. 17But He, knowing their
thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom
divided against itself is brought to desola-
tion, and a house *divided* against a house
falls. 18If Satan also is divided against him-
self, how will his kingdom stand? Because
you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub.
19And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by
whom do your sons cast *them* out? There-
fore they will be your judges. 20But if I cast
out demons with the finger of God, surely
the kingdom of God has come upon you.
21When a strong man, fully armed, guards
his own palace, his goods are in peace.
22But when a stronger than he comes upon
him and overcomes him, he takes from
him all his armor in which he trusted, and
divides his spoils. 23He who is not with Me
is against Me, and he who does not gather
with Me scatters.

AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT RETURNS

24"When an unclean spirit goes out of a
man, he goes through dry places, seeking
rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will re-
turn to my house from which I came.' 25And
when he comes, he finds *it* swept and put
in order. 26Then he goes and takes with *him*
seven other spirits more wicked than him-
self, and they enter and dwell there; and
the last *state* of that man is worse than the
first."

KEEPING THE WORD

27And it happened, as He spoke these
things, that a certain woman from the
crowd raised her voice and said to Him,
"Blessed *is* the womb that bore You, and
the breasts which nursed You!"

OBEDIENCE
What will happen for people who obey God's word?
Luke 11:28

28But He said, "More than that, blessed
are those who hear the word of God and
keep it!"

SEEKING A SIGN

29And while the crowds were thickly gath-
ered together, He began to say, "This is an
evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign
will be given to it except the sign of Jonah
the prophet.[a] 30For as Jonah became a sign
to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man
will be to this generation. 31The queen
of the South will rise up in the judgment
with the men of this generation and con-
demn them, for she came from the ends of
the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon;

11:11 [a]NU-Text omits the words from *bread* through *for* in the next sentence.
11:15 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Beelzebul.*
11:29 [a]NU-Text omits *the prophet.*

and indeed a greater than Solomon *is* here.
32The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here.

THE LAMP OF THE BODY

33"No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts *it* in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. 34The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when *your eye* is bad, your body also *is* full of darkness. 35Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. 36If then your whole body *is* full of light, having no part dark, *the* whole *body* will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

WOE TO THE PHARISEES AND LAWYERS

37And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat. 38When the Pharisee saw *it,* he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner.

39Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. 40Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? 41But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.

42"But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe the mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 43Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. 44Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites![a] For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over *them* are not aware *of them.*"

45Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also."

46And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. 47Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. 49Therefore the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they will kill and persecute,' 50that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, 51from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.

52"Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

53And as He said these things to them,[a] the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail *Him* vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, 54lying in wait for Him, and seeking to catch Him in something He might say, that they might accuse Him.[a]

BEWARE OF HYPOCRISY

12 In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first *of all,* "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. 3Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.

JESUS TEACHES THE FEAR OF GOD

4"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!

11:44 [a]NU-Text omits *scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.* **11:53** [a]NU-Text reads *And when He left there.* **11:54** [a]NU-Text omits *and seeking* and *that they might accuse Him.*

MAKING IT REAL // LUKE 12:15–21

Temporary Things Jesus makes the point in this parable that having a lot of things isn't the point of life. Things don't give you a relationship with God. And things don't make your walk with God any deeper. The rich man in this parable thought that he would have an easy life because he had everything he could possibly ever want or need. God called him a fool, because that night when he died, his things could do nothing for him.

Where are you spending most of your time and energy? Are you worrying about the next really important "thing" you've got to have and how to get it, or are you thinking about the Lord and how to know and love Him more completely? Jesus says it's foolish to spend your time accumulating stuff that will only rust and decay in the end.

People who expect to always get what they want are commonly known in America as "spoiled brats." They are like immature children. They don't have the self-control or discipline it takes to be mature. God wants you to be mature, to learn what's really valuable and what isn't; to sacrifice for the good of another person, or yourself, or of the kingdom of God. He promises to provide all you need. But His focus is on the eternal—the souls of men and women. That's what really matters to God. (See also: Prov. 28:22; Luke 12:16–21; 1 Tim. 6:6–10; James 1:9, 10.)

Words to Live By

Covetousness: The word translated as "covetousness" in Luke 12:15 is the Greek word *pleonexia* (pleh-on-ex-ee'-ah). It means "greediness" and "the desire to always have more." Covetousness is never satisfied. The more you get, the more you want. That's why Jesus warns us about it. When you get caught up in a cycle of covetousness, it's extremely hard to see your way out. You can miss all the important things in life in your struggle to fill a bottomless pit of greed.

6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins?[a] And not one of them is forgotten
before God. 7 But the very hairs of your head
are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you
are of more value than many sparrows.

CONFESS CHRIST BEFORE MEN

8 "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me
before men, him the Son of Man also will
confess before the angels of God. 9 But he
who denies Me before men will be denied
before the angels of God.

10 "And anyone who speaks a word
against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven
him; but to him who blasphemes against
the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.

11 "Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do
not worry about how or what you should
answer, or what you should say. 12 For the
Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour
what you ought to say."

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

13 Then one from the crowd said to Him,
"Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

14 But He said to him, "Man, who made
Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?"
15 And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness,[a] for one's life does
not consist in the abundance of the things
he possesses."

16 Then He spoke a parable to them,
saying: "The ground of a certain rich man
yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within
himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I
have no room to store my crops?' 18 So he
said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my
barns and build greater, and there I will
store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I
will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many

12:6 [a]Greek *assarion,* a coin of very small value
12:15 [a]NU-Text reads *all covetousness.*

goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.'" [20]But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

[21]"So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

DO NOT WORRY

[22]Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. [23]Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing. [24]Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? [25]And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? [26]If you then are not able to do *the* least, why are you anxious for the rest? [27]Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [28]If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *will He clothe* you, O *you* of little faith?

[29]"And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. [30]For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. [31]But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things[a] shall be added to you.

[32]"Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. [33]Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. [34]For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT AND THE EVIL SERVANT

[35]"Let your waist be girded and *your* lamps burning; [36]and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. [37]Blessed *are* those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat,* and will come and serve them. [38]And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants. [39]But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and[a] not allowed his house to be broken into. [40]Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

[41]Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable *only* to us, or to all *people?*"

[42]And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* master will make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of food in due season? [43]Blessed *is* that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. [44]Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. [45]But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, [46]the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him,* and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the unbelievers. [47]And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare *himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes.* [48]But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

CHRIST BRINGS DIVISION

[49]"I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! [50]But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! [51]Do *you* suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. [52]For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. [53]Father will be

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12:31 [a]NU-Text reads *His kingdom, and these things.* **12:39** [a]NU-Text reads *he would not have allowed.*

divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

FAMILY
Can a Christian's family become divided because of their faith?
Luke 12:51–53

DISCERN THE TIME

54Then He also said to the multitudes, "Whenever you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. 55And when *you see* the south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is. 56Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how *is it* you do not discern this time?

MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR ADVERSARY

57"Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? 58When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. 59I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite."

REPENT OR PERISH

13 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. 4Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

REPENTANCE
What would happen to us if we didn't repent of our sin?
Luke 13:3–5

THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE

6He also spoke this parable: "A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' 8But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize *it.* 9And if it bears fruit, *well.* But if not, after that[a] you can cut it down.'"

A SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY

10Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise *herself* up. 12But when Jesus saw her, He called *her* to *Him* and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." 13And He laid *His* hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day."

15The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite![a] Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead *it* away to water it? 16So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" 17And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

13:9 [a]NU-Text reads *And if it bears fruit after that, well. But if not, you can cut it down.*
13:15 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Hypocrites.*

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

18Then He said, "What is the kingdom of
God like? And to what shall I compare it?
19It is like a mustard seed, which a man
took and put in his garden; and it grew and
became a large[a] tree, and the birds of the
air nested in its branches."

THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN

20And again He said, "To what shall I liken
the kingdom of God? 21It is like leaven,
which a woman took and hid in three mea-
sures[a] of meal till it was all leavened."

THE NARROW WAY

22And He went through the cities and vil-
lages, teaching, and journeying toward
Jerusalem. 23Then one said to Him, "Lord,
are there few who are saved?"

And He said to them, 24"Strive to enter
through the narrow gate, for many, I say
to you, will seek to enter and will not be
able. 25When once the Master of the house
has risen up and shut the door, and you
begin to stand outside and knock at the
door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and
He will answer and say to you, 'I do not
know you, where you are from,' 26then you
will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your
presence, and You taught in our streets.'
27But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know
you, where you are from. Depart from Me,
all you workers of iniquity.' 28There will be
weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you
see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all
the prophets in the kingdom of God, and
yourselves thrust out. 29They will come
from the east and the west, from the north
and the south, and sit down in the king-
dom of God. 30And indeed there are last
who will be first, and there are first who
will be last."

31On that very day[a] some Pharisees
came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart
from here, for Herod wants to kill You."

32And He said to them, "Go, tell that
fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and per-
form cures today and tomorrow, and the
third *day* I shall be perfected.' 33Neverthe-
less I must journey today, tomorrow, and
the *day* following; for it cannot be that a
prophet should perish outside of Jerusa-
lem.

JESUS LAMENTS OVER JERUSALEM

34"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who
kills the prophets and stones those who are
sent to her! How often I wanted to gather
your children together, as a hen *gathers* her
brood under *her* wings, but you were not
willing! 35See! Your house is left to you des-
olate; and assuredly,[a] I say to you, you shall
not see Me until *the time* comes when you
say, *'Blessed is He who comes in the name
of the LORD!'* "[b]

A MAN WITH DROPSY HEALED ON THE SABBATH

14 Now it happened, as He went
into the house of one of the rul-
ers of the Pharisees to eat bread
on the Sabbath, that they watched Him
closely. 2And behold, there was a certain
man before Him who had dropsy. 3And Je-
sus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and
Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on
the Sabbath?"[a]

4But they kept silent. And He took *him*
and healed him, and let him go. 5Then He
answered them, saying, "Which of you,
having a donkey[a] or an ox that has fallen
into a pit, will not immediately pull him
out on the Sabbath day?" 6And they could
not answer Him regarding these things.

TAKE THE LOWLY PLACE

7So He told a parable to those who were
invited, when He noted how they chose
the best places, saying to them: 8"When
you are invited by anyone to a wedding
feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest
one more honorable than you be invited
by him; 9and he who invited you and him
come and say to you, 'Give place to this
man,' and then you begin with shame to
take the lowest place. 10But when you are
invited, go and sit down in the lowest place,
so that when he who invited you comes he
may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then
you will have glory in the presence of those
who sit at the table with you. 11For whoever

13:19 [a]NU-Text omits *large.* **13:21** [a]Greek *sata,* approximately two pecks in all **13:31** [a]NU-Text reads *In that very hour.* **13:35** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *assuredly.* [b]Psalm 118:26
14:3 [a]NU-Text adds *or not.* **14:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *son.*

exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

12Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. 13But when you give a feast, invite *the* poor, *the* maimed, *the* lame, *the* blind. 14And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

CARING
Should Christians care for the needy?
Luke 14:13, 14

THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER

15Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed *is* he who shall eat bread[a] in the kingdom of God!"

16Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' 18But they all with one *accord* began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' 21So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here *the* poor and *the* maimed and *the* lame and *the* blind.' 22And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' 23Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. 24For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.'"

LEAVING ALL TO FOLLOW CHRIST

25Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish *it*— 29lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, 30saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'? 31Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

TASTELESS SALT IS WORTHLESS

34"Salt *is* good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? 35It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, *but* men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

15 Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. 2And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." 3So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

4"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? 5And when he has found *it,* he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6And when he comes home, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' 7I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

14:15 [a]M-Text reads *dinner.*

REPENTANCE
What happens in heaven when a sinner repents?
Luke 15:7

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN

8"Or what woman, having ten silver coins,[a] if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds *it?* 9And when she has found *it,* she calls *her* friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' 10Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SON

11Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. 12And the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me.*' So he divided to them *his* livelihood. 13And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. 14But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything.*

Luke 15:15
According to the Law God gave Moses, certain animals, such as pigs and shellfish, were "unclean," unacceptable as either food or sacrifices. Not only were Jewish people not allowed to eat pork, they weren't even allowed to touch pigs.

17"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."'

20"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring[a] out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. 23And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it,* and let us eat and be merry; 24for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

25"Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'

28"But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. 29So he answered and said to *his* father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

31"And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'"

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

16 He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. 2So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about

15:8 [a]Greek *drachma,* a valuable coin often worn in a ten-piece garland by married women
15:22 [a]NU-Text reads *Quickly bring.*



LIFE APP

Finances / Luke 16:10–12

Who couldn't use a few extra dollars? We can always find something else we supposedly need to buy. But is that really what money is all about: how much of it you can get and how much stuff you can buy with what you have? That is sometimes how it feels, especially if you're looking forward to a big life change, like going to college. Where will you get tuition? How about the money to buy books and get housing, not to mention a meal plan? When it all starts to add up, it can get overwhelming; especially if you haven't been particularly good with managing your money up to this point in your life.

Sometimes we think that when we're older or when we have more money, we'll learn to be smarter with it; then we'll learn how to save and how to budget. But Jesus' words in Luke 16 teach us that the time to learn wise and godly financial practices is not tomorrow or in a few years; the time is now, even if you don't have very much money. "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. . . . And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?" (Luke 16:10, 12).

Even if the little money you do have comes mostly from an allowance from your parents, you can still be faithful and wise with how you handle it. As a matter of fact, if you're not wise with the little bit you have, how could you be wise with a large amount of money? If a few dollars burn a hole in your pocket, imagine all the things you could find to waste a large amount of money on, with no thought of the consequences! So no matter how much money you currently have, ask God to teach you how to manage it wisely and faithfully, as you honor Him with your money and your life.

you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

3"Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'

5"So he called every one of his master's debtors to *him,* and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6And he said, 'A hundred measures[a] of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures[a] of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

9"And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail,[a] they may receive you into an everlasting home. 10He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much. 11Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches?* 12And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?

MONEY
Can Christians serve both God and money?
Luke 16:13

13"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

THE LAW, THE PROPHETS, AND THE KINGDOM

14Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. 15And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

16"The law and the prophets *were* until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. 17And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.

18"Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from *her* husband commits adultery.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

19"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell[a] from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24"Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' 25But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 26And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

27"Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, 28for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' 29Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from

16:6 [a]Greek *batos,* eight or nine gallons each (Old Testament *bath*) **16:7** [a]Greek *koros,* ten or twelve bushels each (Old Testament *kor*) **16:9** [a]NU-Text reads *it fails.* **16:21** [a]NU-Text reads *with what fell.*

the dead, they will repent.' 31But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

JESUS WARNS OF OFFENSES

17 Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe *to him* through whom they do come! 2It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. 3Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you,[a] rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you,[a] saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

FAITH AND DUTY

5And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

> FAITH
> ***How strong is even the smallest faith?***
> Luke 17:6

6So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. 7And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? 8But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? 9Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.[a] 10So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

TEN LEPERS CLEANSED

11Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13And they lifted up *their* voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

14So when He saw *them,* He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

15And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

17So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine? 18Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM

20Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!'[a] For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

22Then He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see *it.* 23And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!'[a] Do not go after *them* or follow *them.* 24For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. 25But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. 26And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. 30Even so

17:3 [a]NU-Text omits *against you.* **17:4** [a]M-Text omits *to you.* **17:9** [a]NU-Text ends verse with *commanded;* M-Text omits *him.*
17:21 [a]NU-Text reverses *here* and *there.*
17:23 [a]NU-Text reverses *here* and *there.*

will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

31"In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods *are* in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. 32Remember Lot's wife. 33Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. 34I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. 35Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. 36Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left."[a]

37And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?"

So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

18 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, 2saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. 3Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' 4And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, 5yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"

6Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. 7And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR

9Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

PRAYER

What kind of attitude should we pray with?

Luke 18:9–14

JESUS BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN

15Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw *it,* they rebuked them. 16But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 17Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

ASSURANCE

Where do we find assurance of eternal life?

Luke 18:18–30

JESUS COUNSELS THE RICH YOUNG RULER

18Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

19So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is,* God. 20You know the commandments: *'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'* "[a]

21And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth."

22So when Jesus heard these things, He

17:36 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit verse 36.

18:20 [a]Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20

said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

23But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

24And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?"

27But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

28Then Peter said, "See, we have left all[a] and followed You."

29So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."

JESUS A THIRD TIME PREDICTS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

31Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. 32For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. 33They will scourge *Him* and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

34But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.

A BLIND MAN RECEIVES HIS SIGHT

35Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. 36And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. 37So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. 38And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

39Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

40So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, 41saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

42Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." 43And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it,* gave praise to God.

JESUS COMES TO ZACCHAEUS' HOUSE

19 Then *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho. 2Now behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. 3And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. 4So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that *way.* 5And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him,[a] and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." 6So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. 7But when they saw *it,* they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner."

8Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."

9And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; 10for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

THE PARABLE OF THE MINAS

11Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. 12Therefore He said: "A certain

18:28 [a]NU-Text reads *our own.* **19:5** [a]NU-Text omits *and saw him.*

nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas,[a] and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this *man* to reign over us.'

15"And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17And he said to him, 'Well *done,* good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

20"Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

24"And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give *it* to him who has ten minas.' 25(But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') 26'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 27But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me.'"

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

28When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage[a] and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, *that* He sent two of His disciples, 30saying, "Go into the village opposite *you,* where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring *it here.* 31And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing *it?*' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.'"

32So those who were sent went their way and found *it* just as He had said to them. 33But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?"

34And they said, "The Lord has need of him." 35Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. 36And as He went, *many* spread their clothes on the road.

37Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, 38saying:

"*'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!'*[a]
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

39And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

40But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM

41Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make* for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

JESUS CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

45Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it,[a] 46saying to them, "It is written, *'My*

19:13 [a]The *mina* (Greek *mna,* Hebrew *minah*) was worth about three months' salary. **19:29** [a]M-Text reads *Bethsphage.* **19:38** [a]Psalm 118:26 **19:45** [a]NU-Text reads *those who were selling.*

Luke 19:43

This passage predicts the total destruction of Jerusalem—the kind of destruction that occurred in A.D. 70. After the Jews tried to rebel against Rome, the empire retaliated by sending its army, led by a general named Titus, to attack Jerusalem. When the Roman army was done, the temple had been burned to the ground, its sacred furnishings had been taken back to Rome, and the city of Jerusalem had been reduced to rubble. The Jews were no longer permitted any kind of self-rule.

house is[a] *a house of prayer,'*[b] but you have made it a *'den of thieves.'* "[c]

47And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, 48and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.

JESUS' AUTHORITY QUESTIONED

20 Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, *that* the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted *Him* 2and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?"

3But He answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: 4The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?"

5And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then[a] did you not believe him?' 6But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet." 7So they answered that they did not know where *it was* from.

8And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED VINEDRESSERS

9Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. 10Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. 11Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty-handed. 12And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast *him* out.

13"Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect *him* when they see him.' 14But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' 15So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed *him.* Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others."

And when they heard *it* they said, "Certainly not!"

17Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written:

> *'The stone which the builders rejected*
> *Has become the chief cornerstone'*?[a]

18Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

19And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people[a] —for they knew He had spoken this parable against them.

THE PHARISEES: IS IT LAWFUL TO PAY TAXES TO CAESAR?

20So they watched *Him,* and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor.

21Then they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism,

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19:46 [a]NU-Text reads *shall be.* [b]Isaiah 56:7 [c]Jeremiah 7:11 **20:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *then.* **20:17** [a]Psalm 118:22 **20:19** [a]M-Text reads *but they were afraid.*

but teach the way of God in truth: 22Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

23But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Why do you test Me?[a] 24Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?"

They answered and said, "Caesar's."

25And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

26But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.

THE SADDUCEES: WHAT ABOUT THE RESURRECTION?

27Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to *Him* and asked Him, 28saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us *that* if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 29Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. 30And the second[a] took her as wife, and he died childless. 31Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children,[a] and died. 32Last of all the woman died also. 33Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife."

ANGELS
Can angels die?
Luke 20:36

34Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. 35But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. 37But even Moses showed in the *burning* bush *passage* that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord *'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'*[a] 38For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him."

39Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." 40But after that they dared not question Him anymore.

JESUS: HOW CAN DAVID CALL HIS DESCENDANT LORD?

41And He said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? 42Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms:

'The LORD said to my Lord,
"Sit at My right hand,
43*Till I make Your enemies Your*
footstool."'[a]

44Therefore David calls Him *'Lord'*; how is He then his Son?"

BEWARE OF THE SCRIBES

45Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, 46"Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, 47who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

THE WIDOW'S TWO MITES

21 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, 2and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. 3So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; 4for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God,[a] but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."

JESUS PREDICTS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

5Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 6"These things which you see—the days will come in which not *one* stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."

20:23 [a]NU-Text omits *Why do you test Me?*
20:30 [a]NU-Text ends verse 30 here.
20:31 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the seven also left no children.* **20:37** [a]Exodus 3:6, 15
20:43 [a]Psalm 110:1 **21:4** [a]NU-Text omits *for God.*

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES AND THE END OF THE AGE

7So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign *will there be* when these things are about to take place?"

8And He said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He,*' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore[a] do not go after them. 9But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end *will* not *come* immediately."

10Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. 12But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute *you,* delivering *you* up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. 13But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. 14Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. 16You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put *some* of you to death. 17And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 19By your patience possess your souls.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

20"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 24And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

25"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

29Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. 30When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. 31So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. 32Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. 33Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

DRINKING

How can becoming drunk be unwise?

Luke 21:34

THE IMPORTANCE OF WATCHING

34"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy[a] to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

37And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out

21:8 [a]NU-Text omits *Therefore.* **21:36** [a]NU-Text reads *may have strength.*

and stayed on the mountain called Olivet.
38Then early in the morning all the people
came to Him in the temple to hear Him.

Luke 22:1

Passover was one of the most important holidays on the Jewish calendar. It was set aside as a time for recalling how God had rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. To celebrate, the Jewish people ate a meal similar to the one their ancestors had eaten when they prepared to leave Egypt.

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

22 Now the Feast of Unleavened
Bread drew near, which is
called Passover. 2And the chief
priests and the scribes sought how they
might kill Him, for they feared the people.

3Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed
Iscariot, who was numbered among the
twelve. 4So he went his way and conferred
with the chief priests and captains, how
he might betray Him to them. 5And they
were glad, and agreed to give him money.
6So he promised and sought opportunity to
betray Him to them in the absence of the
multitude.

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES PREPARE THE PASSOVER

7Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread,
when the Passover must be killed. 8And
He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and
prepare the Passover for us, that we may
eat."

9So they said to Him, "Where do You
want us to prepare?"

10And He said to them, "Behold, when
you have entered the city, a man will meet
you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him
into the house which he enters. 11Then you
shall say to the master of the house, 'The
Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest
room where I may eat the Passover with
My disciples?"' 12Then he will show you a
large, furnished upper room; there make
ready."

13So they went and found it just as He
had said to them, and they prepared the
Passover.

JESUS INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER

14When the hour had come, He sat down,
and the twelve[a] apostles with Him. 15Then
He said to them, "With *fervent* desire I have
desired to eat this Passover with you before
I suffer; 16for I say to you, I will no longer
eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom
of God."

17Then He took the cup, and gave
thanks, and said, "Take this and divide *it*
among yourselves; 18for I say to you,[a] I will
not drink of the fruit of the vine until the
kingdom of God comes."

19And He took bread, gave thanks and
broke *it,* and gave *it* to them, saying, "This
is My body which is given for you; do this in
remembrance of Me."

20Likewise He also *took* the cup after
supper, saying, "This cup *is* the new cov-
enant in My blood, which is shed for you.
21But behold, the hand of My betrayer *is*
with Me on the table. 22And truly the Son
of Man goes as it has been determined,
but woe to that man by whom He is be-
trayed!"

23Then they began to question among
themselves, which of them it was who
would do this thing.

THE DISCIPLES ARGUE ABOUT GREATNESS

24Now there was also a dispute among
them, as to which of them should be con-
sidered the greatest. 25And He said to them,
"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship
over them, and those who exercise author-
ity over them are called 'benefactors.' 26But
not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who
is greatest among you, let him be as the
younger, and he who governs as he who
serves. 27For who *is* greater, he who sits at
the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who
sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the
One who serves.

28"But you are those who have contin-
ued with Me in My trials. 29And I bestow
upon you a kingdom, just as My Father
bestowed *one* upon Me, 30that you may eat
and drink at My table in My kingdom, and
sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of
Israel."

22:14 [a]NU-Text omits *twelve.* **22:18** [a]NU-Text adds *from now on.*

JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL

31And the Lord said,[a] "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. 32But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me,* strengthen your brethren."

33But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

34Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

SUPPLIES FOR THE ROAD

35And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?"

So they said, "Nothing."

36Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take *it,* and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. 37For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: *'And He was numbered with the transgressors.'*[a] For the things concerning Me have an end."

38So they said, "Lord, look, here *are* two swords."

And He said to them, "It is enough."

THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

39Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. 40When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

41And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." 43Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. 44And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.[a]

45When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. 46Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

BETRAYAL AND ARREST IN GETHSEMANE

47And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. 48But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

49When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

51But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him.

52Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? 53When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

PETER DENIES JESUS, AND WEEPS BITTERLY

54Having arrested Him, they led *Him* and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance. 55Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. 56And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with Him."

57But he denied Him,[a] saying, "Woman, I do not know him."

58And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them."

But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"

59Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this *fellow* also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."

60But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!"

Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster[a] crowed. 61And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter

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22:31 [a]NU-Text omits *And the Lord said.*
22:37 [a]Isaiah 53:12 **22:44** [a]NU-Text brackets verses 43 and 44 as not in the original text.
22:57 [a]NU-Text reads *denied it.* **22:60** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *a rooster.*

remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows,[a] you will deny Me three times." 62So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

JESUS MOCKED AND BEATEN

63Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. 64And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him,[a] saying, "Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?" 65And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.

JESUS FACES THE SANHEDRIN

66As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 67"If You are the Christ, tell us."

But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe. 68And if I also ask *you,* you will by no means answer Me or let *Me* go.[a] 69Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God."

70Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?"

So He said to them, "You *rightly* say that I am."

71And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

> ***Luke 23:1***
> Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea and Samaria, had come to Jerusalem with his troops for the Passover Feast. His purpose was to make sure the thousands of Jews who had traveled to the city for the annual holiday did not attempt to riot or revolt. As the highest authority in the land, Pilate had the power to sentence criminals to death. The Jewish council had the authority to hand down verdicts, but did not have the authority to execute a prisoner without permission from the Roman authorities.

JESUS HANDED OVER TO PONTIUS PILATE

23 Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. 2And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this *fellow* perverting the[a] nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."

3Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

He answered him and said, "*It is as* you say."

4So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man."

5But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place."

JESUS FACES HEROD

6When Pilate heard of Galilee,[a] he asked if the Man were a Galilean. 7And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. 8Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. 9Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. 10And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. 11Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked *Him,* arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. 12That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

TAKING THE PLACE OF BARABBAS

13Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, 14said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined *Him* in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; 15no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him;[a] and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him.

22:61 [a]NU-Text adds *today.* **22:64** [a]NU-Text reads *And having blindfolded Him, they asked Him.* **22:68** [a]NU-Text omits *also* and *Me or let Me go.* **23:2** [a]NU-Text reads *our.* **23:6** [a]NU-Text omits *of Galilee.* **23:15** [a]NU-Text reads *for he sent Him back to us.*

MAKING IT REAL // LUKE 23:33, 34

Ultimate Forgiveness Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount that anyone can love someone who treats him or her well. But in order to be like God, we must love our enemies and pray for them. He says, "I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven . . . For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:44–48).

All throughout the New Testament, the writers emphasize that the goal of our faith, after salvation, is to become more Christlike—to imitate God. We are instructed to love our enemies because that's what God does. Here in Luke 23:33–35, Jesus sets the example for us. He prays for the people who are killing Him, and He asks God to forgive them.

Loving your enemies does not mean that you approve of what they do. It means that you love them *in spite of it*. You can pray for them, yet not participate in what they do. Sometimes you've just got to grit your teeth and determine that you will obey God. Loving when you don't feel like it, but because it's God's command—now that's love. God hates our sin, but loves all of us in spite of it. Follow His example. (See also: Mark 11:25, 26; Luke 6:27, 35.)

Words to Live By

Know: The Greek word translated as "know" in Luke 23:34 is *eido* (i'-do), and can also mean "to perceive or understand, especially the deeper significance or meaning of something." In the midst of His worst pain and agony, Jesus was still concerned for the people who were crucifying Him. He knew that they didn't understand the full impact of what they were doing (killing the Messiah), and begged for their forgiveness from the Father. The very sacrifice He was making at that moment is what would make that very forgiveness possible. That is the ultimate example of true blessing and love toward those who persecute you.

16 I will therefore chastise Him and release
Him" 17 (for it was necessary for him to re-
lease one to them at the feast).[a]

18 And they all cried out at once, saying,
"Away with this *Man,* and release to us
Barabbas"— 19 who had been thrown into
prison for a certain rebellion made in the
city, and for murder.

20 Pilate, therefore, wishing to release
Jesus, again called out to them. 21 But they
shouted, saying, "Crucify *Him,* crucify
Him!"

22 Then he said to them the third time,
"Why, what evil has He done? I have found
no reason for death in Him. I will therefore
chastise Him and let *Him* go."

23 But they were insistent, demanding
with loud voices that He be crucified. And
the voices of these men and of the chief
priests prevailed.[a] 24 So Pilate gave sen-
tence that it should be as they requested.
25 And he released to them[a] the one they re-
quested, who for rebellion and murder had
been thrown into prison; but he delivered
Jesus to their will.

THE KING ON A CROSS

26 Now as they led Him away, they laid hold
of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who
was coming from the country, and on him
they laid the cross that he might bear *it* af-
ter Jesus.

23:17 [a]NU-Text omits verse 17. **23:23** [a]NU-Text omits *and of the chief priests.* **23:25** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them.*

27And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. 28But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' 30Then they will begin *'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"'* [a] 31For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

32There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."[a]

And they divided His garments and cast lots. 35And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

36The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, 37and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

38And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:[a]

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ,[a] save Yourself and us."

40But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." 42Then he said to Jesus, "Lord,[a] remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

43And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

44Now it was[a] about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45Then the sun was darkened,[a] and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, *'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'*"[a] Having said this, He breathed His last.

47So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"

48And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. 49But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

JESUS BURIED IN JOSEPH'S TOMB

50Now behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. 51He had not consented to their decision and deed. *He was* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting[a] for the kingdom of God. 52This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb *that was* hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. 54That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

Luke 23:53

Jesus' tomb was actually a small room carved into a large rock. The heavy stone that was placed in front of the tomb was not intended to keep bodies from coming out, but to keep animals from getting in.

55And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. 56Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

23:30 [a]Hosea 10:8 **23:34** [a]NU-Text brackets the first sentence as a later addition. **23:38** [a]NU-Text omits *written* and *in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.* **23:39** [a]NU-Text reads *Are You not the Christ?* **23:42** [a]NU-Text reads *And he said, "Jesus, remember me.* **23:44** [a]NU-Text adds *already.* **23:45** [a]NU-Text reads *obscured.* **23:46** [a]Psalm 31:5 **23:51** [a]NU-Text reads *who was waiting.*

HE IS RISEN

24 Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them,[a] came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. [2]But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. [3]Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. [4]And it happened, as they were greatly[a] perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. [5]Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? [6]He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, [7]saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'"

[8]And they remembered His words. [9]Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. [10]It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles. [11]And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. [12]But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying[a] by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

[13]Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles[a] from Jerusalem. [14]And they talked together of all these things which had happened. [15]So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. [16]But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

[17]And He said to them, "What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"[a]

[18]Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

[19]And He said to them, "What things?"

So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, [20]and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. [21]But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. [22]Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. [23]When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. [24]And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

[25]Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! [26]Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" [27]And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

THE DISCIPLES' EYES OPENED

[28]Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. [29]But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

[30]Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it,* and gave it to them. [31]Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

[32]And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" [33]So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, [34]saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" [35]And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

24:1 [a]NU-Text omits *and certain other women with them.* **24:4** [a]NU-Text omits *greatly.* **24:12** [a]NU-Text omits *lying.* **24:13** [a]Literally *sixty stadia* **24:17** [a]NU-Text reads *as you walk? And they stood still, looking sad.*

JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES

36Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." 37But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. 38And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

40When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.[a] 41But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" 42So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.[a] 43And He took *it* and ate in their presence.

THE SCRIPTURES OPENED

44Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." 45And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

46Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise[a] from the dead the third day, 47and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48And you are witnesses of these things. 49Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem[a] until you are endued with power from on high."

GOSPEL
Who is the gospel message for?
Luke 24:46, 47

THE ASCENSION

50And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53and were continually in the temple praising and[a] blessing God. Amen.[b]

24:40 [a]Some printed New Testaments omit this verse. It is found in nearly all Greek manuscripts. **24:42** [a]NU-Text omits *and some honeycomb.* **24:46** [a]NU-Text reads *written, that the Christ should suffer and rise.* **24:49** [a]NU-Text omits *of Jerusalem.* **24:53** [a]NU-Text omits *praising and.* [b]NU-Text omits *Amen.*

John

DATE OF WRITING: LATE A.D. 80S OR EARLY A.D. 90S
AUTHOR: JOHN
THEME: WE CAN KNOW GOD BY BELIEVING IN JESUS CHRIST
PURPOSE: WE CAN HAVE ETERNAL LIFE BY TRUSTING GOD'S SON AS OUR SAVIOR.

OUTLINE

1:1–18 ..... A Hymn in Praise of the Word
1:19–34 ..... The Message of John the Baptist
1:35–51 ..... Jesus Chooses His First Disciples
2:1—12:50 ..... Jesus' Seven Special Miracles
13:1—19:42 ..... Jesus' Last Week: His Trial and Death
20:1–10 ..... Jesus Is Alive
20:11—21:25 ..... Jesus Appears to His Disciples

KEY VERSE:

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name (John 20:30, 31).

THEN /// The Gospel of John was written by one of Jesus' best friends. It's an inside look by someone who worked right beside Jesus throughout His ministry. John's Gospel isn't so much the story of Jesus' life. Rather, it is more like an overview of why we should believe Jesus was the Son of God.

John wasn't as concerned that we know about what Jesus did (and in what order) as he was that we know Jesus and love Him as John did. John wanted us to believe the mystery of Jesus' deity—that while He was a Person, He was really and truly God.

The other Gospels were already written by the time John sat down to have his say. John didn't need to rewrite the same things. So instead of starting with Jesus' birth or even God's promise to Abraham, John started with the creation of the world. Since Jesus was God, Jesus was there when the world was created.

NOW /// One of the most famous verses in the world is in the third chapter of John. You've probably heard John 3:16 many times. It says that God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus, so that we could have eternal life by believing in Him. Sound familiar?

Jesus actually said this as a part of a conversation with a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a religious leader and many of his associates were giving Jesus a hard time. Maybe that's why Nicodemus came to talk to Jesus after it was dark outside. He asked Jesus to explain all this faith and salvation and "born again" stuff to him. Jesus did that; and, in the process, because of John's Gospel, He explained it to us as well.

REALITY CHECK /// John stood by the cross when Jesus was crucified. It was a gruesome sight. It must have been difficult to watch, but John was there. Jesus even talked to him from the cross. He asked John to take care of Mary, Jesus' mom. When Jesus died on the cross, it was the single most significant moment the world had ever seen. It was God giving His life for us. It was all of our sins being forgiven in one moment. And it was one best friend watching another best friend die like a criminal even though He was innocent. What do you think it would have been like to be John standing at the foot of the cross?

It is a good thing for us that one of Jesus' best friends wrote a Gospel. We need to know what it's like to be a friend of God so that we can learn to be one, too.

THE ETERNAL WORD

1 In the beginning was the Word, and
the Word was with God, and the
Word was God. 2He was in the be-
ginning with God. 3All things were made
through Him, and without Him nothing
was made that was made. 4In Him was life,
and the life was the light of men. 5And the
light shines in the darkness, and the dark-
ness did not comprehend[a] it.

JESUS
Is Jesus God?
John 1:1–5

JOHN'S WITNESS: THE TRUE LIGHT

6There was a man sent from God, whose
name *was* John. 7This man came for a
witness, to bear witness of the Light, that
all through him might believe. 8He was not
that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of
that Light. 9That was the true Light which
gives light to every man coming into the
world.[a]

10He was in the world, and the world
was made through Him, and the world
did not know Him. 11He came to His own,[a]
and His own[b] did not receive Him. 12But
as many as received Him, to them He
gave the right to become children of God,
to those who believe in His name: 13who
were born, not of blood, nor of the will
of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of
God.

1:5 [a]Or *overcome* **1:9** [a]Or *That was the true Light which, coming into the world, gives light to every man.* **1:11** [a]That is, His own things or domain [b]That is, His own people



PROFILE
JOHN THE BAPTIST

People who make a difference are themselves often different. They don't fit. They don't just go along with everyone else. They stand up and stand out. Some accomplish great good; others create chaos. They are remembered both for what they did and for who they were. John the Baptist was a "different" person who made a difference in the best way.

God called this John into a life as a messenger, the one who announced the arrival of the Savior Jesus Christ. John understood who he was and he was single-minded in pursuing his calling. He removed himself from distractions by living in the wilderness. He wore camel skins and ate desert food. The only trend he started was a trend of conviction (sorrow for sins). He pointed out people's sinfulness. He fearlessly called people—the poor, the soldiers, a king—to repentance. He told them to get ready because Jesus had arrived on the scene. He prepared the way for the Lord.

What difference did John the Baptist make? Did Jesus get the welcome he deserved? No. But there were some who were prepared for Christ. We know John made a difference because Jesus said so: "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11:11).

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

John made a difference because he followed what God told him to do, not because he acted and looked different. John was definitely not afraid of being different, but his focus was on God, not himself. Most people focus on how they look and act; they try to be just like everyone else and they often travel in groups. Being different takes more courage. Obeying God's instructions and daring to be different takes courage and determination. It's those like John, who set out to be what God has called them to be, who end up making a difference. Have you asked God to make His calling clear to you?

? WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about John, this unique difference-maker, in all four Gospels. He is also mentioned several times in Acts.

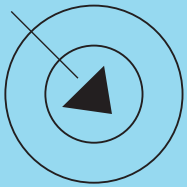
John the Baptist was one of a kind. He knew who he was and didn't care what anyone else thought. He was about as real as it gets. John loved Jesus and told the world about Him in a way only John could. John had the courage to be different. You can, too!

FAMILY
Who can be called God's children?
John 1:12

THE WORD BECOMES FLESH

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt
among us, and we beheld His glory, the
glory as of the only begotten of the Father,
full of grace and truth.
15 John bore witness of Him and cried
out, saying, "This was He of whom I said,
'He who comes after me is preferred before
me, for He was before me.'"
16 And[a] of His fullness we have all re-
ceived, and grace for grace. 17 For the law
was given through Moses, *but* grace and

1:16 [a]NU-Text reads *For.*



PROMISE

God promises you blessing.

Of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace (John 1:16).

Check out what this verse is saying. God has given us "of His fullness . . . and grace for grace." This means He's given us one blessing after another. He is the One who blesses. Notice that the verse doesn't say He *takes* from us.

A lot of people have the idea that God is out to take everything away from them, but that's not true. In fact, His Word says that He has come that we might have abundant life (John 10:10). *Abundant* means plentiful. God isn't a taker. He's a giver, and He *wants* to give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4). Make the choice to let God be the joy and the delight of your life—and really mean it—and He will bring to pass your heart's desires.

God's Word also says that if we will put Him first and do what He wants, God will also add other things to us. What kind of things? Whatever we need. Romans 8:32 sums up all of this: "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Don't forget it: He is the One who blesses time after time after time!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 35:27; 37:4, 5; Matthew 6:33; James 1:17

truth came through Jesus Christ. 18No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son,[a] who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him.*

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

19Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

20He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

21And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

And he answered, "No."

22Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"

23He said: "I *am*

'The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
"Make straight the way of the LORD*,"'*[a]

as the prophet Isaiah said."

24Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. 25And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

26John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. 27It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."

28These things were done in Bethabara[a] beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

THE LAMB OF GOD

29The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' 31I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water."

32And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. 33I did not know Him, but He who sent me to bap-

1:18 [a]NU-Text reads *only begotten God.*
1:23 [a]Isaiah 40:3 **1:28** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Bethany.*

tize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

35Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. 36And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

37The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?"

They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"

39He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

40One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). 42And he brought him to Jesus.

Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah.[a] You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).

PHILIP AND NATHANAEL

43The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." 44Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Philip said to him, "Come and see."

47Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

48Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

49Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

50Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter[a] you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

WATER TURNED TO WINE

2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. 3And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

4Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

5His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do *it*."

6Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. 7Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8And He said to them, "Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast." And they took *it*. 9When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. 10And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

11This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

12After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

JESUS CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

13Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14And He found in the temple those who sold oxen

1:42 [a]NU-Text reads *John*. **1:51** [a]NU-Text omits *hereafter*.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // JOHN 2:24

Jesus Knows Our Hearts To be *omniscient* is to be all-knowing, and God is omniscient. In other words, He knows all things! Nobody "taught" God anything. Being omniscient goes along with being God. There is nothing you can hide from Him. Just like in this verse, Jesus knew people's hearts and knew their thoughts. This is a quality that belongs only to God.

A lot of people con themselves into believing that they are fooling God. You can fool your friends, your family, your youth pastor, and even your BFF, but you'll never fool God. The good news is that no matter how crummy a day, week, month, or year you're having, God already knows. He knows exactly what you're going through. It doesn't matter if nobody on this earth understands the pain you feel, or even understands you. God does and He's on your side. Going through the tough times is a whole lot easier when you realize that He fully knows and understands what's happening and is right there with you to help. He also knows how everything is going to turn out in the end! When you get to the hard or lonely places in your life, remember—He knows and He cares! (See also: Ps. 147:5; Is. 40:28; Rom. 11:33.)

Words to Live By

Knew: The Greek word translated as "knew" in John 2:24 is *ginosko* (ghin-oce'-ko). It shows us that Jesus is totally aware of everything that goes on in the hearts of people. Even things we think we've hidden deep inside, Jesus still knows and understands. It does no good to try to hide motives or thoughts or feelings from Jesus—He already knows what's going on inside your heart.

and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. 15When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. 16And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" 17Then His disciples remembered that it was written, *"Zeal for Your house has eaten*[a] *Me up."*[b]

ANGER
How did Jesus feel and express righteous anger?
John 2:13–17

18So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

19Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

John 2:20

It wasn't generosity that prompted Herod the Great to renovate the temple in Jerusalem for his Jewish subjects. He wanted to keep the Jews happy with the Roman Empire so that they wouldn't get any ideas about rebelling. Specially trained priests served as advisors for the construction to make sure that the building plans matched the original floor plans God gave to Moses. Though construction had been going on for decades, the temple was not finished in Jesus' lifetime.

20Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

21But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22Therefore, when He had risen

2:17 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *will eat.* [b]Psalm 69:9

from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them;[a] and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

THE DISCERNER OF HEARTS

23Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. 24But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men,* 25and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

THE NEW BIRTH

3 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

3Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

9Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

10Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? 11Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. 12If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is,* the Son of Man who is in heaven.[a] 14And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15that whoever believes in Him should not perish but[a] have eternal life. 16For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

ETERNAL LIFE
How do we gain eternal life?
John 3:15, 16

18"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

JOHN THE BAPTIST EXALTS CHRIST

22After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. 23Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. 24For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

25Then there arose a dispute between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. 26And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"

27John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. 28You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not

2:22 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them.*
3:13 [a]NU-Text omits *who is in heaven.*
3:15 [a]NU-Text omits *not perish but.*

the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' 29He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. 30He must increase, but I *must* decrease. 31He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. 33He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. 34For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. 35The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. 36He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

A SAMARITAN WOMAN MEETS HER MESSIAH

4 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), 3He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. 4But He needed to go through Samaria.

> ***John 4:4***
> Samaria was located in what had once been the nation of Israel. When the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C., they took many Israelites away as captives and brought in many foreigners to live in Canaan. It wasn't long before the Israelites who were left behind started getting involved with the foreigners who had moved in. Not only did the Israelites begin marrying and having kids with the foreigners, they also adopted their idol worship. This mingling continued generation after generation until the distinction between the Israelites and the foreigners disappeared altogether. The descendants of these mixed marriages were known as Samaritans.

5So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." 8For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

9Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

10Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

11The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? 12Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

13Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

15The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

16Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

17The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' 18for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

19The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

21Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship,

for salvation is of the Jews. 23But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

25The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

26Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."

JESUS
Is Jesus the Messiah?
John 4:21–26

THE WHITENED HARVEST

27And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

28The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, 29"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

31In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

32But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."

33Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?"

34Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. 35Do you not say, 'There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' 38I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

39And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I *ever* did." 40So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41And many more believed because of His own word.

42Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ,[a] the Savior of the world."

WELCOME AT GALILEE

43Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. 44For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. 45So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

A NOBLEMAN'S SON HEALED

46So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. 48Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

49The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

50Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. 51And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told *him,* saying, "Your son lives!"

52Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." 53So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

54This again *is* the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

4:42 [a]NU-Text omits *the Christ.*

A MAN HEALED AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

5 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep *Gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda,[a] having five porches. 3In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. 4For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.[a] 5Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. 6When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

7The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

8Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." 9And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.

And that day was the Sabbath. 10The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

11He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'"

12Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" 13But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in *that* place. 14Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

15The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

HONOR THE FATHER AND THE SON

16For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him,[a] because He had done these things on the Sabbath. 17But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

18Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. 19Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. 20For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. 21For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them,* even so the Son gives life to whom He will. 22For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 23that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

ASSURANCE

What are Christians assured of?

John 5:24

LIFE AND JUDGMENT ARE THROUGH THE SON

24"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. 25Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. 26For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, 27and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. 28Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. 30I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

5:2 [a]NU-Text reads *Bethzatha.* **5:4** [a]NU-Text omits *waiting for the moving of the water* at the end of verse 3, and all of verse 4. **5:16** [a]NU-Text omits *and sought to kill Him.*

ETERNAL LIFE
Who receives eternal condemnation?
John 5:28, 29

THE FOURFOLD WITNESS

31"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness
is not true. 32There is another who bears
witness of Me, and I know that the wit-
ness which He witnesses of Me is true.
33You have sent to John, and he has borne
witness to the truth. 34Yet I do not receive
testimony from man, but I say these things
that you may be saved. 35He was the burn-
ing and shining lamp, and you were willing
for a time to rejoice in his light. 36But I have
a greater witness than John's; for the works
which the Father has given Me to finish—
the very works that I do—bear witness of
Me, that the Father has sent Me. 37And the
Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified
of Me. You have neither heard His voice at
any time, nor seen His form. 38But you do
not have His word abiding in you, because
whom He sent, Him you do not believe.
39You search the Scriptures, for in them
you think you have eternal life; and these
are they which testify of Me. 40But you are
not willing to come to Me that you may
have life.

41"I do not receive honor from men.
42But I know you, that you do not have the
love of God in you. 43I have come in My Fa-
ther's name, and you do not receive Me; if
another comes in his own name, him you
will receive. 44How can you believe, who
receive honor from one another, and do
not seek the honor that *comes* from the
only God? 45Do not think that I shall ac-
cuse you to the Father; there is *one* who
accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust.
46For if you believed Moses, you would
believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47But
if you do not believe his writings, how will
you believe My words?"

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

6 After these things Jesus went over
the Sea of Galilee, which is *the Sea*
of Tiberias. 2Then a great multitude
followed Him, because they saw His signs
which He performed on those who were
diseased. 3And Jesus went up on the moun-
tain, and there He sat with His disciples.

4Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews,
was near. 5Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes,
and seeing a great multitude coming to-
ward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall
we buy bread, that these may eat?" 6But
this He said to test him, for He Himself
knew what He would do.

7Philip answered Him, "Two hundred
denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for
them, that every one of them may have a
little."

8One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon
Peter's brother, said to Him, 9"There is a
lad here who has five barley loaves and
two small fish, but what are they among so
many?"

10Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit
down." Now there was much grass in the
place. So the men sat down, in number
about five thousand. 11And Jesus took the
loaves, and when He had given thanks He
distributed *them* to the disciples, and the
disciples[a] to those sitting down; and like-
wise of the fish, as much as they wanted.
12So when they were filled, He said to His
disciples, "Gather up the fragments that
remain, so that nothing is lost." 13Therefore
they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve
baskets with the fragments of the five bar-
ley loaves which were left over by those
who had eaten. 14Then those men, when
they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said,
"This is truly the Prophet who is to come
into the world."

JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA

15Therefore when Jesus perceived that they
were about to come and take Him by force
to make Him king, He departed again to
the mountain by Himself alone.

16Now when evening came, His disciples
went down to the sea, 17got into the boat,
and went over the sea toward Capernaum.
And it was already dark, and Jesus had not
come to them. 18Then the sea arose because
a great wind was blowing. 19So when they
had rowed about three or four miles,[a] they
saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing

6:11 [a]NU-Text omits *to the disciples, and the disciples.* **6:19** [a]Literally *twenty-five or thirty stadia*



PROFILE
A BOY WITH A LUNCH

One boy in the Bible lived by a motto that turned out to make quite a difference: Lunch—don't leave home without it. His story has been told for thousands of years, but we don't even know his name.

That nameless boy was among a crowd of thousands who followed Jesus around the Sea of Galilee to hear Him teach. Not knowing how long he would be gone, the boy had brought a simple meal: five loaves and two fish. That was probably enough food to feed a young boy several meals. But, when it turned out to be the only food around, it looked pretty insignificant to feed a crowd of thousands.

Then the boy's little lunch was turned over to Jesus. Jesus prayed and multiplied the contents of the meal so that it served every one of the five thousand . . . *and* there were leftovers! The boy himself gave up his meal, but got at least as much in return, not to mention the thrill of Jesus' miracle. The boy's small act of generosity was a big enough deal to be mentioned by all four writers of the Good News.

Jesus' apostles saw an impossible situation: there were thousands of hungry people and they only had five loaves and two fish. They momentarily overlooked the obvious fact that they also had Jesus. He made the difference. Even a little boy's lunch gift was more than enough in Jesus' hands.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

You may be convinced that you have little to offer Christ. Measured against the needs of the world around you, you may well be right. None of us can change the world around us any more easily than the nameless little boy could feed everyone with his pitiful little lunch. The only way we can truly make a difference is by placing who we are and what we have into God's hands and expecting Him to use us. Jesus can and will multiply all that we have and make us more than we could ever be on our own.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

You can find this story in Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:10–17; and John 6:1–14.

A little boy with a lunch became a channel to bless thousands. His willingness made a real difference. Yours can, too!

near the boat; and they were afraid. 20But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN

22On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered,[a] and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone— 23however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks— 24when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. 25And when they found Him on the other side of

6:22 [a]NU-Text omits *that* and *which His disciples had entered.*

MAKING IT REAL // JOHN 6:35

Bread of Life "Get a life." Ever heard those words? Ever said those words? Most of the time, when people say that, they mean, "Go find something to do." The life that we get from Jesus is more than just stuff to do. It's a life beyond a beating heart and a set of breathing lungs. It's something extraordinary that happens in your spirit when Jesus lives inside of you.

Jesus came that we might live. We're talking about really living—not just breathing and walking around, not living in a fantasyland, not living with your head in the clouds. We're talking about living to the fullest—having life not just on this earth but forever, in the presence of God.

Jesus is the bread of life. Just like God sent the Israelites manna (life-giving bread) in the wilderness, so He sent Jesus to us as the bread of abundant, eternal life! We don't have to live each day trying to find something to satisfy us. We don't have to wonder what it's going to take to keep us happy from week to week. We don't have to depend on our circumstances to determine our mood. We have the bread of life that always sustains us.

Don't settle for second best. Live life to the fullest! That's what the Lord wants for you. That's what Jesus offers you! (See also: John 6:48–58; 10:10.)

Words to Live By

Hunger: The Greek word *peinao* (pi-nah'-o) is translated as "hunger" in John 6:35, and can also mean "to crave or be in need." Many people crave fulfillment in life and try to meet that craving by seeking popularity, money, power, or what the world calls "success." But nothing will ever stop that craving or meet that need for fulfillment outside of Jesus Christ. He is the bread of life.

the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"

26 Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 27 Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

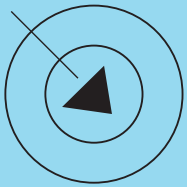
30 Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, *'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'* "[a]

32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

34 Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. 36 But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

6:31 [a]Exodus 16:4; Nehemiah 9:15; Psalm 78:24



PROMISE

God promises to never turn you away.

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37).

Some people think they have to have their lives totally together before they turn to God. They think they need to make themselves worthy of Jesus' friendship. This is a lie that suits Satan's purposes pretty well. The problem is that *no one* can *ever* be worthy of what God offers. That's a part of God's truth that can be hard to swallow. In this world, we have to earn good things, and Satan tries to make us believe God's way is the same. If Satan can keep people believing they have to somehow earn God's favor—that it's even possible—he can keep them from taking the first step toward God's kingdom.

The truth is that God doesn't ask anyone to be worthy of Him. If you come to Him—without excuses, without trying to justify yourself, just putting your complete trust in Him (like putting all of your weight in a chair)—then Jesus promises not to turn you away. He accepts you because He loves you, not because you've earned His friendship.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// John 10:27, 28; Hebrews 11:6

RESURRECTION

Who did Jesus promise to raise up at the last day?

John 6:38–40

REJECTED BY HIS OWN

41The Jews then complained about Him,
because He said, "I am the bread which
came down from heaven." 42And they said,
"Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose
father and mother we know? How is it
then that He says, 'I have come down from
heaven'?"

43Jesus therefore answered and said to
them, "Do not murmur among yourselves.
44No one can come to Me unless the Father
who sent Me draws him; and I will raise
him up at the last day. 45It is written in the
prophets, *'And they shall all be taught by
God.'*[a] Therefore everyone who has heard
and learned[b] from the Father comes to Me.
46Not that anyone has seen the Father, ex-
cept He who is from God; He has seen the
Father. 47Most assuredly, I say to you, he
who believes in Me[a] has everlasting life.
48I am the bread of life. 49Your fathers ate
the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.
50This is the bread which comes down from
heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.
51I am the living bread which came down
from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread,
he will live forever; and the bread that I
shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for
the life of the world."

52The Jews therefore quarreled among
themselves, saying, "How can this Man give
us *His* flesh to eat?"

53Then Jesus said to them, "Most assur-
edly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh
of the Son of Man and drink His blood,
you have no life in you. 54Whoever eats My
flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life,
and I will raise him up at the last day. 55For
My flesh is food indeed,[a] and My blood is
drink indeed. 56He who eats My flesh and
drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.
57As the living Father sent Me, and I live be-
cause of the Father, so he who feeds on Me
will live because of Me. 58This is the bread
which came down from heaven—not as
your fathers ate the manna, and are dead.
He who eats this bread will live forever."

59These things He said in the synagogue
as He taught in Capernaum.

6:45 [a]Isaiah 54:13 [b]M-Text reads *hears and has learned.* **6:47** [a]NU-Text omits *in Me.*
6:55 [a]NU-Text reads *true food* and *true drink.*

MANY DISCIPLES TURN AWAY

60Therefore many of His disciples, when
they heard *this,* said, "This is a hard saying;
who can understand it?"

61When Jesus knew in Himself that His
disciples complained about this, He said to
them, "Does this offend you? 62*What* then
if you should see the Son of Man ascend
where He was before? 63It is the Spirit who
gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The
words that I speak to you are spirit, and
they are life. 64But there are some of you
who do not believe." For Jesus knew from
the beginning who they were who did not
believe, and who would betray Him. 65And
He said, "Therefore I have said to you that
no one can come to Me unless it has been
granted to him by My Father."

66From that *time* many of His disciples
went back and walked with Him no more.
67Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you
also want to go away?"

68But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord,
to whom shall we go? You have the words
of eternal life. 69Also we have come to be-
lieve and know that You are the Christ, the
Son of the living God."[a]

70Jesus answered them, "Did I not
choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a
devil?" 71He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son*
of Simon, for it was he who would betray
Him, being one of the twelve.

John 7:2

The Feast of Tabernacles, one of the major Jewish holidays, was like a national campout. Each year at harvest time, people made temporary shelters out of tree branches and stayed in those shelters for the entire eight-day holiday. Why, you ask? To remind them of the years their ancestors spent wandering in the desert and living in tents, from the time they left Egypt to the time they entered the Promised Land.

JESUS' BROTHERS DISBELIEVE

7 After these things Jesus walked
in Galilee; for He did not want to
walk in Judea, because the Jews[a]
sought to kill Him. 2Now the Jews' Feast
of Tabernacles was at hand. 3His brothers
therefore said to Him, "Depart from here
and go into Judea, that Your disciples also
may see the works that You are doing. 4For
no one does anything in secret while he
himself seeks to be known openly. If You do
these things, show Yourself to the world."
5For even His brothers did not believe in
Him.

6Then Jesus said to them, "My time has
not yet come, but your time is always ready.
7The world cannot hate you, but it hates
Me because I testify of it that its works are
evil. 8You go up to this feast. I am not yet[a]
going up to this feast, for My time has not
yet fully come." 9When He had said these
things to them, He remained in Galilee.

THE HEAVENLY SCHOLAR

10But when His brothers had gone up, then
He also went up to the feast, not openly, but
as it were in secret. 11Then the Jews sought
Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?"
12And there was much complaining among
the people concerning Him. Some said, "He
is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary,
He deceives the people." 13However, no one
spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

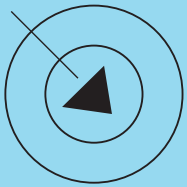
14Now about the middle of the feast Je-
sus went up into the temple and taught.
15And the Jews marveled, saying, "How
does this Man know letters, having never
studied?"

16Jesus[a] answered them and said, "My
doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent
Me. 17If anyone wills to do His will, he shall
know concerning the doctrine, whether it
is from God or *whether* I speak on My own
authority. 18He who speaks from himself
seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the
glory of the One who sent Him is true, and
no unrighteousness is in Him. 19Did not
Moses give you the law, yet none of you
keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

20The people answered and said, "You
have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"

21Jesus answered and said to them, "I
did one work, and you all marvel. 22Moses
therefore gave you circumcision (not that
it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and

6:69 [a]NU-Text reads *You are the Holy One of God.* **7:1** [a]That is, the ruling authorities **7:8** [a]NU-Text omits *yet.* **7:16** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *So Jesus.*



PROMISE

God promises you living water.

"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38).

Have you ever been really thirsty—like "walking-across-the-desert-in-search-of-water" thirsty? Then you know that when you get that thirsty, there's nothing better than a nice long, cool glass of refreshing water! Water renews us; it cleanses us on the inside and without it, we will die. When you gave your heart to Jesus, you received refreshing, eternal water. It cleanses you and assures you of eternal life. The question is, what are you going to do with that water? Jesus said it should flow from you, not just to you!

We've all seen television programs in which a person in need of water, crawling across the desert spots an imaginary pond in the middle of all the sand. But their hope comes to nothing when the cool water disappears before their eyes. What seemed to be an oasis is really a mirage. Nothing!

That's the question: Are you going to be a mirage or an oasis of life? Will you allow your faith to be a cool, refreshing pool of life to others, or will you actually have nothing to offer but dry, lifeless sand? Jesus will fill you with the living water this world is searching for and cause it to flow from you in streams of hope to others. Don't just talk a good game; really live your faith and watch as those around you also find the power of "living water."

SEE FOR YOURSELF// John 4:1–26; Revelation 21:6; 22:17

you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. [23]If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? [24]Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

JUDGMENT

Should we judge by outward appearances?

John 7:24

COULD THIS BE THE CHRIST?

[25]Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill? [26]But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly[a] the Christ? [27]However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

[28]Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. [29]But[a] I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."

[30]Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. [31]And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this *Man* has done?"

JESUS AND THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

[32]The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. [33]Then Jesus said to them,[a] "I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then* I go to Him who sent Me. [34]You will seek Me and not find *Me,* and where I am you cannot come."

[35]Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach

7:26 [a]NU-Text omits *truly.* **7:29** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *But.* **7:33** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to them.*

the Greeks? 36What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?"

THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

37On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing[a] in Him would receive; for the Holy[b] Spirit was not yet *given,* because Jesus was not yet glorified.

WHO IS HE?

40Therefore many[a] from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." 41Others said, "This is the Christ."

But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? 42Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" 43So there was a division among the people because of Him. 44Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

REJECTED BY THE AUTHORITIES

45Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?"

46The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

> ***John 7:47, 48***
> Even though the Romans ultimately controlled the land of Israel, they gave the Jews some say in the way things were run. The Jewish council was a group of seventy-one community leaders who served as a type of "supreme court." They made decisions and rulings on legal matters and other special concerns. The council could not impose the death penalty, and its rulings could always be overturned by the Roman rulers.

47Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? 48Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? 49But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

50Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night,[a] being one of them) said to them, 51"Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

52They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen[a] out of Galilee."

AN ADULTERESS FACES THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

53And everyone went to his *own* house.[a]

8 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

2Now early[a] in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. 3Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught[a] in adultery, in the very act. 5Now Moses, in the law, commanded[a] us that such should be stoned.[b] But what do You say?"[c] 6This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, as though He did not hear.[a]

7So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up[a] and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." 8And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9Then those who heard *it,* being convicted by *their* conscience,[a] went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10When Jesus had

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7:39 [a]NU-Text reads *who believed.* [b]NU-Text omits Holy. **7:40** [a]NU-Text reads *some.* **7:50** [a]NU-Text reads *before.* **7:52** [a]NU-Text reads *is to rise.* **7:53** [a]The words *And everyone* through *sin no more* (8:11) are bracketed by NU-Text as not original. They are present in over 900 manuscripts. **8:2** [a]M-Text reads *very early.* **8:4** [a]M-Text reads *we found this woman.* **8:5** [a]M-Text reads *in our law Moses commanded.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *to stone such.* [c]M-Text adds *about her.* **8:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *as though He did not hear.* **8:7** [a]M-Text reads *He looked up.* **8:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *being convicted by their conscience.*

MAKING IT REAL // JOHN 8:32

The Truth Will Make You Free Satan is the father of lies, a master deceiver, and he wants you to believe anything other than the teachings of Jesus. Satan will deceive you whenever he can—whispering things that are not true over and over in your ear. He hopes you'll believe his tricks and get confused. But remember that confusion is not from God (1 Cor. 14:33). If Satan can make you believe his lies, he'll have you all wrapped up in doubt and bound up with fear. You'll be like a prisoner, caged up in Satan's lies.

Jesus not only emphasizes the importance of truth, He is the source of truth. The truth is that believing in Jesus saves you from your sin, and gives you eternal life. In this verse Jesus says that the truth will set you free because Jesus frees you from your bondage to sin. When you feel confused or overwhelmed, return to Scripture and read the truth of the words of God. From Him you will find direction and clear guidance. Meditate on those words. Let His truth come alive in your mind and in your heart. The Bible teaches much about truth because lies will lead you astray. Stay focused on the truth of God's Word. Know the truth, follow the truth, and tell the truth. It "shall make you free"! (See also: Ps. 33:4; John 1:17; 17:17; Eph. 4:20, 21.)

Words to Live By

Make you free: The Greek word translated as "make you free" in John 8:32 is *eleutheroo* (el-yoo-ther-o'-o). It carries a meaning of "to liberate" or "to deliver." Believing the truth about Jesus Christ can lead you to trust in Him, and He will liberate you from the power of sin and death. Following His truth can lead you to deliverance from Satan's temptations and deceptions.

raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her,[a] "Woman, where are those accusers of yours?[b] Has no one condemned you?"

[11]She said, "No one, Lord."

And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and[a] sin no more."

[12]Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

JESUS DEFENDS HIS SELF-WITNESS

[13]The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."

[14]Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. [15]You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. [16]And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me. [17]It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. [18]I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

[19]Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?"

Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

[20]These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEPARTURE

[21]Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."

[22]So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come'?"

8:10 [a]NU-Text omits *and saw no one but the woman;* M-Text reads *He saw her and said.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of yours.*
8:11 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *from now on.*

John 8:20

The treasury was a room in the temple set aside specifically for collecting and storing the taxes and tithes collected by the people of Jerusalem. Herod the Great had built the temple for the Jewish people, but he expected them to kick in some money every year to help with the cost of maintenance.

23And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He,* you will die in your sins."

25Then they said to Him, "Who are You?"

And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. 26I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

27They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

28Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He,* and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. 29And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." 30As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

31Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

TRUTH
What does the truth do for us?
John 8:31, 32

33They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, 'You will be made free'?"

34Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. 36Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

ABRAHAM'S SEED AND SATAN'S

37"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with[a] your father."

39They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father."

Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. 40But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41You do the deeds of your father."

Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God."

42Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources,* for he is a liar and the father of it. 45But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? 47He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

SATAN
Is Satan completely evil?
John 8:44

BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM

48Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

8:38 [a]NU-Text reads *heard from.*

49Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. 50And I do not seek My *own* glory; there is One who seeks and judges. 51Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

52Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' 53Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"

54Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your[a] God. 55Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. 56Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad."

57Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

58Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

59Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple,[a] going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

A MAN BORN BLIND RECEIVES SIGHT

9 Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. 4I[a] must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work. 5As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

6When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

8Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind[a] said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?"

9Some said, "This is he." Others *said,* "He is like him."[a]

He said, "I am *he.*"

10Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"

11He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of[a] Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight."

12Then they said to him, "Where is He?"

He said, "I do not know."

THE PHARISEES EXCOMMUNICATE THE HEALED MAN

13They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. 14Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

16Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath."

Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.

17They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?"

He said, "He is a prophet."

18But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. 19And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

20His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." 22His parents said these *things* because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already

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8:54 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *our.*
8:59 [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.
9:4 [a]NU-Text reads *We.* **9:8** [a]NU-Text reads *a beggar.* **9:9** [a]NU-Text reads *"No, but he is like him."* **9:11** [a]NU-Text omits *the pool of.*

that if anyone confessed *that* He *was* Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. 23Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

24So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner."

25He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner *or not* I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

26Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

27He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

28Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. 29We know that God spoke to Moses; *as for* this *fellow,* we do not know where He is from."

30The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! 31Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. 32Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 33If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

34They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

TRUE VISION AND TRUE BLINDNESS

35Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"[a]

36He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

37And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."

38Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

39And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

40Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"

41Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

JESUS THE TRUE SHEPHERD

10 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." 6Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

7Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8All who *ever* came before Me[a] are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

LIFE
What did Jesus come to give?
John 10:10

11"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep,* and am known by My own. 15As the Father knows Me, even so I know

9:35 [a]NU-Text reads *Son of Man.* **10:8** [a]M-Text omits *before Me.*



LIFE APP

Bullying / John 10:10

At one time, the most common bully was the big, mean kid who stole your lunch money or pushed you around in gym class. Today, bullies come in all shapes and sizes. And they don't just hassle people at school; now they can practice their cruelty 24/7 through the invisible waves of cyberspace. Regardless of how or where bullies choose to attack others, they all have one thing in common—they seem to enjoy making themselves feel powerful by making others feel weak.

You may wonder what could cause someone to become a bully. The answer is really a simple one: we have an enemy and his name is Satan. He is our enemy because he hates anything that God loves. Satan's entire purpose is "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10). And he does his job well. Paul said, "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood" (Eph. 6:12). Paul reminds us that it is Satan and his demons who lie and deceive in order to cause people to act in hateful, aggressive ways toward others.

You will most likely experience the hateful effects of a bully at some point in your life. When someone sets out to hurt you, it can seem your world has become a threatening, ugly place. But when you are the victim of a bully, you need to remember who is really at fault for the sinful behavior. You should pray for the bullies in your life that they learn about God and His love for them. You should pray that God will protect you from their evil schemes. But you also need to protect *yourself* from the pain they try to inflict. If you run into a bully who is making your life miserable, report them to the authorities. Someone who enjoys hurting others is most likely hurting themselves and they need help. By reporting their sinful actions, you may be the one God uses to get them the help they need.

the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.

17"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

19Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. 20And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?"

21Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

John 10:22

To fully understand Hanukkah, the "Feast of Dedication" mentioned in this verse, you have to know the story of a Syrian king named Antiochus Epiphanes. After the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon, Antiochus Epiphanes took control of the temple in Jerusalem. In a disgusting act of blasphemy, he built an altar to the Greek god Zeus directly over what had been the Jewish altar of burnt offering. As if that weren't bad enough, he then sacrificed a pig on the altar. (Remember, God had declared pigs to be unclean animals.) The one good thing to come from Antiochus Epiphanes' outrageous actions was that the Jews became so enraged they revolted and overthrew the Syrian leaders. In 165 B.C., a group of Jews led by Judas Maccabeus cleansed the temple of its desecration. The eight-day celebration of Hanukkah celebrated that cleansing.

THE SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS SHEEP

22Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. 23And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. 24Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

25Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. 26But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.[a] 27My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. 30I and *My* Father are one."

RENEWED EFFORTS TO STONE JESUS

31Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

33The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."

34Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, *'I said, "You are gods"'*?[a] 35If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 36do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? 37If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe[a] that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him." 39Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

THE BELIEVERS BEYOND JORDAN

40And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. 41Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." 42And many believed in Him there.

10:26 [a]NU-Text omits *as I said to you.*
10:34 [a]Psalm 82:6 **10:38** [a]NU-Text reads *understand.*

THE DEATH OF LAZARUS

11 Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

4When Jesus heard *that,* He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

5Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. 7Then after this He said to *the* disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

8*The* disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

John 11:9

In New Testament Israel, you could work eleven hours and still not qualify for overtime. The Jewish work day lasted twelve hours, from sunrise to sunset.

9Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." 11These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

12Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." 13However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

14Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

16Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

17So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. 18Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles[a] away. 19And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

23Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

ETERNAL LIFE
What kind of life does Jesus give?
John 11:25

25Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

27She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

JESUS AND DEATH, THE LAST ENEMY

28And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." 29As soon as she heard *that,* she arose quickly and came to Him. 30Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was[a] in the place where Martha met Him. 31Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."[a]

32Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

11:18 [a]Literally *fifteen stadia* **11:30** [a]NU-Text adds *still.* **11:31** [a]NU-Text reads *supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.*



PROFILE
MARY AND MARTHA

Mary and Martha were sisters, but they were very different from one another. Each had a unique personality that worked well with the other—most of the time. For instance, if they had company over, Mary focused on the guest. She was the conversationalist of the two. Martha busied herself with the details of entertaining. She focused on the guest's needs. Together, they formed a hospitality team.

Jesus was a close friend of the sisters and their brother, Lazarus, and was often a guest at their home. During one of Jesus' visits, a conflict arose. Martha was upset because Mary spent her time listening to Jesus, leaving Martha on her own to bustle about getting a meal ready for more than a dozen men. Martha became flustered and frustrated. She finally asked Jesus to order her sister to help. Jesus' answer was an amazing example of tough and tender love: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41, 42). Jesus' point wasn't necessarily that Martha shouldn't have been busy. Rather, his point was that Martha had allowed her busyness to make her forget the reason she was busy. Her attention shifted from her guests to herself, which led to resentment toward her sister.

Jesus helped Mary and Martha each recognize and accept their own strengths. The last time the sisters are mentioned in Scripture (John 12:1–3) there was quite a change in their approach. Martha continued to serve (she couldn't help it), but she no longer resented her role. Mary continued to be focused on Jesus, but, by washing Jesus' feet with costly perfume, she proved she understood the meaning of being a servant.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

In any situation, you bring something very special to offer—yourself. God's intention in your design is to call you into special service. Your ultimate purpose isn't to meet the expectations of anyone other than your Creator. The difference you make in life will really be determined by God. Like Mary, you will accomplish that purpose more effectively if your attention is focused on God rather than on yourself. And like Martha, you will succeed when you decide to serve.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Get to know the sisters better as you read Luke 10:38–42 and John 11:1–45; 12:1–3.

Mary and Martha learned to accept themselves as God created them. When they did, they were free to make a real difference by loving and serving others. You can, too!

[33]Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. [34]And He said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

[35]Jesus wept. [36]Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

[37]And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

[38]Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a

EMOTIONS
Did Jesus experience emotions?
John 11:35

stone lay against it. [39]Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days."

[40]Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" [41]Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying.[a] And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. [42]And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this,* that they may believe that You sent Me." [43]Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" [44]And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

[45]Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. [46]But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. [47]Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. [48]If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

[49]And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, [50]nor do you consider that it is expedient for us[a] that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." [51]Now this he did not say on his own *authority;* but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, [52]and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

[53]Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. [54]Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

[55]And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. [56]Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?" [57]Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it,* that they might seize Him.

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY

12 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead,[a] whom He had raised from the dead. [2]There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. [3]Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

[4]But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son,* who would betray Him, said, [5]"Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii[a] and given to the poor?" [6]This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

[7]But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept[a] this for the day of My burial. [8]For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

THE PLOT TO KILL LAZARUS

[9]Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. [10]But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, [11]because

11:41 [a]NU-Text omits *from the place where the dead man was lying.* **11:50** [a]NU-Text reads *you.* **12:1** [a]NU-Text omits *who had been dead.* **12:5** [a]About one year's wages for a worker **12:7** [a]NU-Text reads *that she may keep.*

on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

12 The next day a great multitude that had
come to the feast, when they heard that
Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took
branches of palm trees and went out to
meet Him, and cried out:

"Hosanna!
'Blessed is He who comes in the name
of the LORD!'[a]
The King of Israel!"

14 Then Jesus, when He had found a
young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

15 *"Fear not, daughter of Zion;*
Behold, your King is coming,
Sitting on a donkey's colt."[a]

16 His disciples did not understand these
things at first; but when Jesus was glorified,
then they remembered that these things
were written about Him and *that* they had
done these things to Him.

17 Therefore the people, who were with
Him when He called Lazarus out of his
tomb and raised him from the dead, bore
witness. 18 For this reason the people also
met Him, because they heard that He had
done this sign. 19 The Pharisees therefore
said among themselves, "You see that
you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the
world has gone after Him!"

THE FRUITFUL GRAIN OF WHEAT

20 Now there were certain Greeks among
those who came up to worship at the feast.
21 Then they came to Philip, who was from
Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, say-
ing, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

22 Philip came and told Andrew, and in
turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

23 But Jesus answered them, saying,
"The hour has come that the Son of Man
should be glorified. 24 Most assuredly, I say
to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into
the ground and dies, it remains alone; but
if it dies, it produces much grain. 25 He who
loves his life will lose it, and he who hates
his life in this world will keep it for eternal
life. 26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow
Me; and where I am, there My servant will
be also. If anyone serves Me, him *My* Father
will honor.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS

27 "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall
I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But
for this purpose I came to this hour. 28 Fa-
ther, glorify Your name."

Then a voice came from heaven, *saying,*
"I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it*
again."

29 Therefore the people who stood by
and heard *it* said that it had thundered.
Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."

30 Jesus answered and said, "This voice
did not come because of Me, but for your
sake. 31 Now is the judgment of this world;
now the ruler of this world will be cast out.
32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will
draw all *peoples* to Myself." 33 This He said,
signifying by what death He would die.

34 The people answered Him, "We have
heard from the law that the Christ remains
forever; and how *can* You say, 'The Son of
Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of
Man?"

35 Then Jesus said to them, "A little while
longer the light is with you. Walk while you
have the light, lest darkness overtake you;
he who walks in darkness does not know
where he is going. 36 While you have the light,
believe in the light, that you may become
sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and
departed, and was hidden from them.

WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?

37 But although He had done so many signs
before them, they did not believe in Him,
38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might
be fulfilled, which he spoke:

"Lord, who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD
been revealed?"[a]

39 Therefore they could not believe, be-
cause Isaiah said again:

40 *"He has blinded their eyes and*
hardened their hearts,

12:13 [a]Psalm 118:26 **12:15** [a]Zechariah 9:9
12:38 [a]Isaiah 53:1

MIR MAKING IT REAL // JOHN 12:46

Jesus Is the Light Have you ever watched a movie that showed places where evil took place as dark and gloomy? Have you ever heard something bad described as "dark"? That's because darkness hides things and is a place evil prefers because it can't be seen.

Think about what it's like to be in a room that is pitch black—no light, no windows, totally dark. In total darkness, you can't see what's right in front of you. That blindness is exactly like the effect sin has on us—we can't see truth even when it's right before our eyes.

What happens when you turn on a flashlight or strike a match in a dark room? The entire room lights up. It's hard to believe the power of one small light source.

We live in a world darkened by sin and death. But the good news is that Jesus is the light of the world, and because you belong to Him, you are the light! You can have the same kind of effect as a flashlight in a dark room when you allow your light to shine wherever you go. Every day you come across the paths of people who desperately need the light of Jesus. Don't hide the light. Use it to impact someone's life forever! Don't let your batteries run out, and you'd better check your bulb. Know God's Word and stay connected to the Holy Spirit within. You'll have all you need to remain "light"—the light that Christians give because of Jesus is the only light this world has. (See also: Matt. 5:14; John 9:5.)

Words to Live By

Darkness: The people in this world who are living in darkness do not know the truth of God's Word. They may not even realize they're living in darkness because they've never really seen what the light is like. Jesus is the light, and because He came into our world, life in eternal light rather than continual darkness is possible for everyone—even for those who are currently lost in the deepest darkness.

Lest they should see with their eyes,
Lest they should understand with their
hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them."[a]

[41]These things Isaiah said when[a] he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

WALK IN THE LIGHT

[42]Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him,* lest they should be put out of the synagogue; [43]for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

[44]Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. [45]And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. [46]I have come *as* a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. [47]And if anyone hears My words and does not believe,[a] I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. [48]He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. [49]For I have not spoken on My own *authority;* but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. [50]And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

13 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the

12:40 [a]Isaiah 6:10 **12:41** [a]NU-Text reads *because.* **12:47** [a]NU-Text reads *keep them.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // JOHN 13:13–15

Humility In Jesus' day, people traveled on foot and when they arrived at their destination, their feet were filthy. It was customary for a visitor's feet to be washed the moment he arrived. The task was considered demeaning and disgusting, so servants were normally required to wash the grime from guest's dirty, smelly feet.

Jesus gave His disciples a lesson in humility when He washed their feet (John 13:1–17). He told them to follow His example. He meant they were to be voluntary servants and provide whatever they could for the good of others. He wanted them to be humble and not too prideful to meet the needs around them, even if it meant doing the most demeaning of tasks.

Meeting the needs of other people (even if it sometimes means making a personal sacrifice) is the example of Jesus, and we are to be like Him. Did you know that when you feel sorry for yourself, one of the best things to help you feel better is to do something good for someone else? And if you are acting like Jesus, it may cost you something—some time, some energy, some money, maybe even your pride. Sometimes we can serve others secretly, and God gets all of the glory.

Jesus willingly humbled Himself by being a servant to others; being Christlike means that we are willing to do the same. It's the whole point of our time here on earth—following His example, looking more and more like Jesus every day. (See also: Matt. 16:24–26; John 12:26.)

Words to Live By

Example: The word translated as "example" in John 13:15 is the Greek word *hupodeigma* (hoop-od'-igue-mah). It conveys the picture of something that is to be imitated, like a pattern or a copy. Jesus' example is not a suggestion for us to consider following. Rather, it is the definitive pattern set out for us to copy. We don't have to wonder how God wants us to live or what He wants us to do. He's given us a clear example. And the more we imitate His example, the more we will become like Him.

Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

2And supper being ended,[a] the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son,* to betray Him, 3Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, 4rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. 5After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded. 6Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

7Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

8Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!"

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

9Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!"

John 13:5

In New Testament times, people wore sandals or open shoes, and walked on dirt roads. You can imagine what their feet looked (and smelled) like after a long journey. A polite host would provide water so his guests could wash their feet. A wealthy host might have a slave wash the feet of guests. It was unheard of for a host to wash a guest's filthy feet.

13:2 [a]NU-Text reads *And during supper.*

10Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed
needs only to wash *his* feet, but is com-
pletely clean; and you are clean, but not all
of you." 11For He knew who would betray
Him; therefore He said, "You are not all
clean."

12So when He had washed their feet,
taken His garments, and sat down again,
He said to them, "Do you know what I
have done to you? 13You call Me Teacher
and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am.
14If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have
washed your feet, you also ought to wash
one another's feet. 15For I have given
you an example, that you should do as
I have done to you. 16Most assuredly, I
say to you, a servant is not greater than
his master; nor is he who is sent greater
than he who sent him. 17If you know
these things, blessed are you if you do
them.

JESUS IDENTIFIES HIS BETRAYER

18"I do not speak concerning all of you. I
know whom I have chosen; but that the
Scripture may be fulfilled, *'He who eats
bread with Me*[a] *has lifted up his heel
against Me.'*[b] 19Now I tell you before it
comes, that when it does come to pass,
you may believe that I am *He.* 20Most
assuredly, I say to you, he who receives
whomever I send receives Me; and he
who receives Me receives Him who sent
Me."

21When Jesus had said these things, He
was troubled in spirit, and testified and
said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of
you will betray Me." 22Then the disciples
looked at one another, perplexed about
whom He spoke.

23Now there was leaning on Jesus' bo-
som one of His disciples, whom Jesus
loved. 24Simon Peter therefore motioned to
him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

25Then, leaning back[a] on Jesus' breast, he
said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

26Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I
shall give a piece of bread when I have
dipped *it.*" And having dipped the bread,
He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Si-
mon. 27Now after the piece of bread, Sa-
tan entered him. Then Jesus said to him,
"What you do, do quickly." 28But no one
at the table knew for what reason He said
this to him. 29For some thought, because
Judas had the money box, that Jesus had
said to him, "Buy *those things* we need for
the feast," or that he should give something
to the poor.

30Having received the piece of bread,
he then went out immediately. And it was
night.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT

31So, when he had gone out, Jesus said,
"Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God
is glorified in Him. 32If God is glorified in
Him, God will also glorify Him in Him-
self, and glorify Him immediately. 33Little
children, I shall be with you a little while
longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to
the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot
come,' so now I say to you. 34A new com-
mandment I give to you, that you love one
another; as I have loved you, that you also
love one another. 35By this all will know
that you are My disciples, if you have love
for one another."

LOVE
Is it important for Christians to love each other?
John 13:34, 35

JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL

36Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where
are You going?"

Jesus answered him, "Where I am going
you cannot follow Me now, but you shall
follow Me afterward."

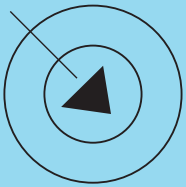
37Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not
follow You now? I will lay down my life for
Your sake."

38Jesus answered him, "Will you lay
down your life for My sake? Most assuredly,
I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till
you have denied Me three times.

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

14 "Let not your heart be troubled;
you believe in God, believe also
in Me. 2In My Father's house are

13:18 [a]NU-Text reads *My bread.* [b]Psalm 41:9
13:25 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *thus.*



PROMISE

God promises you a home with Him.

"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know" (John 14:2–4).

This is one of the most awesome promises in all of Scripture. Jesus has gone to heaven to prepare our home—our forever home. A room in our Father's house waits for each one of us. And then, when it is time, Jesus will return to take us there. It's the home your heart has been longing for since the day you were born. It's the place where all your wounds will be healed; all your hopes will be fulfilled; your joy will be complete and unending; laughter will bounce off the walls; tears will be banned; worry won't even be a word we understand. It will be a perfect home—everything you've ever thought a home should be, and more than you ever dreamed it could be. Not a day too early, but just in time, Jesus will take us home. This is one of the greatest promises and the greatest hopes of all who belong to the Lord.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Matthew 6:19–20; 1 Corinthians 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:15–18; 5:10

many mansions;[a] if *it were* not *so,* I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.[b] 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. 4And where I go you know, and the way you know."

5Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

ETERNAL LIFE

Where can we find eternal life?

John 14:6

6Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

THE FATHER REVEALED

7"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

8Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

9Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority;* but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

THE ANSWERED PRAYER

12"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If you ask[a] anything in My name, I will do *it.*

14:2 [a]Literally *dwellings* [b]NU-Text adds a word which would cause the text to read either *if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?* or *if it were not so I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.* **14:14** [a]NU-Text adds *Me.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // JOHN 14:6

The Way If you check the life stories of Mohammed or Buddha or any other so-called god, you will find that those stories all have one thing in common: those men all died. And they remain dead to this day. It is true that Jesus was crucified on a cross, died, and His body placed in a tomb. But Jesus did not stay in the tomb. He came back to life! Death could not hold Him.

Mohammed and Buddha cannot bring eternal life to anyone because they didn't have power over death. Jesus is the only one who defeated death and He is the only way to get to God. He is the only way to get to heaven, the only way to have eternal life, and the only way to have real life on this earth.

A lot of people are out there lost in the world trying to work their way into heaven. There are also those who think they can buy their way into heaven. Others simply believe that as long as you try to be a good person, you'll end up in heaven. And finally there are some people who just don't believe anyone goes to hell. They believe everyone goes to heaven.

Here's good news and some bad news. There really is a heaven and there really is a hell. It doesn't matter how good you may think you are, how much money you have, or how many times you've been to church. Without Jesus, none of it matters. He is the only way. He is the only truth. He is the only life. (See also: Matt. 7: 13, 14; 10:28; 11:27; Acts 4:12; Rom. 10:13.)

Words to Live By

Way: The word translated as "way" in John 14:6 is the Greek word *hodos* (hod-os'). It carries the idea of a road or journey, or a means of travelling somewhere. We are all traveling through life on our way to a destination—either heaven or hell. There are many roads, or ways, leading to hell. There is only *one* way by which we can journey to heaven—Jesus Christ is that way.

JESUS PROMISES ANOTHER HELPER

15 "If you love Me, keep[a] My commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

INDWELLING OF THE FATHER AND THE SON

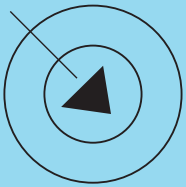
19 "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. 20 At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. 21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

DEATH
Who has power over death?
John 14:19

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you

14:15 [a]NU-Text reads *you will keep.*



PROMISE

God promises to help you by His spirit.

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper [the Holy Spirit], that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).

Have you ever needed help? Of course you have. You may need help right now. All of us need help at some time or another. None of us is immune from the storms of life, but the good news is God sent the Holy Spirit to go with us through anything life may hold. Not only did He come to fill us with power, but He was also sent to help us with every trial, every temptation, and every circumstance.

You may be going through something at this very moment, but you know what? The Holy Spirit is with you right now. He is ready and willing to help, even as you read this. In fact, if you will become aware of God's presence in you, there isn't anything that the devil can throw at you that you can't handle. Jesus, the greater One, lives inside of you and empowers you through His Holy Spirit! Nothing can stop you now! He'll always help you arrive at victory!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 33:20; 37:40; Romans 8:26; 1 John 4:4

hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

THE GIFT OF HIS PEACE

25"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. 26But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. 27Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. 28You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming *back* to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said,[a] 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

29"And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. 30I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. 31But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

THE TRUE VINE

15 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;[a] and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5"I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. 7If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will[a] ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

LOVE AND JOY PERFECTED

9"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

11"These things I have spoken to you,

14:28 [a]NU-Text omits *I said.* **15:2** [a]Or *lifts up*
15:7 [a]NU-Text omits *you will.*



LIFE APP

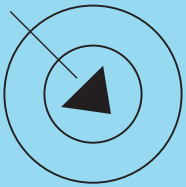
Joy / John 15:11

Most people think happiness and joy are the same thing. They are similar, but the difference between them is actually huge. Seeking one will allow you to live your life successfully; seeking the other will allow your life to live you.

Happiness is our reaction to things we like: good grades, a date for prom, lots of friends, a car, money in your pocket—these make us happy. But what happens when our grades drop, or friends desert us, or our car gets totaled, or when we're broke. That's right . . . no more happiness. Life gets hard and happiness ends. Instead of you choosing how you will feel, life has made the choice for you—your life is living you.

Think about how you feel when you're really enjoying yourself. It's like every part of you is ultra-alive. You smile so much your face actually hurts. You feel so peaceful and glad to be alive. Wouldn't you like to have that feeling all the time, regardless of what life throws at you?

You can have joy no matter what's going on in your life. It may sound crazy, but you can be full of joy even when your world falls apart. That's because joy is a gift, not a reaction. Happiness comes when life brings you what you want; joy comes when God gives you what you need. That doesn't mean the stuff God might allow you to have, it means the important, lasting things that will allow you live a successful life: love, joy, peace, patience (longsuffering), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22, 23). Joy comes from God. It will fill up your heart and allow you to enjoy the adventure of life. It will allow you to live your life to the fullest. Happiness will come and go, but with the joy of God in your heart, life will never get the best of you. So ask God to fill you with His joy and stop letting life call the shots. You live it, don't let it live you.



PROMISE

God promises to be your friend.

"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:14, 15).

Jesus called the disciples His *friends.* That word applies to everyone who would ever become His disciple. In verse 15, Jesus says, "No longer do I call you servants . . . I have called you friends."

You've probably heard a lot about being Jesus' servant. He's done so much for you! Because of Him you're loved more than you can imagine. Because of Him you can be strong and confident. Because of Him you'll spend eternity with God. So a good response to Him is, "Jesus, what can I do for You?" Of course, Jesus wants you to do your best to be a servant who pleases Him. But more than that, He wants you to treat Him like your friend. Jesus is a Person, and like any person, He wants a friend who loves Him more than anyone or anything else. What counts is not wearing yourself out with good deeds, but turning yourself toward Him and loving Him with your whole heart.

Be careful not to take His friendship for granted. He isn't like your friends at school, just as imperfect as you are. He is God. While you're learning to love Him as your best friend, don't ever lose sight of how awesome He is and of all the incredible gifts He gives you. Start to think of yourself as a friend of Jesus.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// John 14:15, 21; James 2:23

that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. 12This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17These things I command you, that you love one another.

FRIENDSHIP

How strong is the love of a true friend?

John 15:13–15

THE WORLD'S HATRED

18"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. 19If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. 22If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23He who hates Me hates My Father also. 24If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. 25But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, *'They hated Me without a cause.'*[a]

15:25 [a]Psalm 69:4

THE COMING REJECTION

26"But when the Helper comes, whom I
shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit
of truth who proceeds from the Father, He
will testify of Me. 27And you also will bear
witness, because you have been with Me
from the beginning.

16 "These things I have spoken
to you, that you should not be
made to stumble. 2They will put
you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is
coming that whoever kills you will think
that he offers God service. 3And these
things they will do to you[a] because they
have not known the Father nor Me. 4But
these things I have told you, that when the[a]
time comes, you may remember that I told
you of them.

And these things I did not say to you at
the beginning, because I was with you.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

5"But now I go away to Him who sent Me,
and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You
going?' 6But because I have said these
things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.
7Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to
your advantage that I go away; for if I do
not go away, the Helper will not come to
you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.
8And when He has come, He will convict
the world of sin, and of righteousness, and
of judgment: 9of sin, because they do not
believe in Me; 10of righteousness, because
I go to My Father and you see Me no more;
11of judgment, because the ruler of this
world is judged.

12"I still have many things to say to you,
but you cannot bear *them* now. 13However,
when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He
will guide you into all truth; for He will not
speak on His own *authority,* but whatever
He hears He will speak; and He will tell you
things to come. 14He will glorify Me, for He
will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to
you. 15All things that the Father has are
Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of
Mine and declare *it* to you.[a]

SORROW WILL TURN TO JOY

16"A little while, and you will not see Me;
and again a little while, and you will see
Me, because I go to the Father."

17Then *some* of His disciples said among
themselves, "What is this that He says to
us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me;
and again a little while, and you will see
Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?"
18They said therefore, "What is this that He
says, 'A little while'? We do not know what
He is saying."

19Now Jesus knew that they desired to
ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you
inquiring among yourselves about what
I said, 'A little while, and you will not see
Me; and again a little while, and you will
see Me'? 20Most assuredly, I say to you that
you will weep and lament, but the world
will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but
your sorrow will be turned into joy. 21A
woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow
because her hour has come; but as soon
as she has given birth to the child, she
no longer remembers the anguish, for joy
that a human being has been born into the
world. 22Therefore you now have sorrow;
but I will see you again and your heart will
rejoice, and your joy no one will take from
you.

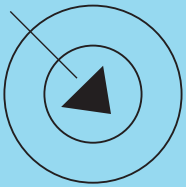
PRAYER
In whose name should we pray?
John 16:23, 24

23"And in that day you will ask Me noth-
ing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever
you ask the Father in My name He will give
you. 24Until now you have asked nothing in
My name. Ask, and you will receive, that
your joy may be full.

JESUS CHRIST HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD

25"These things I have spoken to you in
figurative language; but the time is coming
when I will no longer speak to you in figu-
rative language, but I will tell you plainly
about the Father. 26In that day you will ask
in My name, and I do not say to you that I
shall pray the Father for you; 27for the Fa-
ther Himself loves you, because you have

16:3 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to you.*
16:4 [a]NU-Text reads *their.* **16:15** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *He takes of Mine and will declare it to you.*



PROMISE

God promises to show you what is true.

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13).

Have you ever had a tough time making a decision? Well, the Holy Spirit has been sent to speak to you at those very moments. This verse assures you that He will tell you only what God says. In other words, when the Holy Spirit speaks to your heart, you can take what He says to the bank. You'd better go with it! He will speak to you and He's going to show you what is true. That's His job. So make sure you're listening and not ignoring Him.

So how do you listen to the Holy Spirit? How do you hear His voice? Begin learning to hear Him by learning the Bible—not just reading words but really getting into the Word of God. Start out by just reviewing a few verses in your mind—over and over. Begin putting the Word of God inside you by memorizing a verse or two. Read Psalm 119:1–24. Notice how the psalmist felt about God's Word. (Whenever you read the words *law, statutes, testimonies, commandments,* or *God's Word,* you can think of them as meaning the Bible.) As you begin to "feed" yourself the Word of God, you'll begin to notice that you are hearing God speak to you in ways and about things you've never heard before. Start making it a point to read the Bible and let the Holy Spirit lead you "into all truth"!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 32:8; 119:27, 34, 35; Isaiah 58:11; 2 Timothy 2:15

loved Me, and have believed that I came
forth from God. [28]I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I
leave the world and go to the Father."

[29]His disciples said to Him, "See, now
You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! [30]Now we are sure that You
know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe
that You came forth from God."

COMFORT
What has Jesus overcome?
John 16:33

[31]Jesus answered them, "Do you now
believe? [32]Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered,
each to his own, and will leave Me alone.
And yet I am not alone, because the Father
is with Me. [33]These things I have spoken to
you, that in Me you may have peace. In the
world you will[a] have tribulation; but be of
good cheer, I have overcome the world."

SALVATION
Does salvation include gaining a relationship with God?
John 17:1–5

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF

17 Jesus spoke these words, lifted
up His eyes to heaven, and said:
"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, [2]as You have given Him authority
over all flesh, that He should[a] give eternal
life to as many as You have given Him. [3]And
this is eternal life, that they may know You,
the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom
You have sent. [4]I have glorified You on the
earth. I have finished the work which You
have given Me to do. [5]And now, O Father,
glorify Me together with Yourself, with

16:33 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *will.*
17:2 [a]M-Text reads *shall.*

the glory which I had with You before the world was.

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

6"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them,* and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

9"I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me,[a] that they may be one as We *are.* 12While I was with them in the world,[a] I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept;[b] and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

TRUTH
Is God's word truth?
John 17:17

JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

20"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will[a] believe in Me through their word; 21that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

24"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it,* that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

BETRAYAL AND ARREST IN GETHSEMANE

18 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. 2And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. 3Then Judas, having received a detachment *of troops,* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. 4Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"

5They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus said to them, "I am *He.*" And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. 6Now when He said to them, "I am *He,*" they drew back and fell to the ground.

7Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?"

And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

8Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am *He.* Therefore, if you seek Me, let these

17:11 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *keep them through Your name which You have given Me.* **17:12** [a]NU-Text omits *in the world.* [b]NU-Text reads *in Your name which You gave Me. And I guarded them;* (or *it;*). **17:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *will.*

go their way," 9that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

10Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST

12Then the detachment *of troops* and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. 13And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. 14Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

PETER DENIES JESUS

15And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so *did* another[a] disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. 16But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. 17Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also *one* of this Man's disciples, are you?"

He said, "I am not."

18Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

JESUS QUESTIONED BY THE HIGH PRIEST

19The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.

20Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet,[a] and in secret I have said nothing. 21Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said."

22And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You answer the high priest like that?"

23Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"

24Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

PETER DENIES TWICE MORE

25Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, "You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?"

He denied *it* and said, "I am not!"

26One of the servants of the high priest, a relative *of him* whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" 27Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed.

John 18:28

Why did the Jewish leaders go to Pilate with their accusations against Jesus? Because they wanted Jesus dead, but didn't have the authority to order His execution. They needed Pilate, the Roman governor, to rule against Jesus on behalf of Rome in order to guarantee Jesus' crucifixion.

IN PILATE'S COURT

28Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. 29Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"

30They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you."

31Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law."

Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death," 32that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.

33Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

34Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking

18:15 [a]M-Text reads *the other.* **18:20** [a]NU-Text reads *where all the Jews meet.*

for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"

35Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"

36Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

37Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?"

Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

38Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.

TAKING THE PLACE OF BARABBAS

39"But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

40Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

> ***John 19:2***
> In ancient times, the color purple was a symbol of royalty. Purple dye, which came from a special type of shellfish in the Mediterranean Sea, was extremely expensive. Only royalty and other wealthy and important people could afford it.

THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

19 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged *Him.* 2And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put *it* on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. 3Then they said,[a] "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.

4Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."

PILATE'S DECISION

5Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And *Pilate* said to them, "Behold the Man!"

6Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify *Him,* crucify *Him!*"

Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify *Him,* for I find no fault in Him."

7The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our[a] law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

8Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, 9and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

10Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"

11Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

12From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."

13When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The* Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"

15But they cried out, "Away with *Him,* away with *Him!* Crucify Him!"

Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?"

The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"

16Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led *Him* away.[a]

THE KING ON A CROSS

17And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called *the Place* of a Skull, which is

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19:3 [a]NU-Text reads *And they came up to Him and said.* **19:7** [a]NU-Text reads *the law.*
19:16 [a]NU-Text omits *and led Him away.*

called in Hebrew, Golgotha, 18where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. 19Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING
OF THE JEWS.

20Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, *and* Latin.

21Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews."'"

22Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

23Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. 24They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

"They divided My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots."[a]

Therefore the soldiers did these things.

BEHOLD YOUR MOTHER

25Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" 27Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.

IT IS FINISHED

28After this, Jesus, knowing[a] that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" 29Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth. 30So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

JESUS' SIDE IS PIERCED

31Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day,* that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. 32Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. 35And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. 36For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, *"Not one of His bones shall be broken."*[a] 37And again another Scripture says, *"They shall look on Him whom they pierced."*[a]

John 19:42

According to the law God gave Moses, touching a dead body made a person unclean, which meant he was considered unfit to take part in any religious ceremonies. Uncleanness wasn't a permanent condition, though. A person was considered clean again after a certain amount of time had passed and certain cleansing rituals had been performed. The Jewish leaders wanted to finish the burial so that they could complete the necessary cleansing rituals before the Sabbath day began.

JESUS BURIED IN JOSEPH'S TOMB

38After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. 39And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a

19:24 [a]Psalm 22:18 **19:28** [a]M-Text reads *seeing.*
19:36 [a]Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20
19:37 [a]Zechariah 12:10

mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. 40Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. 41Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation *Day,* for the tomb was nearby.

THE EMPTY TOMB

20 Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

3Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there;* yet he did not go in. 6Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there,* 7and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. 8Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. 9For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

MARY MAGDALENE SEES THE RISEN LORD

11But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb. 12And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

14Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there,* and did not know that it was Jesus. 15Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?"

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

16Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned and said to Him,[a] "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

17Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and *to* My God and your God.'"

18Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord,[a] and *that* He had spoken these things to her.

THE APOSTLES COMMISSIONED

19Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled,[a] for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace *be* with you." 20When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

21So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22And when He had said this, He breathed on *them,* and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained."

SEEING AND BELIEVING

24Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord."

So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

26And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger

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20:16 [a]NU-Text adds *in Hebrew.*
20:18 [a]NU-Text reads *disciples, "I have seen the Lord,"*… **20:19** [a]NU-Text omits *assembled.*

here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here,* and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29Jesus said to him, "Thomas,[a] because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed."

THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

30And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

BREAKFAST BY THE SEA

21 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed *Himself:* 2Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the *sons* of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."

They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately[a] got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. 4But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?"

They answered Him, "No."

6And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some.*" So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

7Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. 8But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. 9Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. 10Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."

11Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. 12Jesus said to them, "Come *and* eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—knowing that it was the Lord. 13Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

14This *is* now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

JESUS RESTORES PETER

15So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of Jonah,[a] do you love Me more than these?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

16He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah,[a] do you love Me?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."

He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

17He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah,[a] do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?"

And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You."

Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. 18Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish." 19This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE AND HIS BOOK

20Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what *about* this man?"

20:29 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Thomas.* **21:3** [a]NU-Text omits *immediately.* **21:15** [a]NU-Text reads *John.* **21:16** [a]NU-Text reads *John.* **21:17** [a]NU-Text reads *John.*

22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me."

23 Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?"

24 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

Acts

DATE OF WRITING: EARLY A.D. 60S
AUTHOR: HISTORICALLY, LUKE
THEME: CHRISTIANITY SPREADS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH GROWS
PURPOSE: THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS AT WORK IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

OUTLINE

1:1—8:3 .....Telling the Good News in Jerusalem
8:4—12:25.....The Good News in Judea and Samaria
13:1—14:28 .....Paul's First Journey to Tell the Good News
15:1–35.....An Important Decision in Jerusalem
15:36—18:22 .....Paul's Second Journey to Tell the Good News
18:23—21:16 .....Paul's Third Journey to Tell the Good News
21:17—23:22 .....Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem
23:23—26:32 .....Paul Is Taken to Caesarea
27:1—28:31 .....Paul Is Taken to Rome

KEY VERSE:

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

THEN ///

Have you ever watched one of those shows in which an actress is supposed to be having a baby? Remember all the pain and the yelling and the not-pushing and then the pushing? Then, there the baby is; and everybody in the room is all smiles and happy tears. That process is called labor and delivery. It's a lot of work for everyone involved.

Reading the Book of Acts is like watching a baby being born. The baby, though, is the church. Before Jesus came and revolutionized the world's thinking, people went to churches called temples. There they learned, worshiped, gave offerings, and offered sacrifices. After Christ's death and resurrection, though, church meant something different. Church was no longer just a place to go to meet with God. Instead, it was the group of people who made up the family of God and the body of Christ.

When Christ was here on earth, He was God in a human body. Then He left; and now we, the church, are the body of Christ on earth. Making that transition was and is a lot of work for everyone involved: apostles, disciples, church members, missionaries, pastors, and so on. The Book of Acts shows us how it all began.

NOW ///

The early church wasn't exactly a commune. They didn't live in the same building or anything like that. But they did function as a serious community. The people who had money shared with those who didn't. The Bible says there was no poverty in the early church because they took care of each other.

Think of what it was like to walk in their shoes. Jesus had just turned their world upside down. With their very own eyes, they had watched Him go back into heaven. They knew for real that this world was not their home—that heaven was—so they didn't feel ownership over things and money and houses. They shared everything. How do you think that would work for the church today?

REALITY CHECK ///

Paul was one of the most famous people in the New Testament church. Our first glimpse of him is in Acts. At first his name was Saul, and he was searching out and killing Christians. One day, while he was traveling to a place called Damascus to find and persecute Christians there, he was confronted by Jesus, who had already ascended into heaven. "Why are you doing this to Me?" Jesus asked. (The church is considered the body of Christ, so when Saul/Paul destroyed the church, he was destroying Christ's body all over again.) Within a few days, Saul became Paul; and he focused his energy in an entirely different direction. Instead of destroying the church, he became a missionary and started churches in every place he could. That's how it works when you face Jesus. You can't stay the same.

PROLOGUE

1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to
do and teach, 2until the day in which
He was taken up, after He through the Holy
Spirit had given commandments to the
apostles whom He had chosen, 3to whom
He also presented Himself alive after His
suffering by many infallible proofs, being
seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom
of God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMISED

4And being assembled together with *them,*
He commanded them not to depart from
Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of
the Father, "which," *He said,* "you have
heard from Me; 5for John truly baptized
with water, but you shall be baptized with
the Holy Spirit not many days from now."
6Therefore, when they had come together,
they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at
this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
7And He said to them, "It is not for you to
know times or seasons which the Father
has put in His own authority. 8But you shall
receive power when the Holy Spirit has
come upon you; and you shall be witnesses
to Me[a] in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and
Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

1:8 [a]NU-Text reads *My witnesses.*

Acts 1:6
Jesus' followers had expected Him to wrestle control of Israel from the Roman Empire, which had been in charge of the land since 63 B.C.

HOLY SPIRIT
What does the Holy Spirit empower us to be?
Acts 1:8

WITNESSING
What are Christians called to do?
Acts 1:8

JESUS ASCENDS TO HEAVEN

9Now when He had spoken these things,
while they watched, He was taken up, and
a cloud received Him out of their sight.
10And while they looked steadfastly toward
heaven as He went up, behold, two men
stood by them in white apparel, 11who also
said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand
gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus,
who was taken up from you into heaven,
will so come in like manner as you saw
Him go into heaven."

THE UPPER ROOM PRAYER MEETING

12Then they returned to Jerusalem from
the mount called Olivet, which is near Je-
rusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. 13And
when they had entered, they went up into
the upper room where they were staying:
Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip
and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew;
James *the son* of Alphaeus and Simon the
Zealot; and Judas *the son* of James. 14These
all continued with one accord in prayer
and supplication,[a] with the women and
Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His
brothers.

MATTHIAS CHOSEN

15And in those days Peter stood up in the
midst of the disciples[a] (altogether the
number of names was about a hundred
and twenty), and said, 16"Men *and* breth-
ren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which
the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth
of David concerning Judas, who became a
guide to those who arrested Jesus; 17for he
was numbered with us and obtained a part
in this ministry."

18(Now this man purchased a field with
the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong,
he burst open in the middle and all his en-
trails gushed out. 19And it became known
to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that
field is called in their own language, Akel
Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

20"For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

'Let his dwelling place be desolate,
And let no one live in it';[a]

and,

'Let[b] *another take his office.'*[c]

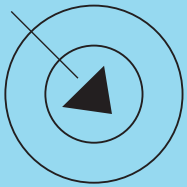
21"Therefore, of these men who have ac-
companied us all the time that the Lord Je-
sus went in and out among us, 22beginning
from the baptism of John to that day when
He was taken up from us, one of these must
become a witness with us of His resurrec-
tion."

23And they proposed two: Joseph called
Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and
Matthias. 24And they prayed and said, "You,
O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show
which of these two You have chosen 25to
take part in this ministry and apostleship
from which Judas by transgression fell, that
he might go to his own place." 26And they
cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias.
And he was numbered with the eleven
apostles.

COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

2 When the Day of Pentecost had fully
come, they were all with one accord[a]
in one place. 2And suddenly there
came a sound from heaven, as of a rush-
ing mighty wind, and it filled the whole

1:14 [a]NU-Text omits *and supplication.*
1:15 [a]NU-Text reads *brethren.* **1:20** [a]Psalm 69:25 [b]Psalm 109:8 [c]Greek *episkopen,* position of overseer **2:1** [a]NU-Text reads *together.*



PROMISE

God promises to save you.

"And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

Salvation, as it is meant in this verse, is a one-time thing. You make the decision to *become* a Christian one time. You make decisions to *live* like a Christian daily—sometimes even moment by moment. Sometimes people are insecure about their salvation. They keep wondering if they "did it right" the first time. So they wind up raising their hand to accept Christ every time the offer is made.

Jesus promises that when you call out to Him and ask Him to save you, He does. It's that simple. You give your heart to Him, ask Him to forgive your sins, and make Him the Lord and Savior of your life. You are saved from that moment until forever. So nail it down. If you've accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, then you are saved. It's time to move on and grow up in Christ. If you are still unsure, then turn to Romans 10:9–13 and find out what you need to do in order to be saved. Salvation isn't a tricky thing. The Lord sees your heart and knows your sincerity. The right attitude is more important than the right words. Jesus' promise is strong and sure—call out to Him, and you *will* be saved.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Mark 16:16; John 10:28; Acts 16:30, 31; Romans 10:9–13

house where they were sitting. 3Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. 4And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

THE CROWD'S RESPONSE

5And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. 7Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? 8And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? 9Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." 12So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

13Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

PETER'S SERMON

14But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. 15For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day. 16But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 *'And it shall come to pass in the last*
days, says God,
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all
flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall
prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.
18 *And on My menservants and on My*
maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;
And they shall prophesy.
19 *I will show wonders in heaven above*
And signs in the earth beneath:
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.
20 *The sun shall be turned into darkness,*

And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and
awesome day of the LORD.
21 *And it shall come to pass*
That whoever calls on the name of the
LORD
Shall be saved.'[a]

22"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— 23Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken[a] by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. 25For David says concerning Him:

'I foresaw the LORD always before my
face,
For He is at my right hand, that I may
not be shaken.
26 *Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my*
tongue was glad;
Moreover my flesh also will rest in
hope.
27 *For You will not leave my soul in*
Hades,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to
see corruption.
28 *You have made known to me the ways*
of life;
You will make me full of joy in Your
presence.'[a]

29"Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,[a] 31he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

34"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

'The LORD said to my Lord,
"Sit at My right hand,
35 *Till I make Your enemies Your*
footstool."'[a]

36"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

SALVATION
What must we do when we receive salvation?
Acts 2:37, 38

37Now when they heard *this,* they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"

38Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

MONEY
Should we share the resources God has blessed us with?
Acts 2:42–45

GIVING
How does giving affect our community?
Acts 2:44–47

A VITAL CHURCH GROWS

40And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from

2:21 [a]Joel 2:28–32 **2:23** [a]NU-Text omits *have taken.* **2:28** [a]Psalm 16:8–11 **2:30** [a]NU-Text omits *according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ* and completes the verse with *He would seat one on his throne.* **2:35** [a]Psalm 110:1

this perverse generation." 41Then those who gladly[a] received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them.* 42And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

46So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church[a] daily those who were being saved.

A LAME MAN HEALED

3 Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour.* 2And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; 3who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. 4And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." 5So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." 7And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. 9And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

PREACHING IN SOLOMON'S PORTICO

11Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. 12So when Peter saw *it,* he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go. 14But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. 16And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

JESUS
Of what is Jesus the Prince?
Acts 3:15

17"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers. 18But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,[a] 21whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. 22For Moses truly said to the fathers, *'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.* 23*And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'*[a] 24Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken,

2:41 [a]NU-Text omits *gladly.* **2:47** [a]NU-Text omits *to the church.* **3:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Christ Jesus, who was ordained for you before.* **3:23** [a]Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19

have also foretold[a] these days. 25You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, *'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'*[a] 26To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one *of you* from your iniquities."

PETER AND JOHN ARRESTED

4 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

ADDRESSING THE SANHEDRIN

5And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"

Acts 4:6

The Sanhedrin, a council made up of seventy men plus the high priest, was the highest Jewish court in the land. The council met regularly to settle disputes among the Jewish people. Caiaphas had been selected by the Romans to replace his father-in-law, Annas, as high priest. Annas, though, was considered to be high priest emeritus and was the highest-ranking member of the Sanhedrin.

8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11This is the *'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'*[a] 12Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

THE NAME OF JESUS FORBIDDEN

13Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. 14And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*. 17But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name."

18So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." 21So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. 22For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

PRAYER FOR BOLDNESS

23And being let go, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,

3:24 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *proclaimed.*
3:25 [a]Genesis 22:18; 26:4; 28:14 **4:11** [a]Psalm 118:22

25 who by the mouth of Your servant David[a]
have said:

'Why did the nations rage,
And the people plot vain things?
26 *The kings of the earth took their stand,*
And the rulers were gathered together
Against the LORD *and against His*
Christ.'[a]

27 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. 29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

Acts 4:27

Let's introduce two of the judges in Jesus' trial. Herod was the ruler of the Jewish people in Galilee and Perea. Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea and Samaria. Because Jesus was from Galilee and the charges against Him were made in Jerusalem, His trial fell under the jurisdiction of both men. It's interesting to note that neither man found Jesus guilty, yet both allowed Him to be crucified.

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

SHARING IN ALL THINGS

32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. 33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. 34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

36 And Joses,[a] who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold *it,* and brought the money and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

5 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. 2 And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware *of it,* and brought a certain part and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. 6 And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried *him* out, and buried *him.*

7 Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?"

She said, "Yes, for so much."

9 Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband *are* at the door, and they will carry you out." 10 Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* out, buried *her* by her husband. 11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

CONTINUING POWER IN THE CHURCH

12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among

4:25 [a]NU-Text reads *who through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father, Your servant David.*
4:26 [a]Psalm 2:1, 2 **4:36** [a]NU-Text reads *Joseph.*

the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. 13Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. 14And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

IMPRISONED APOSTLES FREED

17Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, 18and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. 19But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20"Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."

21And when they heard *that,* they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

APOSTLES ON TRIAL AGAIN

22But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, 23saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside[a] before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!" 24Now when the high priest,[a] the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. 25So one came and told them, saying,[a] "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"

26Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. 27And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"

29But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. 30The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32And we are His witnesses to these things, and *so* also *is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."

> ***Acts 5:34***
> Though Gamaliel was a highly respected member of the Jewish council and an extremely well educated Pharisee, he is perhaps best known as the teacher of the apostle Paul.

GAMALIEL'S ADVICE

33When they heard *this,* they were furious and plotted to kill them. 34Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. 35And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. 36For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. 37After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. 38And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God."

40And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them,* they commanded that they

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5:23 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *outside.*
5:24 [a]NU-Text omits *the high priest.*
5:25 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *saying.*

should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His[a] name. 42And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.

SEVEN CHOSEN TO SERVE

6 Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists,[a] because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. 2Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

5And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, 6whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

7Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

STEPHEN ACCUSED OF BLASPHEMY

8And Stephen, full of faith[a] and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 9Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. 10And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. 11Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 12And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him,* seized him, and brought *him* to the council. 13They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous[a] words against this holy place and the law; 14for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." 15And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

STEPHEN'S ADDRESS: THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

7 Then the high priest said, "Are these things so?"

2And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, 3and said to him, *'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.'*[a] 4Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. 5And *God* gave him no inheritance in it, not even *enough* to set his foot on. But even when *Abraham* had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. 6But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress *them* four hundred years. 7*'And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,'*[a] said God, *'and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.'*[b] 8Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so *Abraham* begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac *begot* Jacob, and Jacob *begot* the twelve patriarchs.

ENVY
To what kind of actions can envy lead?
Acts 7:9

5:41 [a]NU-Text reads *the name;* M-Text reads *the name of Jesus.* **6:1** [a]That is, Greek-speaking Jews **6:8** [a]NU-Text reads *grace.* **6:13** [a]NU-Text omits *blasphemous.* **7:3** [a]Genesis 12:1 **7:7** [a]Genesis 15:14 [b]Exodus 3:12

THE PATRIARCHS IN EGYPT

9"And the patriarchs, becoming envious,
sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with
him 10and delivered him out of all his trou-
bles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the
presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he
made him governor over Egypt and all his
house. 11Now a famine and great trouble
came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan,
and our fathers found no sustenance. 12But
when Jacob heard that there was grain in
Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. 13And
the second *time* Joseph was made known
to his brothers, and Joseph's family became
known to the Pharaoh. 14Then Joseph
sent and called his father Jacob and all his
relatives to *him,* seventy-five[a] people. 15So
Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he
and our fathers. 16And they were carried
back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that
Abraham bought for a sum of money from
the sons of Hamor, *the father* of Shechem.

GOD DELIVERS ISRAEL BY MOSES

17"But when the time of the promise drew
near which God had sworn to Abraham,
the people grew and multiplied in Egypt
18till another king arose who did not know
Joseph. 19This man dealt treacherously
with our people, and oppressed our fore-
fathers, making them expose their babies,
so that they might not live. 20At this time
Moses was born, and was well pleasing to
God; and he was brought up in his father's
house for three months. 21But when he was
set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away
and brought him up as her own son. 22And
Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the
Egyptians, and was mighty in words and
deeds.

23"Now when he was forty years old, it
came into his heart to visit his brethren, the
children of Israel. 24And seeing one of *them*
suffer wrong, he defended and avenged
him who was oppressed, and struck down
the Egyptian. 25For he supposed that his
brethren would have understood that God
would deliver them by his hand, but they
did not understand. 26And the next day he
appeared to *two of* them as they were fight-
ing, and *tried to* reconcile them, saying,
'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong
one another?' 27But he who did his neigh-
bor wrong pushed him away, saying, *'Who
made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28Do
you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian
yesterday?'*[a] 29Then, at this saying, Moses
fled and became a dweller in the land of
Midian, where he had two sons.

30"And when forty years had passed, an
Angel of the Lord[a] appeared to him in a
flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of
Mount Sinai. 31When Moses saw *it,* he mar-
veled at the sight; and as he drew near to
observe, the voice of the Lord came to him,
32*saying, 'I am the God of your fathers—the
God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the
God of Jacob.'*[a] And Moses trembled and
dared not look. 33 *'Then the LORD said to
him, "Take your sandals off your feet, for
the place where you stand is holy ground.
34I have surely seen the oppression of My
people who are in Egypt; I have heard their
groaning and have come down to deliver
them. And now come, I will send you to
Egypt."'*[a]

35"This Moses whom they rejected, say-
ing, *'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'*[a]
is the one God sent *to be* a ruler and a deliv-
erer by the hand of the Angel who appeared
to him in the bush. 36He brought them out,
after he had shown wonders and signs in
the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and
in the wilderness forty years.

ISRAEL REBELS AGAINST GOD

37"This is that Moses who said to the chil-
dren of Israel,[a] *'The LORD your God will
raise up for you a Prophet like me from
your brethren. Him you shall hear.'*[b]

38"This is he who was in the congrega-
tion in the wilderness with the Angel who
spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and *with*
our fathers, the one who received the liv-
ing oracles to give to us, 39whom our fa-
thers would not obey, but rejected. And
in their hearts they turned back to Egypt,
40saying to Aaron, *'Make us gods to go be-
fore us; as for this Moses who brought us
out of the land of Egypt, we do not know
what has become of him.'*[a] 41And they

7:14 [a]Or *seventy* (compare Exodus 1:5) **7:28** [a]Exodus 2:14 **7:30** [a]NU-Text omits *of the Lord.* **7:32** [a]Exodus 3:6, 15 **7:34** [a]Exodus 3:5, 7, 8, 10 **7:35** [a]Exodus 2:14 **7:37** [a]Deuteronomy 18:15 [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Him you shall hear.* **7:40** [a]Exodus 32:1, 23

made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. 42Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets:

'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals
and sacrifices during forty years
in the wilderness,
O house of Israel?
43 *You also took up the tabernacle of*
Moloch,
And the star of your god Remphan,
Images which you made to worship;
And I will carry you away beyond
Babylon.'[a]

GOD'S TRUE TABERNACLE

44"Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, 45which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, 46who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. 47But Solomon built Him a house.

48"However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:

49 *'Heaven is My throne,*
And earth is My footstool.
What house will you build for Me?
says the LORD,
Or what is the place of My rest?
50 *Has My hand not made all these*
things?'[a]

ISRAEL RESISTS THE HOLY SPIRIT

51"*You* stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did,* so *do* you. 52Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it.*"

STEPHEN THE MARTYR

54When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. 55But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

57Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him.* And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

SAUL PERSECUTES THE CHURCH

8 Now Saul was consenting to his death.

At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial,* and made great lamentation over him.

3As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.

CHRIST IS PREACHED IN SAMARIA

4Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. 5Then Philip went down to the[a] city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8And there was great joy in that city.

7:43 [a]Amos 5:25–27 **7:50** [a]Isaiah 66:1, 2
8:5 [a]Or *a*

THE SORCERER'S PROFESSION OF FAITH

9But there was a certain man called Simon,
who previously practiced sorcery in the
city and astonished the people of Samaria,
claiming that he was someone great, 10to
whom they all gave heed, from the least to
the greatest, saying, "This man is the great
power of God." 11And they heeded him be-
cause he had astonished them with his
sorceries for a long time. 12But when they
believed Philip as he preached the things
concerning the kingdom of God and the
name of Jesus Christ, both men and women
were baptized. 13Then Simon himself also
believed; and when he was baptized he con-
tinued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing
the miracles and signs which were done.

THE SORCERER'S SIN

14Now when the apostles who were at Jeru-
salem heard that Samaria had received the
word of God, they sent Peter and John to
them, 15who, when they had come down,
prayed for them that they might receive the
Holy Spirit. 16For as yet He had fallen upon
none of them. They had only been baptized
in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17Then they
laid hands on them, and they received the
Holy Spirit.

18And when Simon saw that through the
laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy
Spirit was given, he offered them money,
19saying, "Give me this power also, that
anyone on whom I lay hands may receive
the Holy Spirit."

20But Peter said to him, "Your money
perish with you, because you thought that
the gift of God could be purchased with
money! 21You have neither part nor portion
in this matter, for your heart is not right in
the sight of God. 22Repent therefore of this
your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps
the thought of your heart may be forgiven
you. 23For I see that you are poisoned by
bitterness and bound by iniquity."

24Then Simon answered and said, "Pray
to the Lord for me, that none of the things
which you have spoken may come upon
me."

25So when they had testified and
preached the word of the Lord, they re-
turned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel
in many villages of the Samaritans.

CHRIST IS PREACHED TO AN ETHIOPIAN

26Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip,
saying, "Arise and go toward the south
along the road which goes down from Jeru-
salem to Gaza." This is desert. 27So he arose
and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia,
a eunuch of great authority under Can-
dace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had
charge of all her treasury, and had come
to Jerusalem to worship, 28was returning.
And sitting in his chariot, he was reading
Isaiah the prophet. 29Then the Spirit said to
Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

30So Philip ran to him, and heard him
reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do
you understand what you are reading?"

31And he said, "How can I, unless some-
one guides me?" And he asked Philip to
come up and sit with him. 32The place in
the Scripture which he read was this:

> *"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;*
> *And as a lamb before its shearer is*
> *silent,*
> *So He opened not His mouth.*
> 33*In His humiliation His justice was*
> *taken away,*
> *And who will declare His generation?*
> *For His life is taken from the earth."*[a]

34So the eunuch answered Philip and
said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet
say this, of himself or of some other man?"
35Then Philip opened his mouth, and be-
ginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus
to him. 36Now as they went down the road,
they came to some water. And the eunuch
said, "See, *here is* water. What hinders me
from being baptized?"

37Then Philip said, "If you believe with
all your heart, you may."

And he answered and said, "I believe
that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."[a]

38So he commanded the chariot to stand
still. And both Philip and the eunuch went
down into the water, and he baptized him.
39Now when they came up out of the water,
the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away,
so that the eunuch saw him no more; and
he went on his way rejoicing. 40But Philip

8:33 [a]Isaiah 53:7, 8 **8:37** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit this verse. It is found in Western texts, including the Latin tradition.

was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

THE DAMASCUS ROAD: SAUL CONVERTED

9 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 9:2

Today the city of Damascus is the capital of Syria. In New Testament times, Damascus was a refuge for Jewish Christians. When the persecution of the early church began in Jerusalem, many Christians headed the one hundred fifty miles northwest to Damascus to escape danger.

3As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

5And he said, "Who are You, Lord?"

Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.[a] It *is* hard for you to kick against the goads."

6So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

Then the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

7And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. 8Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought *him* into Damascus. 9And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

ANANIAS BAPTIZES SAUL

10Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias."

And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

11So the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. 12And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

13Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

15But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

17And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus,[a] who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

19So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

SAUL PREACHES CHRIST

20Immediately he preached the Christ[a] in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

21Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?"

22But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ.

SAUL ESCAPES DEATH

23Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. 24But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. 25Then

9:5 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the last sentence of verse 5 and begin verse 6 with *But arise and go.* **9:17** [a]M-Text omits *Jesus.* **9:20** [a]NU-Text reads *Jesus.*

the disciples took him by night and let *him* down through the wall in a large basket.

SAUL AT JERUSALEM

[26]And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. [27]But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. [28]So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. [29]And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. [30]When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

THE CHURCH PROSPERS

[31]Then the churches[a] throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

ENCOURAGEMENT
Who is our source of encouragement?
Acts 9:31

AENEAS HEALED

[32]Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all *parts of the country,* that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. [33]There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. [34]And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. [35]So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

DORCAS RESTORED TO LIFE

[36]At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. [37]But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid *her* in an upper room. [38]And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring *him* not to delay in coming to them. [39]Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. [40]But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. [41]Then he gave her *his* hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. [42]And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. [43]So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.

Acts 10:1

Here are the basics you need to know about the divisions of the Roman army. A legion was made up of six thousand soldiers. Each legion was divided into ten cohorts of six hundred men each. Each cohort was commanded by a tribune. Six centurions (captains) served under each tribune, and each captain was in charge of one hundred soldiers.

CORNELIUS SENDS A DELEGATION

10 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, [2]a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. [3]About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

[4]And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?"

So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial

9:31 [a]NU-Text reads *church . . . was edified.*

before God. 5Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. 6He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.[a] He will tell you what you must do." 7And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. 8So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

PETER'S VISION

9The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. 10Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance 11and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. 12In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 13And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

14But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

15And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." 16This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

SUMMONED TO CAESAREA

17Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. 18And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

19While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. 20Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

21Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius,[a] and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?"

22And they said, "Cornelius *the* centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you." 23Then he invited them in and lodged *them.*

On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

PETER MEETS CORNELIUS

24And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him.* 26But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man." 27And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. 28Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. 29Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?"

30So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour[a] I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, 31and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. 32Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.[a] When he comes, he will speak to you.' 33So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God."

PREACHING TO CORNELIUS' HOUSEHOLD

34Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35But in every nation whoever fears

10:6 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the last sentence of this verse. **10:21** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *who had been sent to him from Cornelius.* **10:30** [a]NU-Text reads *Four days ago to this hour, at the ninth hour.* **10:32** [a]NU-Text omits the last sentence of this verse.

Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. 36The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— 37that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: 38how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. 39And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they[a] killed by hanging on a tree. 40Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, 41not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. 42And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead. 43To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

THE HOLY SPIRIT FALLS ON THE GENTILES

44While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Then Peter answered, 47"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have?*" 48And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

PETER DEFENDS GOD'S GRACE

11 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, 3saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!"

4But Peter explained *it* to them in order from the beginning, saying: 5"I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. 6When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 7And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' 8But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.' 9But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' 10Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. 12Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. 13And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, 14who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' 15And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. 16Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He gave* us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

18When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."

BARNABAS AND SAUL AT ANTIOCH

19Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. 20But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

10:39 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *also.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ACTS 11:26

Christians After Jesus returned to heaven, the disciples and other followers became known as Christians. They "belonged to the party of Jesus." At a restaurant, you may wait with a group until the host calls, "Table for the Smith party." Everyone who is with your group gets up to be seated. Each one of you is different, but you all belong together. You are recognized as a distinct group. Your party is separate from all the other people in the restaurant. In Antioch, the followers of Christ had become recognized as a separate group of people who belonged together.

Followers today are still called Christians, meaning that we belong with all the others who believe in Christ. It is a high privilege to carry the banner of Christ along with those who have gone before us.

The question to ask yourself is whether or not your life makes you look like you belong to "the party of Jesus." Are your choices different from your non-Christian friends? If someone is not aware you are a Christian, will they wonder what's different about you; or do you just blend in with every other group? Our lives are like stories the world reads; when they read yours, do they read about Jesus? (See also: Acts 26:28; 1 Cor. 12:12; 1 Pet. 4:16.)

Words to Live By

Christians: The Greek word translated as "Christians" in Acts 11:26 is *Christianos* (khris-tee-an-os'). It simply means "a follower of Christ." We are so closely identified with our Savior that His title (Christ) identifies us. The world should be able to recognize us as Christians, because as we follow Christ we should look more and more like Him, which will set us apart from the world.

22 Then news of these things came to the
ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they
sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.
23 When he came and had seen the grace
of God, he was glad, and encouraged them
all that with purpose of heart they should
continue with the Lord. 24 For he was a
good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of
faith. And a great many people were added
to the Lord.

25 Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to
seek Saul. 26 And when he had found him,
he brought him to Antioch. So it was that
for a whole year they assembled with the
church and taught a great many people.
And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

RELIEF TO JUDEA

27 And in these days prophets came
from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 Then one
of them, named Agabus, stood up and
showed by the Spirit that there was going
to be a great famine throughout all the
world, which also happened in the days
of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples,
each according to his ability, determined
to send relief to the brethren dwelling in
Judea. 30 This they also did, and sent it to
the elders by the hands of Barnabas and
Saul.

HEROD'S VIOLENCE TO THE CHURCH

12 Now about that time Herod the
king stretched out *his* hand to
harass some from the church.
2 Then he killed James the brother of John
with the sword. 3 And because he saw that
it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further
to seize Peter also. Now it was *during* the
Days of Unleavened Bread. 4 So when he
had arrested him, he put *him* in prison, and
delivered *him* to four squads of soldiers to
keep him, intending to bring him before
the people after Passover.



PROFILE
RHODA

People don't usually realize the incredible power of prayer until one of God's answers comes knocking at the door!

Rhoda was a young believer caught up in the exciting days that followed Jesus' resurrection. At first, it seemed that everyone would turn to the risen Christ. Then came the backlash. Ugly confrontations, imprisonment, and even death were used to resist the wildfire of the good news. No one was safe.

Rhoda participated in a fervent prayer meeting, asking God for the safe release of Peter, who had been imprisoned. While they were praying, God was working. An angel broke Peter out of his confinement. Once the angel left him on the street, Peter made his way to the house where Rhoda and the others were still in prayer. He knocked on the outer door, and Rhoda went to answer. She recognized Peter's voice and got so excited that she rushed back into the house to tell the news. During the next confusing minutes, Peter was left standing out in the street.

At first, the others in the house didn't believe Rhoda's report. But someone finally decided that the best way to check her story was to open the door. To their surprise and delight, they found that God had answered their prayers. Rhoda had the right attitude; she just forgot the evidence that would have easily persuaded others—Peter himself.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

We may chuckle over Rhoda's oversight, but it reminds us how easily we fall into the error of praying but not really expecting God to provide. Then, when the answer is right before our eyes, we may refuse to accept it because we really didn't expect it in the first place. God answers prayers; that's a fact. But sometimes His answers look entirely different than we expect or come at times we least anticipate.

When we pray, we put ourselves in a place where we can see and expect God to act. When we pray for rain, we ought to carry our umbrellas with us. When God's answers come knocking, we need to open the door.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Rhoda's surprising answer to prayer in Acts 12:1–17.

Rhoda's prayers made a difference. Yours can, too!

PETER FREED FROM PRISON

5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant[a] prayer was offered to God for
him by the church. 6 And when Herod was
about to bring him out, that night Peter
was sleeping, bound with two chains be-
tween two soldiers; and the guards before
the door were keeping the prison. 7 Now
behold, an angel of the Lord stood by *him,*
and a light shone in the prison; and he
struck Peter on the side and raised him up,
saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell
off *his* hands. 8 Then the angel said to him,
"Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and
so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your
garment and follow me." 9 So he went out
and followed him, and did not know that
what was done by the angel was real, but
thought he was seeing a vision. 10 When

12:5 [a]NU-Text reads *constantly* (or *earnestly*).

they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

11And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and *from* all the expectation of the Jewish people."

12So, when he had considered *this,* he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. 13And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14When she recognized Peter's voice, because of *her* gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. 15But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, "It is his angel."

16Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened *the door* and saw him, they were astonished. 17But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren." And he departed and went to another place.

18Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. 19But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that *they* should be put to death.

And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed *there.*

HEROD'S VIOLENT DEATH

20Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king's personal aide their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food by the king's *country.*

21So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. 22And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" 23Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.

24But the word of God grew and multiplied.

BARNABAS AND SAUL APPOINTED

25And Barnabas and Saul returned from[a] Jerusalem when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.

13 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.

PREACHING IN CYPRUS

4So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. 5And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as *their* assistant.

Acts 13:9

If you're confused about Paul's two names, remember this: Saul was his Jewish name, and Paul was the Greek translation of it. When he was in his Jewish surroundings, he used the name Saul. When he was ministering to the Gentiles, he used the name Paul. Using the Greek version of his name would have helped Paul identify with the people he was teaching about Jesus.

6Now when they had gone through the island[a] to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name *was* Bar-Jesus, 7who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and

12:25 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *to.*
13:6 [a]NU-Text reads *the whole island.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ACTS 13:2

God Speaks In the Book of Acts, we see the disciples looking to the Lord for instruction and guidance. They needed direction about how to spread the message of Christ. In this passage, the Holy Spirit speaks to them about sending out Barnabas and Saul.

The Lord still gives clear instruction and direction to believers. The Holy Spirit still guides us through the will of God. The church in Acts worshiped, fasted, and waited for God to give instruction. They actively sought the Lord about what to do. They wanted their entire lives to revolve around God and His plans.

What does your life revolve around? Do you actively seek the Lord about the direction of your life and activities? Or are your own desires and the opinions of others your motivation? As disciples of Christ, we must follow the example set in Acts and pursue God continually. We can hear from God when we listen for Him to speak. If you want God to speak to you, then spend time with Him, worshiping, fasting, and praying. Designate a specific part of your day to focus all of your attention on Him. He still speaks. Will you be faithful to listen? (See also: Job 37:4, 5; Ezek. 1:25–28; Matt. 10:20; John 10:27; Rev. 3:20.)

Words to Live By

Ministered to the Lord: We often hear of ministering *for* the Lord, but what does ministering *to* the Lord mean? The Greek word translated as "ministered to" in Acts 13:2 is *leitourgeo* (li-toorg-eh'-o). The word in this context conveys the idea of service to God, including, for example, worship, prayer, and obedience. Serving God is how we minister *to* Him.

sought to hear the word of God. 8But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9Then Saul, who also *is called* Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, *you* son of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? 11And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time."

And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

AT ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA

13Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. 14But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. 15And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men *and* brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

16Then Paul stood up, and motioning with *his* hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: 17The God of this people Israel[a] chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. 18Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. 19And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.

20"After that He gave *them* judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David

13:17 [a]M-Text omits *Israel.*

as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, *'I have found David*[a] the *son* of Jesse, *a man after My own heart,* who will do all My will.'[b] 23From this man's seed, according to *the* promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus—[a] 24after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not *He.* But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.'

26"Men *and* brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. 27For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him.* 28And though they found no cause for death *in Him,* they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. 29Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took *Him* down from the tree and laid *Him* in a tomb. 30But God raised Him from the dead. 31He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. 32And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. 33God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:

'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.'[a]

34And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus:

'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'[a]

35Therefore He also says in another *Psalm:*

'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'[a]

36"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; 37but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. 38Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; 39and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:

FORGIVENESS
Who can receive forgiveness?
Acts 13:38, 39

41 *'Behold, you despisers,*
Marvel and perish!
For I work a work in your days,
A work which you will by no means believe,
Though one were to declare it to you.' "[a]

BLESSING AND CONFLICT AT ANTIOCH

42So when the Jews went out of the synagogue,[a] the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 43Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. 45But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. 46Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47For so the Lord has commanded us:

13:22 [a]Psalm 89:20 [b]1 Samuel 13:14
13:23 [a]M-Text reads *for Israel salvation.*
13:33 [a]Psalm 2:7 **13:34** [a]Isaiah 55:3
13:35 [a]Psalm 16:10 **13:41** [a]Habakkuk 1:5
13:42 [a]Or *And when they went out of the synagogue of the Jews;* NU-Text reads *And when they went out of the synagogue, they begged.*

'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,
That you should be for salvation to the
ends of the earth.' "[a]

[48]Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

[49]And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. [50]But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. [51]But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. [52]And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

AT ICONIUM

14 Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. [2]But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. [3]Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

[4]But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. [5]And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, [6]they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. [7]And they were preaching the gospel there.

IDOLATRY AT LYSTRA

[8]And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. [9]*This* man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, [10]said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked. [11]Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian *language,* "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" [12]And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. [13]Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.

[14]But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out [15]and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, [16]who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. [17]Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." [18]And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.

STONING, ESCAPE TO DERBE

[19]Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city, supposing him to be dead. [20]However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

STRENGTHENING THE CONVERTS

[21]And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, [22]strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying,* "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." [23]So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. [24]And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. [25]Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. [26]From there they sailed

13:47 [a]Isaiah 49:6



PROFILE
JOHN MARK

We know John Mark best by his second name, which identifies the account of the Good News he probably wrote, using Peter as one of his sources. In his account, John Mark (or Mark) gives a subtle glimpse of his own uncertain discipleship on the night Jesus was betrayed. He mentions a young follower who fled in such fear that he ran right out of his clothes (Mark 14:51, 52).

Later, when Paul and Barnabas were setting out on their first missionary journey, they chose John Mark as their traveling assistant. He quit during the adventure. On the next mission, Barnabas wanted to give Mark another try, but Paul refused. As a result of this disagreement, the two leaders split and went their separate ways. Barnabas helped Mark grow up in the faith. Later, Paul realized that Mark had become a real asset to the cause of Christ. It took a while, but Mark made a difference.

Can someone still make a difference after they have made a big mistake? John Mark may have failed twice before he finally realized what discipleship in Jesus Christ is all about. Actually, that record is probably better than average. John Mark gives us a good example of the fact that people fail and sometimes fall flat on their faces; but when, by God's grace, they refuse to stay down, God is glorified and the world can be changed.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Everyone makes mistakes, and all mistakes have consequences—some bad, some good. If and when you decide to follow Jesus, you will find you still make mistakes and sometimes you will be met with failure. But it's important that you grow through your mistakes and failures. The journey to maturity—the way to making a difference—will most likely be filled with wrong choices and less than perfect attempts. You may find yourself falling far more often than you ever thought. But remember John Mark; keep getting up by God's grace! There's nothing to be gained by giving up and everything to be gained by pushing on.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Follow the ups and downs of Mark's journey in these passages: Acts 12:25—13:13; 15:36–40; Colossians 4:10, 11; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 23, 24; and 1 Peter 5:13.

John Mark was determined to follow the Lord and make a difference. And he did. If you are just as determined, you can, too!

to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.

27 Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

CONFLICT OVER CIRCUMCISION

15 And certain *men* came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others

of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

3So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. 4And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. 5But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses."

Acts 15:5

Circumcision was an important ritual in Jewish tradition. The removal of the foreskin from the male penis was a physical sign that the Jews belonged to God. Any male who desired to convert to Judaism had to be circumcised.

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

6Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. 7And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up *and* said to them: "Men *and* brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, 9and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ[a] we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

12Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. 13And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men *and* brethren, listen to me: 14Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

16 *'After this I will return*
And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;
I will rebuild its ruins,
And I will set it up;
17 *So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD,*
Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,
Says the LORD who does all these things.'[a]

18"Known to God from eternity are all His works.[a] 19Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, 20but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality,[a] *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. 21For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

THE JERUSALEM DECREE

22Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, *namely,* Judas who was also named Barsabas,[a] and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

23They wrote this *letter* by them:

The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,

To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

Greetings.

24Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "*You must* be circumcised and keep the law"[a] —to whom we gave no *such* commandment— 25it seemed

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15:11 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Christ.* **15:17** [a]Amos 9:11, 12 **15:18** [a]NU-Text (combining with verse 17) reads *Says the Lord, who makes these things known from eternity (of old).* **15:20** [a]Or *fornication* **15:22** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Barsabbas.* **15:24** [a]NU-Text omits *saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law."*

good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. 28For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.[a] If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Farewell.

CONTINUING MINISTRY IN SYRIA

30So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. 31When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. 32Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. 33And after they had stayed *there* for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles.[a]

34However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there.[a] 35Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

DIVISION OVER JOHN MARK

36Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing." 37Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. 38But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. 39Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; 40but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. 41And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

TIMOTHY JOINS PAUL AND SILAS

16 Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. 2He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. 3Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. 4And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. 5So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

THE MACEDONIAN CALL

6Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. 7After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit[a] did not permit them. 8So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

LYDIA BAPTIZED AT PHILIPPI

11Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next *day* came to Neapolis, 12and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. 13And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there*. 14Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things

15:29 [a]Or *fornication* **15:33** [a]NU-Text reads *to those who had sent them.* **15:34** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit this verse. **16:7** [a]NU-Text adds *of Jesus.*

spoken by Paul. 15And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us,* saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

DEMONS
In whose name are demons cast out?
Acts 16:16–18

PAUL AND SILAS IMPRISONED

16Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." 18And this she did for many days.

But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. 19But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities.

20And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; 21and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." 22Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods. 23And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER SAVED

25But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. 27And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

29Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* stripes. And immediately he and all his *family* were baptized. 34Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

PAUL REFUSES TO DEPART SECRETLY

35And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, "Let those men go."

36So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace."

37But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, *and* have thrown *us* into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out."

38And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. 39Then they came and pleaded with them and brought *them* out, and asked *them* to depart from the city. 40So they went out of the prison and entered *the house of* Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

PREACHING CHRIST AT THESSALONICA

17 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

3explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying,* "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." 4And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

ASSAULT ON JASON'S HOUSE

5But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious,[a] took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. 7Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus." 8And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. 9So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

MINISTERING AT BEREA

10Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so. 12Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. 13But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds. 14Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there. 15So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.

THE PHILOSOPHERS AT ATHENS

16Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. 17Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. 18Then[a] certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?"

> ***Acts 17:16***
> In New Testament times, the city of Athens was known as a center of philosophy and intellectual thought. As Paul discovered, the intellectuals in the city were pretty rough on people who could not express their ideas eloquently.

Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

19And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new doctrine *is* of which you speak? 20For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean." 21For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

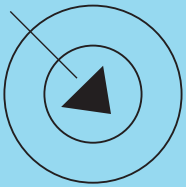
ADDRESSING THE AREOPAGUS

22Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24"God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26And He has made from one

17:5 [a]NU-Text omits *who were not persuaded;* M-Text omits *becoming envious.*
17:18 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *also.*



PROMISE

God promises to help you be exactly the person He created you to be.

"In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28a).

Ever feel like you're expected to be somebody you're not? Straight-A student? Club president? Perfect little angel? Sure, there are times when you need to venture out of your comfort zone and expect more of yourself than what comes easily for you. And God has given you natural abilities that (as you begin to spot them) will shape the person you are. When He created you, He didn't just bundle up a bunch of leftovers and throw them in your direction. He knew what He wanted to do in you, what He wanted you to accomplish, the skills and potential He wanted you to have. And He knew exactly what you'd need in order to pull it off.

He's placed spiritual gifts in you, unique and powerful tools that shape the way you serve Him and relate to others—as a peacemaker, an encourager, a leader.

You're not God's afterthought, and you're certainly no mistake. You are a complete package of Christlike potential, waiting to be discovered and put into practice. And you can start living out God's purposes for you today, right where you are, with the people God has put in your life. Discover the person God created you to be. You'll be miserable being anybody else.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Romans 9:19, 20; 12:4–8; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Ephesians 2:10

blood[a] every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' 29Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. 30Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

32And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this *matter*." 33So Paul departed from among them. 34However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Acts 18:1

Athens was known for its beautiful buildings and schools. Alexandria was known for its library and museum. Corinth, on the other hand, was known for its . . . immorality. Located in southern Greece, about fifty miles from Athens, Corinth was the site of a temple for Aphrodite, the goddess of love. The temple housed one thousand "priestesses," who also worked as prostitutes.

MINISTERING AT CORINTH

18 After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. 2And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had

17:26 [a]NU-Text omits *blood*.

commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. 3So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. 4And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

5When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *is* the Christ. 6But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, "Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." 7And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus,[a] *one* who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. 8Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

9Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; 10for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." 11And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, 13saying, "This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law."

14And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. 15But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters*." 16And he drove them from the judgment seat. 17Then all the Greeks[a] took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.

PAUL RETURNS TO ANTIOCH

18So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. 19And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, 21but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem;[a] but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus.

22And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23After he had spent some time *there,* he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

MINISTRY OF APOLLOS

24Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. 27And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; 28for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

BIBLE
What does the Bible reveal?
Acts 18:28

PAUL AT EPHESUS

19 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

18:7 [a]NU-Text reads *Titius Justus.*
18:17 [a]NU-Text reads *they all.* **18:21** [a]NU-Text omits *I must* through *Jerusalem.*

3And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?"

So they said, "Into John's baptism."

4Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

5When they heard *this,* they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. 7Now the men were about twelve in all.

8And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. 9But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

MIRACLES GLORIFY CHRIST

11Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. 13Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We[a] exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." 14Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

15And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

DEMONS
Do demons have power?
Acts 19:16

16Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered[a] them, and prevailed against them,[b] so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. 19Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned *them* in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and *it* totaled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. 20So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

THE RIOT AT EPHESUS

21When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." 22So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

23And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. 24For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana,[a] brought no small profit to the craftsmen. 25He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. 26Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. 27So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed,[a] whom all Asia and the world worship."

28Now when they heard *this,* they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!" 29So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. 30And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. 31Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. 32Some therefore cried one

19:13 [a]NU-Text reads *I.* **19:16** [a]M-Text reads *and they overpowered.* [b]NU-Text reads *both of them.* **19:24** [a]Greek *Artemis* **19:27** [a]NU-Text reads *she be deposed from her magnificence.*

thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. 34But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!"

Acts 19:35

The Greek goddess Artemis had a different Roman name—Diana. The temple built in her honor in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The temple boasted more than one hundred columns, each five stories tall. Inside the temple was an image of Artemis/Diana, carved into a stone that many scholars believe was a meteorite. Worshipers of the goddess claimed that the stone had been sent from heaven by Zeus, the god of gods.

35And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Zeus? 36Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. 37For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your[a] goddess. 38Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. 39But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. 40For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering." 41And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

JOURNEYS IN GREECE

20 After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to *himself,* embraced *them,* and departed to go to Macedonia. 2Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece 3and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. 4And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. 5These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. 6But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Acts 20:6

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was part of the annual Passover celebration. In case you're wondering, unleavened bread does not have yeast in it. Why would people make bread without yeast, the ingredient that makes it rise? When Moses and the Israelites left Egypt, they were in a hurry. There was no time for them to prepare food or to wait for bread to rise. Today unleavened bread is called matzo.

MINISTERING AT TROAS

7Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. 8There were many lamps in the upper room where they[a] were gathered together. 9And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. 10But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing *him* said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." 11Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. 12And they brought the young

19:37 [a]NU-Text reads *our.* **20:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *we.*



PROFILE
EUTYCHUS

Eutychus left a mark not so much because of what he did as because of what happened to him. He fell asleep in a church meeting in which Paul was speaking. That in itself wasn't that unusual—the meeting was held late at night and it seemed to go on and on. The unusual part of the story turned out to be the place Eutychus chose to sit. He was perched on a windowsill in a third-floor room and the window was open. While Eutychus listened, he got drowsy, he drifted off, and he fell out of the window! (This might be a good time to point out that Eutychus' name means "lucky.")

There was a doctor in the house—Luke—and he pronounced the young man dead at the scene. But the apostle Paul heard those words as a call to action. He held the dead boy and prayed, and Eutychus was brought back to life! It's not hard to imagine how this miracle affected everyone. As Luke said, "They were not a little comforted" (Acts 20:12).

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Obviously, falling asleep in church is not the best idea, even if you don't risk falling to your death. But we can still learn from Eutychus' story. Rather than focus on an ill-fated nap, maybe we should focus on the effect changes in a young person's life can have on others.

Unfortunately, some adults tend to have a stereotypical view of youth—teenagers in particular. Sometimes they forget that age is really not a factor in whether someone can positively affect their world. Maybe it's time you helped to remind them.

Don't be afraid to speak up about what God is doing in your life. If God has gotten hold of you, that is no less a miracle than Eutychus being revived on the lawn. Find out how many people know about Eutychus. Tell them the story. Tell them what it means to you. Tell them about how the Lord has worked in your own life: you were taken from death to life through faith in Jesus. Is there a greater miracle?

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Luke recorded Eutychus' brief but exciting episode in Acts 20:7–12.

Eutychus' life and death experience with the Lord made a difference. Yours can, too!

man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

FROM TROAS TO MILETUS

13Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. 14And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. 15We sailed from there, and the next *day* came opposite Chios. The following *day* we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next *day* we came to Miletus. 16For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.

THE EPHESIAN ELDERS EXHORTED

17From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. 18And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19serving the Lord with all

humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; 20how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself,[a] so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

25"And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men.* 27For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. 28Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God[a] which He purchased with His own blood. 29For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

32"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. 34Yes,[a] you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. 35I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

GIVING
What's better than getting gifts?
Acts 20:35

36And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

WARNINGS ON THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

21 Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following *day* to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. 2And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 3When we had sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo. 4And finding disciples,[a] we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. 5When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed. 6When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home.

7And when we had finished *our* voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day. 8On the next *day* we who were Paul's companions[a] departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was *one* of the seven, and stayed with him. 9Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. 10And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his *own* hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

12Now when we heard these things, both

20:24 [a]NU-Text reads *But I do not count my life of any value or dear to myself.* **20:28** [a]M-Text reads *of the Lord and God.* **20:34** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Yes.* **21:4** [a]NU-Text reads *the disciples.* **21:8** [a]NU-Text omits *who were Paul's companions.*

we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

14So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

PAUL URGED TO MAKE PEACE

15And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. 16Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge.

17And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18On the following *day* Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. 19When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20And when they heard *it,* they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; 21but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs. 22What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will[a] hear that you have come. 23Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. 24Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave *their* heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but *that* you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. 25But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written *and* decided that they should observe no such thing, except[a] that they should keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."

ARRESTED IN THE TEMPLE

26Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.

27Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, 28crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." 29(For they had previously[a] seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut. 31Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. 33Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. 34And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another.

So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. 35When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. 36For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, "Away with him!"

ADDRESSING THE JERUSALEM MOB

37Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I speak to you?"

He replied, "Can you speak Greek? 38Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?"

39But Paul said, "I am a Jew from Tarsus,

21:22 [a]NU-Text reads *What then is to be done? They will certainly.* **21:25** [a]NU-Text omits *that they should observe no such thing, except.* **21:29** [a]M-Text omits *previously.*

in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people."

40So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to *them* in the Hebrew language, saying,

22 "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now." 2And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent.

Then he said: 3"I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. 4I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, 5as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.

6"Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. 7And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' 8So I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'

9"And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid,[a] but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. 10So I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.' 11And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.

12"Then a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with all the Jews who dwelt *there,* 13came to me; and he stood and said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that same hour I looked up at him. 14Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. 15For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

17"Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance 18and saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.' 19So I said, 'Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. 20And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death,[a] and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' 21Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.'"

PAUL'S ROMAN CITIZENSHIP

22And they listened to him until this word, and *then* they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a *fellow* from the earth, for he is not fit to live!" 23Then, as they cried out and tore off *their* clothes and threw dust into the air, 24the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him. 25And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

26When the centurion heard *that,* he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman."

27Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?"

He said, "Yes."

28The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship."

And Paul said, "But I was born *a citizen.*"

29Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

THE SANHEDRIN DIVIDED

30The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by

22:9 [a]NU-Text omits *and were afraid.*
22:20 [a]NU-Text omits *to his death.*

the Jews, he released him from *his* bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

23 Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." 2And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. 3Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, *you* whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"

4And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"

5Then Paul said, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, *'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'* "[a]

6But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"

7And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. 8For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. 9Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, "We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God."[a]

10Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring *him* into the barracks.

THE PLOT AGAINST PAUL

11But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."

12And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy. 14They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow,[a] as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

16So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. 17Then Paul called one of the centurions to *him* and said, "Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him." 18So he took him and brought *him* to the commander and said, "Paul the prisoner called me to *him* and asked *me* to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you."

19Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?"

20And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. 21But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you."

22So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded *him,* "Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me."

SENT TO FELIX

23And he called for two centurions, saying, "Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night; 24and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring *him* safely to Felix the governor." 25He wrote a letter in the following manner:

23:5 [a]Exodus 22:28 **23:9** [a]NU-Text omits last clause and reads *what if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?* **23:15** [a]NU-Text omits *tomorrow.*

[26]Claudius Lysias,

To the most excellent governor Felix:

Greetings.

[27]This man was seized by the Jews
and was about to be killed by them.
Coming with the troops I rescued him,
having learned that he was a Roman.
[28]And when I wanted to know the
reason they accused him, I brought
him before their council. [29]I found
out that he was accused concerning
questions of their law, but had nothing
charged against him deserving of
death or chains. [30]And when it was
told me that the Jews lay in wait for
the man,[a] I sent him immediately
to you, and also commanded his
accusers to state before you the
charges against him.

Farewell.

[31]Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought *him* by night to Antipatris. [32]The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks. [33]When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. [34]And when the governor had read *it,* he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that *he was* from Cilicia, [35]he said, "I will hear you when your accusers also have come." And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium.

ACCUSED OF SEDITION

24 Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator *named* Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.

[2]And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: "Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, [3]we accept *it* always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. [4]Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. [5]For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. [6]He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him,[a] and wanted to judge him according to our law. [7]But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took *him* out of our hands, [8]commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him." [9]And the Jews also assented,[a] maintaining that these things were so.

THE DEFENSE BEFORE FELIX

[10]Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: "Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, [11]because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. [12]And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. [13]Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. [14]But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. [15]I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead,[a] both of *the* just and *the* unjust. [16]This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

[17]"Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, [18]in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult. [19]They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me. [20]Or else let those who are *here* themselves say if they found any wrongdoing[a] in me while I stood before

23:30 [a]NU-Text reads *there would be a plot against the man.* **24:6** [a]NU-Text ends the sentence here and omits the rest of verse 6, all of verse 7, and the first clause of verse 8. **24:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *joined the attack.* **24:15** [a]NU-Text omits *of the dead.* **24:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *say what wrongdoing they found.*

the council, [21]unless *it is* for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.'"

FELIX PROCRASTINATES

[22]But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of *the* Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case." [23]So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let *him* have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

[24]And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. [25]Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you." [26]Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him.[a] Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.

[27]But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.

PAUL APPEALS TO CAESAR

25 Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. [2]Then the high priest[a] and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, [3]asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—while *they* lay in ambush along the road to kill him. [4]But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was going *there* shortly. [5]"Therefore," he said, "let those who have authority among you go down with *me* and accuse this man, to see if there is any fault in him."

[6]And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought. [7]When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove, [8]while he answered for himself, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all."

[9]But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?"

[10]So Paul said, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. [11]For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar."

> ***Acts 25:11***
> Because he was a Roman citizen by birth, Paul had the right to appeal his case all the way to the Roman emperor Nero, if he so desired.

[12]Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, "You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!"

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

[13]And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. [14]When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, [15]about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me,* when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. [16]To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction[a] before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.' [17]Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. [18]When the accusers stood up,

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24:26 [a]NU-Text omits *that he might release him.*
25:2 [a]NU-Text reads *chief priests.* **25:16** [a]NU-Text omits *to destruction,* although it is implied.

they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, 19but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. 20And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. 21But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar."

22Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself."

"Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him."

23So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in. 24And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. 25But when I found that he had committed nothing deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. 26I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. 27For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him."

PAUL'S EARLY LIFE

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself."

So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: 2"I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, 3especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

4"My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. 5They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. 6And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. 7To this *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. 8Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

9"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against *them.* 11And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted *them* even to foreign cities.

PAUL RECOUNTS HIS CONVERSION

12"While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. 14And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is* hard for you to kick against the goads.' 15So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 16But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 17I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now[a] send you, 18to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

PAUL'S POST-CONVERSION LIFE

19"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20but

26:17 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *now.*

declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. 21For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill *me.* 22Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— 23that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles."

AGRIPPA PARRIES PAUL'S CHALLENGE

24Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

25But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. 26For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. 27King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

28Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

29And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

30When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; 31and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains."

32Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

THE VOYAGE TO ROME BEGINS

27 And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. 2So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. 3And the next *day* we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care. 4When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under *the shelter of* Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. 5And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia. 6There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.

7When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under *the shelter of* Crete off Salmone. 8Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city *of* Lasea.

PAUL'S WARNING IGNORED

9Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, 10saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives." 11Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul. 12And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, *and* winter *there.*

IN THE TEMPEST

13When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. 14But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon.[a] 15So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive. 16And running under *the shelter of* an island called Clauda,[a] we secured the skiff with difficulty. 17When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run

27:14 [a]NU-Text reads *Euraquilon.*
27:16 [a]NU-Text reads *Cauda.*

aground on the Syrtis[a] *Sands,* they struck sail and so were driven. [18]And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship. [19]On the third *day* we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands. [20]Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us,* all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.

[21]But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. [22]And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. [23]For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, [24]saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' [25]Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. [26]However, we must run aground on a certain island."

[27]Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic *Sea,* about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. [28]And they took soundings and found *it* to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms. [29]Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. [30]And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, [31]Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." [32]Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

THANKFULNESS
Who should we thank for providing for our needs?
Acts 27:35

[33]And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. [34]Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you." [35]And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. [36]Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves. [37]And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship. [38]So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.

SHIPWRECKED ON MALTA

[39]When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. [40]And they let go the anchors and left *them* in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. [41]But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

[42]And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. [43]But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump *overboard* first and get to land, [44]and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

PAUL'S MINISTRY ON MALTA

28 Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. [2]And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. [3]But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid *them* on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. [4]So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not

27:17 [a]M-Text reads *Syrtes.*



LIFE APP

Kindness / Acts 28:2

In Acts 28, we catch up with the apostle Paul when he is a prisoner of the Roman Empire. His guards were taking him to Rome by ship when a large storm came and shipwrecked them on an island called Malta. It was raining and cold and there were natives living on that island, so it may have seemed a dangerous situation. Would the natives attack them? Would they take them all prisoner? Things could have gone very wrong. But they didn't. Instead, "the natives showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold" (Acts 28:2).

Rather than approach the shipwrecked strangers confrontationally, the natives chose to show them kindness. They welcomed them and helped them get warm and dry. In such horrible circumstances, this act of kindness made a huge difference—and was even recorded in the Bible to be read about generation after generation.

When was the last time someone did something kind for you? Were you surprised by their kindness? In our world, we see plenty of selfishness and greed and deceit and scheming. Sometimes it's hard to see through all those things to identify the acts of kindness that are also happening. But don't be misled—kindness still exists in this world, mostly because God's people are still in this world. And we are called to live lives of kindness.

If you look around, opportunities for kindness are everywhere. Maybe the older lady who lives next door needs help taking her trash to the street on pick-up day. Maybe that kid at school who gets picked on all the time could use some friendly company on his walk to his next class. Maybe your mother needs to hear how much you appreciate her. Acts of kindness can take many shapes and forms, but they should be a part of our everyday lives. God can use even the smallest act of kindness to change someone's life forever. Who wouldn't want to be a part of that?

allow to live." 5But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. 6However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

7In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. 8And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. 9So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. 10They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.

ARRIVAL AT ROME

11After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. 12And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. 13From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, 14where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome. 15And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

16Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.

PAUL'S MINISTRY AT ROME

17And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: "Men *and* brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, 18who, when they had examined me, wanted to let *me* go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. 19But when the Jews[a] spoke against *it,* I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. 20For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see *you* and speak with *you,* because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

21Then they said to him, "We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. 22But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere."

23So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at *his* lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. 24And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. 25So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our[a] fathers, 26saying,

'Go to this people and say:
"Hearing you will hear, and shall not
understand;
And seeing you will see, and not
perceive;
27 *For the hearts of this people have*
grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes
and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their
hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them."'[a]

28"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" 29And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.[a]

30Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

28:19 [a]That is, the ruling authorities
28:25 [a]NU-Text reads *your.* **28:27** [a]Isaiah 6:9, 10
28:29 [a]NU-Text omits this verse.

Romans

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 57
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: KNOW THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST
PURPOSE: GOD DECLARES US RIGHTEOUS AND HELPS US TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY.

OUTLINE

1:1–17 .....Paul and His Message of Good News
1:18—3:20.....Everyone Is Guilty
3:21—4:25.....Justification by Faith
5:1—8:39 .....A New Life in Christ for God's People
9:1—11:36.....What About the People of Israel?
12:1—15:13 .....How to Live a Transformed Life of Love
15:14—16:27 .....Paul's Plans and Personal Greetings

KEY VERSE:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek (Romans 1:16).

THEN /// We are used to talking about faith. It doesn't seem like a difficult concept. We hear songs about it on the radio. We hear the word at least three times every time we go to church. Why did it seem to be such a new thought to the early Christians?

Before Christ's life and death, God was worshiped through sacrifices and rituals. People had to have faith, but it was faith that *one day* God would send a Savior. They depended on their sacrifices to keep them right with God. Once Jesus came, He made the one true sacrifice. The people didn't have to do all those rituals anymore to keep themselves right with God. They just had to have faith in Jesus' sacrifice for their sins. In that way, faith was a very new concept.

NOW /// Do you know what a primer is? It is the most basic handbook you can find. When you learned to read, you probably used a primer of some kind. It is a book that explains a big concept in simple, small pieces. It is an Outline of the fundamentals.

The Book of Romans is a kind of primer. It is a primer to the Christian life. Paul wrote it to the Romans so that they would have an introduction to him and to his beliefs before he came to visit them. He wanted to make the most of his trip there, so the more he could explain to them ahead of time, the better. He could answer their questions when he arrived.

The basic message of Romans is this: you are saved by God's grace through faith, not by the good things you do. None of us deserves salvation. It is God's gift through Jesus. Life gets complicated sometimes—trying to figure out what to do and what not to do. Romans takes us back to the basics so that we can find our way to God and then figure out life in light of His love.

REALITY CHECK /// In Paul's letter to the Romans, he makes one bold statement in several different ways: before we come to believe in Christ and His sacrifice, we are dead in our sins. We are spiritual corpses. Our bodies might be carrying on, but our spirits have no breath in them. We don't function. We can't do the things that we were created to do like spill over with joy and kindness and patience and abundant life. But when we accept Christ's sacrifice for our sins and put our faith in *His* goodness rather than our own, then we come to life. The Holy Spirit breathes His life into us, and our spirits come alive and dance and sing in the light of God's love.

GREETING

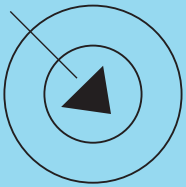
1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ,
called *to be* an apostle, separated to
the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the
Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the
seed of David according to the flesh, 4 *and*
declared *to be* the Son of God with power
according to the Spirit of holiness, by the
resurrection from the dead. 5 Through
Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all
nations for His name, 6 among whom you
also are the called of Jesus Christ;

7 To all who are in Rome, beloved of God,
called *to be* saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

DESIRE TO VISIT ROME

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ
for you all, that your faith is spoken of
throughout the whole world. 9 For God is
my witness, whom I serve with my spirit
in the gospel of His Son, that without
ceasing I make mention of you always in
my prayers, 10 making request if, by some
means, now at last I may find a way in the
will of God to come to you. 11 For I long to
see you, that I may impart to you some
spiritual gift, so that you may be established— 12 that is, that I may be encouraged
together with you by the mutual faith both
of you and me.



PROMISE

God promises everyone who has faith will live.

For in it [the gospel of Christ] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).

Most people want to do something so that God will like them. They think that if they're really good, if they do everything—or most things—right, then God will accept them. It makes people feel really good to think there's something so neat about them that they can earn a spot in heaven.

The truth is that no one can be *that* good. There's something special about every single person on earth, but there's some junk in everyone, too. God doesn't accept anyone's goodness as good enough to get into heaven.

But that's not the end of the story. "The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith." In other words, God accepts those who come to Him in faith. Now *that's* good news. It's not being good that gets God to accept you; it's having faith in His Son. You don't have to settle for some lukewarm, lip-service faith. You can have a faith so strong, so alive, that you can't wait to commit your whole life to Jesus. Then, as Romans 1:17 says, you will live—not just physically but with strength and power because you're living in Him.

Keep renewing your mind with God's Word. That's how you build faith. Do your best to live the way God wants you to just because you love Him and you want to please Him. Faith sets you free from the vicious cycle of constantly trying to work your way into God's good graces.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 5:18, 19; Galatians 3:9, 26; Hebrews 1



[13]Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. [14]I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. [15]So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

SALVATION
Who can receive salvation?
Romans 1:16

THE JUST LIVE BY FAITH

[16]For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,[a] for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. [17]For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, *"The just shall live by faith."*[a]

HOMOSEXUALITY
Will homosexuals be held accountable for their actions?
Romans 1:18–32

GOD'S WRATH ON UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

[18]For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, [19]because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. [20]For since

1:16 [a]NU-Text omits *of Christ.* **1:17** [a]Habakkuk 2:4



WORLD APP

Alternative Lifestyles / Romans 1:26–32

In Genesis 1 and 2, we can read about how God made the world and all the creatures in it. Part of God's creation was nature—the system of how everything should function. When sin was introduced into the world through Adam and Eve, natural things became corruptible.

We see evidences of this corruption every day: crime, greed, lust, deception. The list seems endless. People continually choose to live lifestyles contrary to the natural way God intended. When we use the term "alternative lifestyles," we are typically referring to the way of life described in Romans 1:26, 27: "For this reason God gave them up to the vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due."

God designed men and women as the perfect partners for each other (Gen. 2). When people choose to defy this natural design and live lifestyles based on their own opposing thoughts or desires, it goes against nature as God intended. These alternative lifestyles do not honor God or result in a blessed life.

But homosexual lifestyles are not the only lifestyles that are contrary to God's design. Lives filled with disobedience, such as envy, strife, lying, gossip, or pride, go against God's intentions as well (Rom. 1:28–32). As Christians, we should live according to the Word of God and our desire to be like Jesus. Living life based on the characteristics of the world (Rom. 1:28–32) will only draw us away from God. Living life based on the characteristics of the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22, 23) will bring us closer to our Creator.

When we do encounter those who purposefully choose to live lifestyles opposed to God's will, we can consider that maybe no one ever told them about God's love or His plan for the world. We can share the truth with them in the spirit of love (Eph. 4:15).

the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

24Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

28And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality,[a] wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, 30backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving,[a] unmerciful; 32who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

2 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. 3And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6who *"will render to each one according to his deeds"*:[a] 7eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, 9tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11For there is no partiality with God.

12For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law 13(for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; 14for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*) 16in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

THE JEWS GUILTY AS THE GENTILES

17Indeed[a] you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, 18and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, 19and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form

1:29 [a]NU-Text omits *sexual immorality.* **1:31** [a]NU-Text omits *unforgiving.* **2:6** [a]Psalm 62:12; Proverbs 24:12 **2:17** [a]NU-Text reads *But if.*

of knowledge and truth in the law. 21You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? 22You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? 24For *"the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,"*[a] as it is written.

CIRCUMCISION OF NO AVAIL

25For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. 26Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? 27And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, *even* with *your* written *code* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law? 28For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; 29but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.

GOD'S JUDGMENT DEFENDED

3 What advantage then has the Jew, or what *is* the profit of circumcision? 2Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. 3For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? 4Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written:

"That You may be justified in Your words,
And may overcome when You are judged."[a]

5But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) 6Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?

7For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? 8And *why* not *say,* "Let us do evil that good may come"?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.

SIN
Are all people guilty of sin?
Romans 3:9–12, 23

ALL HAVE SINNED

9What then? Are we better *than they?* Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.
10As it is written:

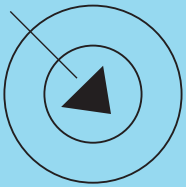
"There is none righteous, no, not one;
11 *There is none who understands;*
There is none who seeks after God.
12 *They have all turned aside;*
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no, not one."[a]
13" *Their throat is an open tomb;*
With their tongues they have practiced deceit";[a]
"The poison of asps is under their lips";[b]
14 *"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."*[a]
15 *"Their feet are swift to shed blood;*
16 *Destruction and misery are in their ways;*
17 *And the way of peace they have not known."*[a]
18 *"There is no fear of God before their eyes."*[a]

19Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.
20Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH

21But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed

2:24 [a]Isaiah 52:5; Ezekiel 36:22 **3:4** [a]Psalm 51:4 **3:12** [a]Psalms 14:1–3; 53:1–3; Ecclesiastes 7:20 **3:13** [a]Psalm 5:9 [b]Psalm 140:3 **3:14** [a]Psalm 10:7 **3:17** [a]Isaiah 59:7, 8 **3:18** [a]Psalm 36:1



PROMISE

God promises to treat you better than you deserve.

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24).

Hate to break it to you this way. You're a pretty good kid and all. But unfortunately, your situation leaves no other choice. You've been found guilty and your file is being turned over to the justice department. Sin has been discovered within you and you have been sentenced to death.

Those could be frightening words if they were real, right? Well, they are. You are guilty and you did receive a death sentence—we all did. We are all guilty of sin and deserve to die. But Jesus came to earth as a man to die in your place. Even though He never sinned—He was guilty of absolutely nothing—He allowed Himself to be crucified and voluntarily gave up His life to pay the penalty of sin. Now we have a choice. We can face our own death sentence, or we can accept Jesus' death as our own.

It goes something like this: First, deliver an honest confession to God that you are guilty. Then ask Him to forgive you for your sin and help you leave it behind you. Tell God you understand what Jesus did for you and that you accept His death on your behalf. Then believe that God will do exactly as He said; He will pardon your sin because of His Son.

Are you ready to make that choice? Go for it!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Isaiah 53; John 3:16; Romans 5:6–19; 8:31–39; Titus 3:4–7

by the Law and the Prophets, [22]even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all[a] who believe. For there is no difference; [23]for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24]being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, [25]whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, [26]to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:25, 26

Under the law God gave to Moses, whenever a person sinned, an animal had to be sacrificed—meaning, killed on an altar. Usually it was a sheep whose blood was offered as payment for the sin. Jesus put an end to that old system of sacrifice when He became the ultimate sacrifice. Jesus' death paid for the sins of the entire world, once and for all. God accepted His blood as the only offering that would ever again need to be made.

BOASTING EXCLUDED

[27]Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. [28]Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. [29]Or *is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, [30]since *there is* one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. [31]Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

3:22 [a]NU-Text omits *and on all.*

ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

4 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?[a] 2For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. 3For what does the Scripture say? *"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*[a] 4Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

DAVID CELEBRATES THE SAME TRUTH

5But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, 6just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

7 *"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds*
are forgiven,
And whose sins are covered;
8*Blessed is the man to whom the* LORD
shall not impute sin."[a]

ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BEFORE CIRCUMCISION

9*Does* this blessedness then *come* upon the circumcised *only,* or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. 10How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. 11And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, 12and the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised.

THE PROMISE GRANTED THROUGH FAITH

13For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, 15because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

> ***Romans 4:17***
> The history of the Jewish people begins with God's promise to Abraham. God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The Lord promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations.

16Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all 17(as it is written, *"I have made you a father of many nations"*[a]) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; 18who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, *"So shall your descendants be."*[a] 19And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22And therefore *"it was accounted to him for righteousness."*[a]

23Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

4:1 [a]Or *Abraham our (fore)father according to the flesh has found?* **4:3** [a]Genesis 15:6 **4:8** [a]Psalm 32:1, 2 **4:17** [a]Genesis 17:5 **4:18** [a]Genesis 15:5 **4:22** [a]Genesis 15:6

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ROMANS 5:1

True Peace Now that you are a believer, the battle for your spirit is over. You chose the path of victory when you chose Jesus. When you trusted Him, God gave you peace. Are you enjoying the peace you have, or are you trying to fight a battle that's already been won? Christians don't live trouble-free lives. We still face challenges and trials. But we don't have to be filled with anxiety and fear because we know Jesus holds all the answers and He'll help us through the hard times.

God wants to calm you. He wants you to trust Him to work everything out. He's in control, so you can relax, keep doing what's right, and leave the outcome up to Him. He wants you to let Him be the light that shatters any darkness you encounter.

Many people give their hearts to Jesus and then keep on fighting the same old way they used to. With the peace of God, you can let go of some of your anxiety about grades, college, finances, family, or whatever is stressing you out. Do everything you know to do and trust God. You don't have to manipulate situations and worry about things you can't see. You don't have to go through life by yourself anymore. Rest in the peace God brings. Open your eyes. His love for you casts out all fear. Stop wringing your hands in worry. He loves you. He wants you to experience the peace He's made available to you. (See also: John 14:27; Col. 3:15; 2 Thess. 3:16.)

Words to Live By

Justified: The word translated as "justified" in Romans 5:1 is the Greek word *dikaioo* (dik-ah-yo-o). This word means "to make someone just or righteous" or "to declare someone innocent." There is not one thing any of us could do to make our own selves righteous or good enough to stand before our holy God, much less have peace with Him. But when we accept Christ as our Savior, He justifies us—He makes us righteous through His own blood. Only because of Him can we be declared innocent before God and live at peace with Him.

FAITH TRIUMPHS IN TROUBLE

5 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have[a] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3And not only *that,* but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

CHRIST IN OUR PLACE

6For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11And not only *that,* but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

DEATH IN ADAM, LIFE IN CHRIST

12Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed

5:1 [a]Another ancient reading is, *let us have peace.*

Romans 5:12

After God created Adam, He placed him in the Garden of Eden. The place was paradise—literally. The law of the land was pretty simple, too: he could eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That's it. That's the only rule Adam had to remember and obey. Guess what? Adam chose to disobey God and eat the fruit from the forbidden tree. Because Adam represented the entire human race, his sin affected all of his descendants.

when there is no law. 14Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. 16And the gift *is* not like *that which came* through the one who sinned. For the judgment *which came* from one *offense resulted* in condemnation, but the free gift *which came* from many offenses *resulted* in justification. 17For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

18Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment came* to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. 19For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

20Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, 21so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE TO GOD

6 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection, 6knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him,* that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God. 11Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

12Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. 14For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

FROM SLAVES OF SIN TO SLAVES OF GOD

15What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 16Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness? 17But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading* to *more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves *of* righteousness for holiness.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ROMANS 6:1, 2

Dead to Sin Paul taught that we, as humans, can't do anything to earn God's friendship. When he told people that the only way they could know God and go to heaven one day was by having faith and trusting in God's kindness and grace, he probably knew that some people were going to say, "Cool. Then we can do anything we want because it doesn't matter, right?" Likely anticipating that the question would come up, Paul included something incredible in this letter to the Romans: "We . . . died to sin." That doesn't sound right. How can Paul say that you're dead to sin when you know that you mess up and sin all the time? Well, Paul wasn't just making that up. He explains it this way: "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

Paul was explaining that because you've put your trust in Jesus, sin only has power over you when you let it. You can make a decision to "walk in newness of life." You can choose to keep living in the old sinful ways, or decide to act in ways that please God. No one is perfect, and no one will always make the right choices. But, day by day, as you read the Bible, you will be transformed by God's Word. As you make the daily effort to walk in love, forgiveness, and purity before the Lord, your character will begin to change. Bit by bit, you will be changed and "newness of life" will become a way of life. Just try it and see. (See also: Rom. 6; Eph. 2:1–9; Col. 2:11–14.)

Words to Live By

Continue: The word translated as "continue" in Romans 6:1 is the Greek word *epimeno* (ep-ee-men'-o). It means "to remain" or "to persevere." We may still sin even though we're following Christ. We're human. But we won't continue to live in a sinful lifestyle, remaining all messed up in unconfessed and unforgiven sins. Instead, we will keep trying to live a lifestyle that pleases God; repenting, confessing, and receiving forgiveness for the sins we do commit.

Romans 6:19

The comparison between sin and slavery probably hit home to many of the people who read Paul's letter. In New Testament times, an estimated one out of every four people in the Roman Empire was a slave. People captured in battle, whether they were soldiers or civilians, usually became slaves. People who could not afford to pay their debts also became slaves as a way to work off what they owed.

20For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. 22But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

DEATH
What does sin earn us?
Romans 6:23

FREED FROM THE LAW

7 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? 2For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law

of *her* husband. 3So then if, while *her* husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. 4Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. 5For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. 6But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

SIN'S ADVANTAGE IN THE LAW

7What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, *"You shall not covet."*[a] 8But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead. 9I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. 10And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death. 11For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me.* 12Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

LAW CANNOT SAVE FROM SIN

13Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. 14For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good. 17But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. 19For the good that I will *to do,* I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do,* that I practice. 20Now if I do what I will not *to do,* it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

21I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

FREE FROM INDWELLING SIN

8 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,[a] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. 7Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. 11But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to

7:7 [a]Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21
8:1 [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.

MAKING IT REAL // ROMANS 8:14

Led by the Spirit When you put your faith in God's Son, His Spirit became part of your life. God knew that you would need His Spirit to help you live the way He wants you to live. People who haven't trusted Jesus don't have God's Spirit. They live life to please themselves or to get on the good side of other people. But you don't have to live that way. You can let God's Spirit choose the road you're going to take. Living that way pleases God. And it has a fringe benefit for you, too. "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6). If your goal in life is to satisfy all your selfish desires or to always please other people, you will never have peace. However, if you are led by the Spirit of God, you can have peace even in the most chaotic situations.

In order for your mind to be ruled by His Spirit, you've got to remain close to God. Spend time in prayer, in worship, and in His Word. Really work these things into your life—so much that they become a part of you. Then you'll know when the Spirit is leading you, and you'll be able to follow. (See also: Is. 63:11–14; 2 Cor. 2:14; Gal. 5:16.)

Words to Live By

Led: The word translated as "led" in Romans 8:14 is the Greek word *ago* (ag'-o). It can also mean "to bring." When God's Spirit is leading us, He's not just giving us instructions and setting us out on our own. Instead, He is right there with us, bringing us to the places we need to go. So we will never be stranded in a situation wondering what to do. The Spirit will be right there with us, bringing us along with Him throughout our journey to our ultimate destination.

your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

SONSHIP THROUGH THE SPIRIT

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him,* that we may also be glorified together.

FROM SUFFERING TO GLORY

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only *that,* but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us[a] with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what

8:26 [a]NU-Text omits *for us.*



LIFE APP

Family / Romans 8:29

When God decided people should live together in families, He had a plan in mind. Parents are to teach and train, children are to grow and become. Older siblings should protect the younger ones and help them learn. God wants to use our families as a part of His plan for us—to help us grow into the people He created us to be.

While families hold an important role in teaching us to become the people we are meant to be, families have an even more important reason for being: they help us understand God's kingdom.

We know God is our heavenly Father. By looking at earthly fathers who love and care for their families, we can learn more about our heavenly Father. A father should do all he can to provide the things his family needs; he should correct his children and discipline them so they can grow into strong adults; most importantly, a father should love his children and their mother as much as he possibly can.

Jesus is the Son of God and He made a way for us to be a part of God's family. When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we are born into God's kingdom—we become children of God and Jesus is our Big Brother!

No person on this earth can live a perfect life, because we all struggle with sin and we all make wrong choices. So no earthly father is perfect and no earthly brothers or sisters can live sinless lives. But by looking at earthly families, we can begin to get an idea of just how close and real our relationship with God and His Son can be. God, our Father, provides for us, teaches us, and loves us completely. And Jesus, our Big Brother, watches out for us and teaches us all we need to know to become the mature Christians God wants us to be.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ROMANS 8:32

God Gives God is a giver. That's true. A lot of people are under the impression that God is a taker—always wanting something from them—but this is not true. Check out John 10:10: "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." God wants to give you a full life. Satan is the thief who comes to steal everything you've got. Not only does God want to meet all of your needs, He also wants to give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4 states, "Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." Does that mean that you can dream up any selfish thing, consider it your heart's desire, and expect God to let you have it? No! It means that when you're going after Him with everything you've got, He'll begin to put His desires in your heart. As you begin to understand how good and how right His desires for you are, they'll become your desires, too.

Let the Lord help you identify His desires for you. Let Him help you figure out how your current desires fit into His plan. Or be willing to let Him take any selfish desires away. God knows the perfect future for you. He knows what will make you happiest in life and everything you need to get there. He's ready, willing, and able to give you what you need. Just ask Him today. (See also: John 14:13–15; 1 Cor. 2:12.)

Words to Live By

Freely give: The word translated as "freely give" in Romans 8:32 is the Greek word *charizomai* (khar-id'-zo-mi). It conveys the idea of doing a favor or being kind. God does not give to us grudgingly or out of simple duty; He doesn't *have* to give anyone anything. God wants to give good things to His people because He loves them and it gives Him joy to bless them.

the mind of the Spirit *is,* because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God.

TRIALS
Can we still trust God when things go wrong?
Romans 8:28

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

GOD'S EVERLASTING LOVE

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. 34 Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written:

> *"For Your sake we are killed all day long;*
> *We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*[a]

8:36 [a]Psalm 44:22

MAKING IT REAL // ROMANS 8:35–39

No Separation Feelings and truth don't always have a lot in common. Feelings are just emotions and they can change faster than a status on your profile page. And sometimes, they are just as silly. Even what you ate for lunch can affect the way you feel. An off-hand comment from someone in the hall can totally change your mood for the rest of the day. Allowing feelings to determine what you think is just messed up.

No matter how you feel, the truth is you are completely loved by God and nothing can ever separate you from His love. Sometimes you may be tempted to compare God's love to the love you know here on earth. The love you know here can be conditional, based on your performance as a friend, a student, or even a son or daughter. But God's love has no conditions, and nothing you could ever do can remove His constant devotion to you. There is nothing you can do to make God stop loving you. You can't run away from His love. You can't hide from His love. You can only decide to accept or reject it. You are loved perfectly and completely by the Creator of everything. You have His Word on that. (See also: Ps. 136:1; 139:13, 14; Eph. 3:14–19.)

Words to Live By

Nothing can separate us: Paul gives an amazing list of the things that can never separate us from the love of Christ. You may think there is something in your life that is so overwhelming or so bad that even Christ's love couldn't get through it. But look at the list in Romans 8:35! If you ever feel what you're facing is too big for God, read this verse again. No matter how intimidating trouble may seem, there is absolutely nothing that can separate you from the love of Christ—accept it!

37 Yet in all these things we are more than
conquerors through Him who loved us.
38 For I am persuaded that neither death
nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor
powers, nor things present nor things to
come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any
other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in
Christ Jesus our Lord.

ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF CHRIST

9 I tell the truth in Christ, I am not
lying, my conscience also bearing
me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that
I have great sorrow and continual grief in
my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself
were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen[a] according to the
flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom *pertain*
the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the
giving of the law, the service *of God,* and
the promises; 5 of whom *are* the fathers and
from whom, according to the flesh, Christ
came, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed
God. Amen.

ISRAEL'S REJECTION AND GOD'S PURPOSE

6 But it is not that the word of God has taken
no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are*
of Israel, 7 nor *are they* all children because
they are the seed of Abraham; but, *"In Isaac
your seed shall be called."*[a] 8 That is, those
who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are*
not the children of God; but the children of
the promise are counted as the seed. 9 For
this *is* the word of promise: *"At this time I
will come and Sarah shall have a son."*[a]

10 And not only *this,* but when Rebecca
also had conceived by one man, *even* by our
father Isaac 11 (for *the children* not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil,
that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him
who calls), 12 it was said to her, *"The older
shall serve the younger."*[a] 13 As it is written,
"Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."[a]

9:3 [a]Or *relatives* **9:7** [a]Genesis 21:12
9:9 [a]Genesis 18:10, 14 **9:12** [a]Genesis 25:23
9:13 [a]Malachi 1:2, 3

MAKING IT REAL // ROMANS 8:37

More than Conquerors Your team just won the state championship. What a season! You worked hard and it really paid off. The whole city is celebrating. It's so exciting. The great feeling seems like it'll carry you forever. Every time you think about that win, you grin from ear to ear. Your team is the best! That feeling does stay with you for a while, maybe for the rest of the year, and even on into the next season. But eventually, someone else wins. Your glory fades a little. Every year the light grows a little dimmer. Your trophy gets pushed aside in the display case to make room for newer awards and prizes. Your sweet victory becomes a sweet memory. It doesn't sustain you anymore. It doesn't inspire you to push harder.

Winning a game is great, but it's certainly not all there is to life. Paul says there's much more. He says that belonging to Christ makes you more than a winner. Believers get to share in Christ's victory for eternity. The celebration never ends. His glory never grows dim. The reward He brings will never be replaced by one greater—nothing is greater than an eternity in heaven with God. Because of Jesus, you can be more than a conqueror every day of your life. And in the end you will be ultimately victorious with a prize that lasts forever. (See also: 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14.)

Words to Live By

We are more than conquerors: The word translated as "we are more than conquerors" in Romans 8:37 is the Greek word *hupernikao* (hoop-er-nik-ah'-o). It means "to get a decisive victory; to not just win, but win huge—to more than conquer." When Jesus conquered the power of sin and death, it wasn't a close fight—He totally vanquished and demolished whatever power they held. And we get to share in His victory—we get to "more than conquer" as well! Even when situations seem their most hopeless, we can look forward to our ultimate victory that surpasses any win we can imagine!

Romans 9:10–13

In ancient times, the oldest male child in a family received a larger inheritance than the other children. Jacob was a famous exception to that rule. Jacob and his brother Esau were twins, but Esau was born first. God, however, chose to bless Jacob, whom He called Israel. (Sound familiar?) The twelve tribes of Israel were descendants of Jacob's twelve sons.

ISRAEL'S REJECTION AND GOD'S JUSTICE

14What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! 15For He says to Moses, *"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."*[a] 16So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. 17For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, *"For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."*[a] 18Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

19You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" 20But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, "Why have you made me like this?" 21Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

22*What* if God, wanting to show *His* wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23and

9:15 [a]Exodus 33:19 **9:17** [a]Exodus 9:16

that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

25As He says also in Hosea:

"I will call them My people, who were not My people,
And her beloved, who was not beloved."[a]
26 *"And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,*
'You are not My people,'
There they shall be called sons of the living God."[a]

27Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel:[a]

"Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,
The remnant will be saved.
28 *For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness,*
Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth."[a]

29And as Isaiah said before:

"Unless the LORD of Sabaoth[a] *had left us a seed,*
We would have become like Sodom,
And we would have been made like Gomorrah."[b]

PRESENT CONDITION OF ISRAEL

30What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; 31but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.[a] 32Why? Because *they did* not *seek it* by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law.[a] For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. 33As it is written:

"Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense,
And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."[a]

ISRAEL NEEDS THE GOSPEL

10 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel[a] is that they may be saved. 2For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. 4For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

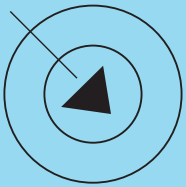
5For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, *"The man who does those things shall live by them."*[a] 6But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, *"Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'"*[a] (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) 7or, *"'Who will descend into the abyss?'"*[a] (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8But what does it say? *"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"*[a] (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11For the Scripture says, *"Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."*[a] 12For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13For *"whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*[a]

SALVATION
How can we receive salvation?
Romans 10:8–10

ISRAEL REJECTS THE GOSPEL

14How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall

9:25 [a]Hosea 2:23 **9:26** [a]Hosea 1:10 **9:27** [a]Isaiah 10:22, 23 **9:28** [a]NU-Text reads *For the LORD will finish the work and cut it short upon the earth.* **9:29** [a]Literally, in Hebrew, *Hosts* [b]Isaiah 1:9 **9:31** [a]NU-Text omits *of righteousness.* **9:32** [a]NU-Text reads *by works.* **9:33** [a]Isaiah 8:14; 28:16 **10:1** [a]NU-Text reads *them.* **10:5** [a]Leviticus 18:5 **10:6** [a]Deuteronomy 30:12 **10:7** [a]Deuteronomy 30:13 **10:8** [a]Deuteronomy 30:14 **10:11** [a]Isaiah 28:16 **10:13** [a]Joel 2:32



PROMISE

God promises that anyone can be saved.

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Rom. 10:9–13).

Do you know any people who consider themselves too sinful, too far gone, for Jesus to save them? Maybe they think their sins are too big or their lives too ugly. They think God couldn't possibly save them. They probably think God's angry, that He's given up on them by now, or that He's too holy to want them around.

Well, this passage is for those people. It gives hope to the hopeless. God delights in saving the unlovable and the lost and the ones who think they could never be saved. To think that God couldn't save you because you're too far gone is to say, "I'm bigger than God. I can do something so evil that He can't forgive me. I have more power than God." The truth is that *everyone* is hopelessly lost without Him and every sin is repulsive to Him. To God, all sins are big and ugly; one is not worse than another. But Jesus died for everyone—no exceptions—no matter how big and ugly their sins are. Anyone who calls out to Jesus will be saved.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Matthew 9:10–13; John 3:16–18; Romans 1:16, 17

they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

"How beautiful are the feet of those
who preach the gospel of peace,[a]
Who bring glad tidings of good
things!"[b]

16But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, *"LORD, who has believed our report?"*[a] 17So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

"Their sound has gone out to all the
earth,
And their words to the ends of the
world."[a]

19But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says:

"I will provoke you to jealousy by those
who are not a nation,
I will move you to anger by a foolish
nation."[a]

20But Isaiah is very bold and says:

"I was found by those who did not
seek Me;
I was made manifest to those who did
not ask for Me."[a]

21But to Israel he says:

"All day long I have stretched out My
hands
To a disobedient and contrary
people."[a]

ISRAEL'S REJECTION NOT TOTAL

11 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin. 2God

10:15 [a]NU-Text omits *preach the gospel of peace, Who.* [b]Isaiah 52:7; Nahum 1:15 **10:16** [a]Isaiah 53:1 **10:18** [a]Psalm 19:4 **10:19** [a]Deuteronomy 32:21 **10:20** [a]Isaiah 65:1 **10:21** [a]Isaiah 65:2

has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3*"LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"*?[a] 4But what does the divine response say to him? *"I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."*[a] 5Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6And if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace.[a] But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

Romans 11:2–4

In this passage, Paul is referring to an incident in the life of Elijah, the Old Testament prophet. It seems Ahab, the king of Israel, built a special temple and encouraged the people of his kingdom to worship there. No problem, right? Wrong. The temple Ahab built was for Baal, a pagan god. Ahab discouraged the Israelites from worshiping the true God! As prophet, it was Elijah's responsibility to confront the king about his wickedness. When he did, the king's evil wife, Jezebel, threatened to kill the prophet.

7What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. 8Just as it is written:

"God has given them a spirit of stupor,
Eyes that they should not see
And ears that they should not hear,
To this very day."[a]

9And David says:

"Let their table become a snare and a trap,
A stumbling block and a recompense to them.
10*Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see,*
And bow down their back always."[a]

ISRAEL'S REJECTION NOT FINAL

11I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles. 12Now if their fall *is* riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

13For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those who are* my flesh and save some of them. 15For if their being cast away *is* the reconciling of the world, what *will* their acceptance *be* but life from the dead?

16For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy;* and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches. 17And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you.

19You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20Well *said.* Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness,[a] if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who *are* natural *branches,* be grafted into their own olive tree?

25For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel

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11:3 [a]1 Kings 19:10, 14 **11:4** [a]1 Kings 19:18 **11:6** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **11:8** [a]Deuteronomy 29:4; Isaiah 29:10 **11:10** [a]Psalm 69:22, 23 **11:22** [a]NU-Text adds *of God.*

MAKING IT REAL // ROMANS 12:1

Living Sacrifices Under the old agreement that God had made with the Jewish people, there were two kinds of sacrifices. One sacrifice was for people's sins; the other sacrifice was an offering of worship. Both sacrifices involved killing an animal, usually a goat or a lamb that didn't have any flaws. Jesus' death on the cross made a new agreement between God and anyone who has faith in Him. Under that new agreement, Jesus is the once-for-all sacrifice for sin. People don't have to offer lambs or goats to make up for sin. But what do you do about the sacrifice of worship?

Just as *God* chose to make Jesus the sacrifice for sin, *you* choose to make the sacrifice of worship. Instead of offering an animal, you offer your own life to God. You dedicate your life to doing what He wants. That why it's called a *living* sacrifice. Paul says that living a life that's pure and pleasing to God is the best way to serve Him—to worship Him. In other words, living the way God wants you to live is your way of saying to Him, "You're awesome and I want everything about me to worship You!" (See also: 1 Pet. 2:5.)

Words to Live By

Acceptable: The word translated as "acceptable" in Romans 12:1 is the Greek word *euarestos* (yoo-ar'-es-tos). In addition to "acceptable," it carries the meaning of "well-pleasing." When we make our lives living sacrifices to the Lord, it is pleasing to Him. He's not just accepting our sacrifices like homework assignments we're turning in. Rather, He is well pleased and delighted when we worship Him with our lives.

until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26And so all Israel will be saved,[a] as it is written:

"The Deliverer will come out of Zion,
And He will turn away ungodliness
from Jacob;
27 *For this is My covenant with them,*
When I take away their sins."[a]

28Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. 29For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable. 30For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

33Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!

34 *"For who has known the mind of the*
LORD?
Or who has become His
counselor?"[a]
35 *"Or who has first given to Him*
And it shall be repaid to him?"[a]

36For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

LIVING SACRIFICES TO GOD

12 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. 2And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

11:26 [a]Or *delivered* **11:27** [a]Isaiah 59:20, 21
11:34 [a]Isaiah 40:13; Jeremiah 23:18 **11:35** [a]Job 41:11

MIR MAKING IT REAL // ROMANS 12:4, 5

One but Many You have a destiny that God has designed just for you. He wants you to live in a way that honors Him, to be part of His plan to bring other people to know Him, and eventually to have the same character traits that Jesus has. But part of God's plan is that you wouldn't be able to accomplish any of this by yourself. Of course, you need His Spirit, and He's given you that. But you also need other people.

God wants His people to care about each other and to be able to depend on each other. Your strengths and weaknesses are different from another person's. That person may be able to help you with an area of your life that is especially challenging for you. Or you may be able to help someone else see clearly in a situation that is really confusing to him. Everyone has to trust Jesus as an individual. But once you become a Christian, your life and your relationship with God is connected to other people. You have a new family—the family of Christ. God meant for it to be this way. You need other Christians! And they need you. (See also: Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12:12; Col. 1:18.)

Words to Live By

Members: The word translated as "members" in Romans 12:45 is the Greek word *melos* (mel'-os). It literally means "a part of the body." Every part of the body has its own specific function. A body wouldn't function properly if the arm was trying to be a leg, or if an ear was trying to be the nose. But when every part of the body is functioning as it should in conjunction with the others, the body is healthy. As individual parts of the body of Christ, we can keep His body healthy by each doing our part while working together.

THOUGHTS
Should a Christian think like the world?
Romans 12:2

HATRED
What should Christians hate?
Romans 12:9

SERVE GOD WITH SPIRITUAL GIFTS

3For I say, through the grace given to me, to
everyone who is among you, not to think *of*
himself more highly than he ought to think,
but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each
one a measure of faith. 4For as we have many
members in one body, but all the members
do not have the same function, 5so we, *being*
many, are one body in Christ, and individu-
ally members of one another. 6Having then
gifts differing according to the grace that is
given to us, *let us use them:* if prophecy, *let*
us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7or
ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; he
who teaches, in teaching; 8he who exhorts,
in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality;
he who leads, with diligence; he who shows
mercy, with cheerfulness.

BEHAVE LIKE A CHRISTIAN

9*Let* love *be* without hypocrisy. Abhor
what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10*Be*
kindly affectionate to one another with
brotherly love, in honor giving preference
to one another; 11not lagging in diligence,
fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12re-
joicing in hope, patient in tribulation,
continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13distrib-
uting to the needs of the saints, given to
hospitality.

14Bless those who persecute you; bless
and do not curse. 15Rejoice with those who
rejoice, and weep with those who weep.
16Be of the same mind toward one another.
Do not set your mind on high things, but
associate with the humble. Do not be wise
in your own opinion.

MAKING IT REAL // ROMANS 12:17–21

Who Gets Even? If your iPod was stolen from your locker at the gym, you would immediately inform the authorities of the theft. The right move after that could be kind of challenging for you—even if you think you might know who took it, you have to stop yourself from trying to get even. Jesus says in Matthew 5:39, "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also." And Paul says in this passage, "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. . . . 'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good'" (Rom. 12:19–21).

The desire to get even is normal. Not following through on that desire is the test of your character. Many times Jesus teaches us to do the opposite of what the world would do. In this instance, the godly thing to do is to commit this act to the Lord, trusting that one day He will set all things in order. Don't act like your enemies, but defeat them with the strength of your character. Replace their evil with your good. (See also: Matt. 5:38–40; Luke 6:27–31; Heb. 10:32–34.)

Words to Live By

Wrath: The Greek word *orge* (or-gay') is translated as "wrath" in Romans 12:19. This word can mean "anger" or "indignation." This anger can lead us to try to punish those who have angered us. Anger is a natural emotion; sometimes it's the appropriate emotion in a certain situation. The point is how we handle our anger. We can choose to let our anger take us over, which can result in bitterness and the pursuit of revenge or punishment. Or we can choose to control our anger instead of letting it control us. This results in a healthier, godly, more joy-filled life.

ENEMIES

How should we respond to those who treat us badly?

Romans 12:14

[17]Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. [18]If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. [19]Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, *"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,"*[a] says the Lord. [20]Therefore

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."[a]

[21]Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

AUTHORITY

From whom do those in authority receive their right to rule?

Romans 13:1, 2

SUBMIT TO GOVERNMENT

13 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. [2]Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. [3]For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise

12:19 [a]Deuteronomy 32:35 **12:20** [a]Proverbs 25:21, 22

WORLD APP

Government / Romans 13:1–7

Imagine a world with no rules or limits on behaviors, and no authority to maintain order. That might not sound so bad until you really start to think about what it would mean. If there are no laws, what is there to protect you from crime? With no rules, people could lie, steal, hurt, or even kill other people with nothing to hold them back or discourage them, and with no repercussions for their evil actions. It would be a fearful, dangerous world. Fortunately, even though our world can be dangerous, we do have a government that is there to enforce our laws and promote the well-being of each citizen. God has ordained governments on this earth, and we are called to respect their authority (Rom. 13:1–7).

Earthly governments are not always perfect. Even in a democracy such as ours, there will always be disagreements and discussions about the best ways to rule and govern. We may not always agree with every decision our leaders make, but we are still called to respect their position and obey the laws they set before us. Romans 13:2 tells us that if we resist the authority that exists, we are actually resisting the "ordinance of God."

The only overriding factor to this obedience is if the government commands you to do something that expressly goes against the teachings in the Word of God. God's Word takes the number one spot of obedience in our lives. As Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego respectfully refused to follow a governmental command that required them to worship something other than God (Dan. 3), we can respectfully refuse to follow a command that contradicts Scripture.

You are a citizen of this country, but first and foremost you are a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. In that sense, this earth is your temporary home. Peter refers to us as "sojourners" and "pilgrims" (1 Pet. 2:11); travelers passing through this territory of earth. Our ultimate allegiance is to God and His Word. But while we're here, we do have the responsibility to respect the authorities that are in place.



WORLD APP

Drugs / Romans 13:13

What comes to mind when you think of drugs and alcohol? Not exactly a pretty picture, right? Of all the accident-related fatalities in the United States every day, nearly 40 percent of them involve drunk drivers. Nearly half of all high school seniors have tried some type of illegal drug. Those are some frightening statistics!

Simple reason will tell you a lifestyle of abusing drugs and alcohol is a very poor excuse for living. Alcohol and drug abuse can destroy families, end careers, cause permanent physical damage to users, and, far too often, lead to death. These are all things you've heard before. But have you really listened? Or do you think those consequences only apply to others, not to you?

Even though you may know well what parents and other adults in your life have to say about drugs and alcohol, you may not realize how strongly God is against them. In Romans 13:13, drunkenness (the state of being intoxicated by a substance) is called "revelry." That word actually means "wild partying" or "crazy, out-of-control behavior." In Galatians 5:20, 21, drunkenness is included in the same list of sins as murder, hatred, and sorcery. It also goes on to say, "Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Although you may think your behavior won't change and your life won't be damaged if you just experiment with drugs or alcohol, that's not really something you can know for sure. Some people are easily addicted to substances or lifestyles and there's simply no way to know whether you are one of those whose lives will end up controlled by an intoxicating substance.

On that note, the reason drugs and alcohol are called "intoxicating" is because they are toxic—they introduce a poison into your system and the feeling of being "high" is actually your brain's reaction to the poison. Gee, that sounds like fun, right?

from the same. 4For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who practices evil. 5Therefore *you* must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes *are due,* customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

8Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9For the commandments, *"You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness,"*[a] *"You shall not covet,"*[b] and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*[c] 10Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

DRINKING
Is getting drunk appropriate for a Christian?
Romans 13:11–14

PUT ON CHRIST

11And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. 12The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY

14 Receive one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things. 2For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats *only* vegetables. 3Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. 4Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

5One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike.* Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6He who observes the day, observes *it* to the Lord;[a] and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe *it.* He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. 7For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. 9For to this end Christ died and rose[a] and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. 10But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.[a] 11For it is written:

> *"As I live, says the LORD,*
> *Every knee shall bow to Me,*
> *And every tongue shall confess to God."*[a]

12So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. 13Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in *our* brother's way.

THE LAW OF LOVE

14I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. 15Yet if your brother is grieved because of *your* food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not

13:9 [a]NU-Text omits *"You shall not bear false witness."* [b]Exodus 20:13–15, 17; Deuteronomy 5:17–19, 21 [c]Leviticus 19:18 **14:6** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this sentence. **14:9** [a]NU-Text omits *and rose.* **14:10** [a]NU-Text reads *of God.* **14:11** [a]Isaiah 45:23

MAKING IT REAL // ROMANS 15:5

The God of Patience and Comfort Galatians 5:22, 23 lists the fruit or qualities of God's Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Do you ever look at that list and think, *No way!* Or maybe you think, *Well, three out of nine isn't too bad.* Trying to measure up to this list can be kind of intimidating, not to mention exhausting.

But Paul gives you some good news here: "May the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another." You're not on your own. God is patient and can comfort you as He helps you live the way He wants you to live and treat others the way He wants you to treat them. He will see you through.

The key to seeing God work in your life is to commit yourself to being open to the changes He wants to make in your heart. Prove your commitment by seriously studying God's Word and putting it into practice. Pray and meditate on Bible verses, especially verses that are relevant to areas in which you're weak. The God of patience and comfort will honor your efforts as He works in and through your life. (See also: Gal. 5:22, 23; Col. 1:9–12; 2 Thess. 3:5.)

Words to Live By

Patience: The word translated as "patience" in Romans 15:5 is the Greek word *hupomone* (hoop-om-on-ay'). It carries the idea of endurance or constancy. God knows that you're not perfect, and He has the patience it takes to help you become more like Him. He is constant. He won't decide that you've messed up one too many times and suddenly give up on you. He will endure as He helps you become the amazing person He has designed you to be.

destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. 16Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; 17for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18For he who serves Christ in these things[a] *is* acceptable to God and approved by men.

19Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another. 20Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed *are* pure, but *it is* evil for the man who eats with offense. 21*It is* good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor *do anything* by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.[a] 22Do you have faith?[a] Have *it* to yourself before God. Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does* not *eat* from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin.[a]

BEARING OTHERS' BURDENS

15 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2Let each of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good, leading to edification. 3For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, *"The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."*[a] 4For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. 5Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6that you may with one mind *and* one mouth

14:18 [a]NU-Text reads *this.* **14:21** [a]NU-Text omits *or is offended or is made weak.*
14:22 [a]NU-Text reads *The faith which you have—have.* **14:23** [a]M-Text puts Romans 16:25–27 here. **15:3** [a]Psalm 69:9



LIFE APP

Hope / Romans 15:13

How many times have you heard the words, "This is hopeless"? How many times have you said them yourself? *Hopeless* is a word that is used far too often; people, especially Christians, would use it far less if we really understood what it means.

Romans 15:13 tells us that God is the "God of hope." This means that wherever God is, hope follows. If you find yourself in a position in life that you consider hopeless, you should take another look at the circumstances. You may just find you have left God totally out of the situation.

A really good definition of hope is "the anticipation of a God event on your behalf." It is looking forward to watching God bring about a positive change in your circumstances. More than just wishing, hope is the certainty that God *will* work on your behalf. Before you can do that, you have to trust Him. Before you can trust Him, you have to know Him. And you come to know Him by spending time with Him—reading His Word and talking to Him.

If we don't really know God, it's far too easy to allow ourselves to feel hopeless or begin to think a situation is impossible. If we haven't really spent time with Him or learned what the Bible tells us about Him, we easily fall for the lie that God is just not there for us. Instead of watching with expectant eyes for what God is going to do, we allow bad circumstances to rob all the joy from our lives.

When you find yourself going through hard times and it seems there is no answer to be found, remember that you serve a God of hope. The Bible says God will bring beauty from ashes and replace sorrow with joy (Is. 61:3). You can be sure whenever something looks hopeless to your eyes, it's just an opportunity for God to prove His love for you. Trust Him; He has a plan. Just watch and see what He will do.

glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

GLORIFY GOD TOGETHER

7Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us,[a] to the glory of God. 8Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers, 9and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written:

"For this reason I will confess to You
among the Gentiles,
And sing to Your name."[a]

10And again he says:

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!"[a]

11And again:

"Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!
Laud Him, all you peoples!"[a]

12And again, Isaiah says:

"There shall be a root of Jesse;
And He who shall rise to reign over the
Gentiles,
In Him the Gentiles shall hope."[a]

13Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

FROM JERUSALEM TO ILLYRICUM

14Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.[a] 15Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on *some* points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, 16that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 17Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things *which pertain* to God. 18For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient— 19in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, 21but as it is written:

"To whom He was not announced, they
shall see;
And those who have not heard shall
understand."[a]

PLAN TO VISIT ROME

22For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. 23But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, 24whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you.[a] For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your *company* for a while. 25But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. 26For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. 27It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. 28Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. 29But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel[a] of Christ.

30Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, 31that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. 33Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

15:7 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *you.*
15:9 [a]2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49
15:10 [a]Deuteronomy 32:43 **15:11** [a]Psalm 117:1
15:12 [a]Isaiah 11:10 **15:14** [a]M-Text reads *others.*
15:21 [a]Isaiah 52:15 **15:24** [a]NU-Text omits *I shall come to you* (and joins *Spain* with the next sentence). **15:29** [a]NU-Text omits *of the gospel.*

SISTER PHOEBE COMMENDED

16 I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, [2]that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

Romans 16:3

Priscilla and Aquila were originally from Rome. When the Emperor Claudius decided he wanted all of the Jews out of Rome, the couple moved to Corinth, a city in Greece, and worked with Paul there. Before they eventually moved back to Rome, they also helped Paul in Ephesus, a city across the Aegean Sea from Corinth.

GREETING ROMAN SAINTS

[3]Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, [4]who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. [5]Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house.

Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia[a] to Christ. [6]Greet Mary, who labored much for us. [7]Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

[8]Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. [9]Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. [10]Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus. [11]Greet Herodion, my countryman.[a] Greet those who are of the *household* of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

[12]Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. [13]Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. [14]Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. [15]Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

[16]Greet one another with a holy kiss. The[a] churches of Christ greet you.

AVOID DIVISIVE PERSONS

[17]Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. [18]For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus[a] Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. [19]For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. [20]And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

GREETINGS FROM PAUL'S FRIENDS

[21]Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you.

[22]I, Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, greet you in the Lord.

[23]Gaius, my host and *the host* of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. [24]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.[a]

BENEDICTION

[25]Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began [26]but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— [27]to God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.[a]

16:5 [a]NU-Text reads *Asia.* **16:11** [a]Or *relative*
16:16 [a]NU-Text reads *All the churches.*
16:18 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Jesus.*
16:24 [a]NU-Text omits this verse. **16:27** [a]M-Text puts Romans 16:25–27 after Romans 14:23.

1 Corinthians

DATE OF WRITING: SPRING A.D. 56
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: A CHURCH SHOULD GROW IN CHRIST AND LEARN HOW TO RESOLVE DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL CHURCH PROBLEMS
PURPOSE: WE ARE TO RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES THAT DIVIDE US.

OUTLINE

1:1–9 .....Paul's Greeting and Prayer
1:10—4:21.....A Call for Unity
5:1—7:40.....Problems in Relationships
8:1—11:1.....Honoring God Instead of Idols
11:2—14:40 .....Guidance for Worship and Church Life
15:1–58.....Christ's Victory Over Death
16:1–4.....An Offering for the Poor
16:5–12.....Paul's Travel Plans
16:13–24 .....Personal Concerns and Greetings

KEY VERSE:

For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:20).

THEN /// Paul helped start the church in Corinth. He loved the people there, and he believed in them. But when he got a letter from one of the church members telling him that everyone was picking on and fighting with each other, he got a little ticked. In fact, when he wrote them the letter we call 1 Corinthians, he said he was writing with tears in his eyes. He was disappointed, and he was angry.

But you have to give the Corinthians some credit. They could have read this letter and ignored Paul's advice. After all, he wasn't even there to check up on them, and who *was* the tattletale anyway?

That's not what they did, though. Instead, they took Paul's words to heart. They changed from nit-picking church members to generous partners in ministry.

NOW /// Corinth was one of the wickedest and wildest cities of its day. Idol worship, prostitution, drunkenness, violence—it was all there. If you wanted to do something morally wrong, Corinth was certainly the place to go.

There are parts of our own world today that seem a lot like Corinth must have been—places where people just don't care what God says or whether they follow His commands. And many of us face some of the same challenges the Corinthians faced. How are we supposed to stay true to God's commands in a place where no one even pretends to care what He has to say? How can we be faithful to God when the world seems to think some sins are not even wrong?

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians taught them a great deal about how to live in ways that please God in a world that had turned away from Him. And reading it can help us learn how to live lives of faith in our world today.

REALITY CHECK /// One of the things Paul wrote about to the Corinthians was their gifts—the special abilities given to them by God. He told them that the church is like a body. Everybody has their own job to do. When everyone does their job the body works well. The feet carry it places. The mouth talks on the phone. The arms reach out to give a hug. Paul tells the Corinthians to find their roles and then to be happy in those roles instead of wishing they were doing something else.

Paul's words teach us about the church today. We each have a gift to use at church and throughout our lives. When we all work together our gifts make us into a complete community, working together to build the kingdom of God. When everyone is operating with the gifts they've been given, we become a powerful force in the world—the body of Christ.

GREETING

1 Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus
Christ through the will of God, and
Sosthenes *our* brother,

2 To the church of God which is at
Corinth, to those who are sanctified in
Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all
who in every place call on the name of Je-
sus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS AT CORINTH

4 I thank my God always concerning you
for the grace of God which was given
to you by Christ Jesus, 5 that you were
enriched in everything by Him in all ut-
terance and all knowledge, 6 even as the
testimony of Christ was confirmed in
you, 7 so that you come short in no gift,
eagerly waiting for the revelation of our
Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm
you to the end, *that you may be* blameless
in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God
is faithful, by whom you were called into
the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our
Lord.

SECTARIANISM IS SIN

10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the
name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you

MAKING IT REAL // 1 CORINTHIANS 1:9

Partners Paul says that God chose you to be in fellowship with Jesus. In a way, that makes you Jesus' partner. Being His partner is an honor you don't deserve, but neither does anyone else. But God, because of His kindness and love, chose you for the job even though you aren't qualified for it.

What does it mean to be Jesus' partner? Partners work together toward a common goal. Think about what that goal might be for you and Jesus. Don't just think about your own life—Jesus isn't your genie-in-a-bottle helping you get the things you want. Instead, think about other people. Ask yourself, what does Jesus want to do in my sister's life or my dad's life? What does He want to do for my friends? Ask Jesus those questions, too, and ask Him what you can do to make those things happen. He'll answer you. It's an awesome privilege to be chosen as Jesus' partner, to work with Him to change the lives of people you care about—and maybe even some people you haven't even met yet. Make up your mind to be the kind of partner Jesus can be proud of. (See also: Rom. 8:16, 17; Eph. 2:4–6; Col. 3:1.)

Words to Live By

Faithful: The Greek word *pistos* (pis-tos') is translated as "faithful" in 1 Corinthians 1:9. This word carries the idea of being trustworthy, sure, or true. Whenever you feel like you're not up to the task of being Jesus' partner or doing what God has called you to do, just remember that you can trust God to give you what you need to do. He is the One who called you. You can be sure He is always there, and you can trust He will never leave you on your own.

all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's *household,* that there are contentions among you. 12Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

1 Corinthians 1:12

Apollos was an important leader in the early Christian church. A former follower of John the Baptist, Apollos was a gifted public speaker and an expert on Old Testament writings. He lived in Alexandria, Egypt.

14I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. 16Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. 17For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

CHRIST THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD

18For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19For it is written:

> *"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,*
> *And bring to nothing the*
> *understanding of the prudent."*[a]

20Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of

1:19 [a]Isaiah 29:14



WORLD APP

Politics / 1 Corinthians 1:12

In 1 Corinthians 1:12, Paul is talking to a group of people who have chosen sides. They are saying either "I'm for Paul" or "I'm for Apollos." That sounds a lot like the things you might hear before an election—people choose sides, decide which candidate they will vote for, and try to convince everyone else to vote the same way.

The political scene in the United States can be a study in bad sportsmanship. One candidate insults another and most everyone is seemingly willing to do anything to win, even cheat. In 1 John 2:16, three things are listed that cause that kind of behavior: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Those who are not listening closely to God's direction can end up totally taken over by the quest for power, the rich lifestyle, and the elevated status that come to those who hold a political office. Those are the very people who should never be placed in positions of power.

Throughout the Bible, leaders are given very strong direction from the Lord. He expects them to be godly people who turn to Him for guidance. He holds them accountable for their decisions and the effect their leadership has on others. They will one day answer to Him for all they have done in their positions as leaders.

You may have thought about entering the political world one day. Consider your decision carefully. Ask the Lord if that is the direction He wants for your life. If He leads you in that way, go for it! Our country is in desperate need of leaders who will turn to God and follow where He leads.

this world? 21For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks[a] foolishness, 24but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

GLORY ONLY IN THE LORD

26For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called.* 27But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— 31that, as it is written, *"He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."*[a]

WISDOM
How is God's wisdom different from human wisdom?
1 Corinthians 2:1–16

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

2 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony[a] of God. 2For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human[a] wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

SPIRITUAL WISDOM

6However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9But as it is written:

> *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,*
> *Nor have entered into the heart of man*
> *The things which God has prepared for*
> *those who love Him."*[a]

10But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

13These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy[a] Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them,* because they are spiritually discerned. 15But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. 16For *"who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?"*[a] But we have the mind of Christ.

SECTARIANISM IS CARNAL

3 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for

1:23 [a]NU-Text reads *Gentiles.* **1:31** [a]Jeremiah 9:24 **2:1** [a]NU-Text reads *mystery.* **2:4** [a]NU-Text omits *human.* **2:9** [a]Isaiah 64:4 **2:13** [a]NU-Text omits *Holy.* **2:16** [a]Isaiah 40:13

MAKING IT REAL // 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1–3

Immature Christians Little kids argue and fight over just about anything. They don't fight because they're mean; they are just immature—just babies. They think the world revolves around them and consider their own happiness before anything else. We can't hold it against them because they just don't know any better yet.

Some little kids grow up, become Christians, lay down their toys, and find other things to fight about. On the outside they look like adults, but on the inside they're still immature babies who believe their ideas count more than others' ideas and their pleasure matters most. In 1 Corinthians 3:1–3, Paul says immature Christians act just like the rest of the world. You can hardly blame the world when they act selfish, because without God, they've only got themselves. But Christians should know better.

Self-centered Christians who argue with others and think too much of themselves are still babies in their faith. They don't understand the teachings of Christ or they would act differently. Being a Christian is about more than just getting to heaven; it's about what happens in your heart when Jesus comes to live there. Your attitudes and actions should begin to be transformed so when the world looks at you, they will see Jesus. When the world looks at an immature Christian, they see only a reflection of themselves—they see the same inconsiderate, selfish behavior. Being a mature Christian means looking more like Jesus and less like the world. (See also: Rom. 12:2; Gal. 5:16–18; Heb. 5:12, 13.)

Words to Live By

Carnal: The word translated as "carnal" in 1 Corinthians 3:1–3 is the Greek word *sarkikos* (sar-kee-kos'). To be carnal is to be ruled by the corrupt desires that result from a sinful nature. Rather than being ruled by God's Spirit, someone who is carnal is ruled by their own sinful desires.

until now you were not able *to receive it,*
and even now you are still not able; 3for you
are still carnal. For where *there are* envy,
strife, and divisions among you, are you
not carnal and behaving like *mere* men?
4For when one says, "I am of Paul," and an-
other, "I *am* of Apollos," are you not carnal?

WATERING, WORKING, WARNING

5Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but
ministers through whom you believed, as
the Lord gave to each one? 6I planted, Apol-
los watered, but God gave the increase. 7So
then neither he who plants is anything,
nor he who waters, but God who gives the
increase. 8Now he who plants and he who
waters are one, and each one will receive
his own reward according to his own labor.
9For we are God's fellow workers; you
are God's field, *you are* God's building.
10According to the grace of God which was
given to me, as a wise master builder I have
laid the foundation, and another builds
on it. But let each one take heed how he
builds on it. 11For no other foundation can
anyone lay than that which is laid, which
is Jesus Christ. 12Now if anyone builds on
this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious
stones, wood, hay, straw, 13each one's work
will become clear; for the Day will declare
it, because it will be revealed by fire; and
the fire will test each one's work, of what
sort it is. 14If anyone's work which he has
built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward.
15If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer
loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as
through fire.

16Do you not know that you are the tem-
ple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells
in you? 17If anyone defiles the temple of
God, God will destroy him. For the temple
of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

AVOID WORLDLY WISDOM

18Let no one deceive himself. If anyone
among you seems to be wise in this age,

let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, *"He catches the wise in their own craftiness"*;[a] 20and again, *"The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."*[a] 21Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: 22whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. 23And you *are* Christ's, and Christ *is* God's.

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD

4 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. 3But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court.[a] In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. 5Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

FOOLS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

6Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7For who makes you differ *from another?* And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive *it,* why do you boast as if you had not received *it?*

8You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you! 9For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. 10We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but you *are* wise in Christ! We *are* weak, but you *are* strong! You *are* distinguished, but we *are* dishonored! 11To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. 12And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; 13being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

PAUL'S PATERNAL CARE

14I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn *you.* 15For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do* not *have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16Therefore I urge you, imitate me. 17For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

18Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. 19But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. 20For the kingdom of God *is* not in word but in power. 21What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

IMMORALITY DEFILES THE CHURCH

5 It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named[a] among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! 2And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. 4In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.[a]

6Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7Therefore purge out the old leaven,

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3:19 [a]Job 5:13 **3:20** [a]Psalm 94:11 **4:3** [a]Literally *day* **5:1** [a]NU-Text omits *named.* **5:5** [a]NU-Text omits *Jesus.*

that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.[a] [8]Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

IMMORALITY MUST BE JUDGED

[9]I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. [10]Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. [11]But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

[12]For what *have* I *to do* with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? [13]But those who are outside God judges. Therefore *"put away from yourselves the evil person."*[a]

DO NOT SUE THE BRETHREN

6 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? [2]Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? [3]Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? [4]If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? [5]I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? [6]But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!

ANGELS
Who will judge the angels?
1 Corinthians 6:3

[7]Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather *let yourselves* be cheated? [8]No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and *you do* these things *to your* brethren! [9]Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals,[a] nor sodomites, [10]nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. [11]And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

GLORIFY GOD IN BODY AND SPIRIT

[12]All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. [13]Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. [14]And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.

SEX
Why is sex outside marriage wrong?
1 Corinthians 6:13–20

[15]Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not! [16]Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her?* For *"the two,"* He says, *"shall become one flesh."*[a] [17]But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him.*

[18]Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. [19]Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you

5:7 [a]NU-Text omits *for us.* **5:13** [a]Deuteronomy 17:7; 19:19; 22:21, 24; 24:7 **6:9** [a]That is, catamites **6:16** [a]Genesis 2:24

MIR MAKING IT REAL // 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19

You Are God's Temple In the Old Testament, the temple was the place where God's presence lived. Today, it is the place where He is worshiped. God says that your body is a temple for Him. Think about what you do to your body. If you could see God dwelling inside you, would you treat your body the same? When you make choices that harm your body, not only are you tearing down the place God lives, you're making a mockery of His home and His creation. Would you go to an actual temple and mess it all up? Of course not! And it should be just as wrong in your eyes to trash your own temple by doing drugs or having premarital sex.

The God who loves you deserves only the best for His temple. He wants to glorify Himself in you. Drugs are stupid—they destroy lives and often cause death. Sex before marriage steals something precious from your future. And it can cause real problems for you today if you get an STD or end up with a pregnancy to cope with. You already know those things. But did you know Satan uses sex and drugs to destroy as many temples as possible? His whole purpose is to kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10). Don't let him ruin your life. Don't do drugs. Keep yourself pure for your future spouse. Practice self-control and keep your temple whole and holy. Ask God to help you live a pure and holy life, and commit to being a good temple for Him. (See also: Rom. 6:12; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16, 17.)

Words to Live By

Temple: The word translated as "temple" in 1 Corinthians 6:19 is the Greek word *naos* (nah-os'). It means "a place of worship." In the Old Testament, we read about the temple of God. During those times, the presence of God actually lived within the temple. Today, God does not live in churches, He lives in us. In John 17, we read Jesus' last prayer before He was crucified. In it He says, "The love with which You (God) loved Me (Jesus) may be in them, and I in them" (v. 26). Jesus Himself lives within those who belong to Him.

are not your own? 20For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body[a] and in your spirit, which are God's.

PRINCIPLES OF MARRIAGE

7 Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:

It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. 3Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does.* And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does.* 5Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment. 7For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

8But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; 9but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn *with passion.*

KEEP YOUR MARRIAGE VOWS

10Now to the married I command, *yet* not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from *her* husband. 11But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to *her* husband. And a husband is not to divorce *his* wife.

6:20 [a]NU-Text ends the verse at *body.*

12But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If
any brother has a wife who does not be-
lieve, and she is willing to live with him, let
him not divorce her. 13And a woman who
has a husband who does not believe, if he
is willing to live with her, let her not di-
vorce him. 14For the unbelieving husband
is sanctified by the wife, and the unbeliev-
ing wife is sanctified by the husband; oth-
erwise your children would be unclean,
but now they are holy. 15But if the unbe-
liever departs, let him depart; a brother or
a sister is not under bondage in such *cases.*
But God has called us to peace. 16For how
do you know, O wife, whether you will save
your husband? Or how do you know, O hus-
band, whether you will save *your* wife?

LIVE AS YOU ARE CALLED

17But as God has distributed to each one,
as the Lord has called each one, so let him
walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.
18Was anyone called while circumcised?
Let him not become uncircumcised. Was
anyone called while uncircumcised? Let
him not be circumcised. 19Circumcision
is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing,
but keeping the commandments of God
is what matters. 20Let each one remain in
the same calling in which he was called.
21Were you called *while* a slave? Do not be
concerned about it; but if you can be made
free, rather use *it.* 22For he who is called in
the Lord *while* a slave is the Lord's freed-
man. Likewise he who is called *while* free is
Christ's slave. 23You were bought at a price;
do not become slaves of men. 24Brethren,
let each one remain with God in that *state*
in which he was called.

TO THE UNMARRIED AND WIDOWS

25Now concerning virgins: I have no com-
mandment from the Lord; yet I give
judgment as one whom the Lord in His
mercy has made trustworthy. 26I suppose
therefore that this is good because of the
present distress—that *it is* good for a man
to remain as he is: 27Are you bound to a
wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you
loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.
28But even if you do marry, you have not
sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not
sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble
in the flesh, but I would spare you.

1 Corinthians 7:26

First-century Rome was a danger-
ous place for Christians. In fact,
people throughout the entire Roman
Empire turned against Christians. The
emperor Claudius kicked all Jews and
Christians out of the city of Rome.
Other believers were tortured and
killed for their faith in the Lord. Paul
knew firsthand about the persecution
of Christians. Before he was called
to be an apostle of Jesus, Paul was a
notorious Christian hunter.

29But this I say, brethren, the time *is*
short, so that from now on even those who
have wives should be as though they had
none, 30those who weep as though they did
not weep, those who rejoice as though they
did not rejoice, those who buy as though
they did not possess, 31and those who use
this world as not misusing *it.* For the form
of this world is passing away.

32But I want you to be without care. He
who is unmarried cares for the things of
the Lord—how he may please the Lord.
33But he who is married cares about the
things of the world—how he may please
his wife. 34There is[a] a difference between a
wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman
cares about the things of the Lord, that she
may be holy both in body and in spirit. But
she who is married cares about the things
of the world—how she may please *her* hus-
band. 35And this I say for your own profit,
not that I may put a leash on you, but for
what is proper, and that you may serve the
Lord without distraction.

36But if any man thinks he is behaving
improperly toward his virgin, if she is past
the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let
him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let
them marry. 37Nevertheless he who stands
steadfast in his heart, having no necessity,
but has power over his own will, and has
so determined in his heart that he will
keep his virgin,[a] does well. 38So then he
who gives *her*[a] in marriage does well, but
he who does not give *her* in marriage does
better.

7:34 [a]M-Text adds *also.* **7:37** [a]Or *virgin daughter* **7:38** [a]NU-Text reads *his own virgin.*

39A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. 40But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment—and I think I also have the Spirit of God.

BE SENSITIVE TO CONSCIENCE

8 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. 2And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. 3But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

4Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one. 5For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), 6yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live.*

7However, *there is* not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat *it* as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

9But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? 11And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

A PATTERN OF SELF-DENIAL

9 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3My defense to those who examine me is this: 4Do we have no right to eat and drink? 5Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? 6Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working? 7Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

8Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also? 9For it is written in the law of Moses, *"You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain."*[a] Is it oxen God is concerned about? 10Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? 12If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more?

Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. 13Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings of* the altar? 14Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

15But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. 16For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! 17For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship. 18What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ[a] without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

SERVING ALL MEN

19For though I am free from all *men,* I have made myself a servant to all, that I

9:9 [a]Deuteronomy 25:4 **9:18** [a]NU-Text omits *of Christ.*



LIFE APP

Perseverance / 1 Corinthians 9:24

There's an old story about a rabbit and a turtle. They get into a race, and the rabbit is so sure he will win that he doesn't even try. He stops constantly to check out things and talk to people. But the turtle just keeps crawling along. In the end, the turtle wins the race because the rabbit was so sure of himself that he didn't do what he was supposed to do—keep getting closer to the finish line. The turtle was slow, but he had something the rabbit didn't—he had perseverance.

Obviously, life isn't a lot like the race between the turtle and the rabbit. Or is it? Take a look around you. Which people do you see who are like the rabbit—so sure of themselves (or so unconcerned with life) that they just don't try? Which people are like the turtle? Turtles may not be the fastest or the most beautiful, but they keep working their way toward their goals—one step at a time.

It may be tempting to look at the rabbits around you and wish you could be like them. They are fun and cute and full of energy. And the turtles who just keep trying their best may seem boring and dull. But who is really making the most of life? In the end, it's the turtles who get to their goals and win the race.

Paul said that it's important to live our lives (run the race) in a way that will take us to our goal (1 Cor. 9:24). Where faith is concerned, that goal is to become a bit more like Jesus every day. Though Christians can and should set goals for their future careers and achievements, their life goal should be the same. If we become more like Jesus every day, our lives will resemble both the rabbit and the turtle. We will be filled with energy and excitement for life and have the determination and patience to arrive at our most important goal—when others look at us, they will be able to see the abundant life that only Jesus can bring.

MAKING IT REAL // 1 CORINTHIANS 9:24–27

Run the Race In 1 Corinthians 9:24–27, Paul compares life to a race. If life is a race, it is a marathon, not a sprint. A marathon runner prepares his body for the long distance because he knows it will be grueling at times. And just like that well-trained runner, a believer has to be well prepared to live life as God intends.

The "race" began for you the day you were born into God's kingdom. So it's time to get serious about how you run it—how you live your life. Every day of your life counts and, if you are a Christian, every day should be spent doing your best to follow God's commands.

None of us can be sure how long our race (our life) will be. And none of us can know what's ahead. We may face obstacles. We may find ourselves running up hill. So it's important that we listen closely to God. He will let us know exactly what we need to run the best possible race.

Even if you haven't been running very well up until now, you can decide to get up and get moving, pace yourself, and finish well. Or you can blow it off and decide you've got plenty of time to catch up. If you choose to wait until later, you can be assured that you will deeply regret all the days you sat and watched everyone else pass you by. God's got a lot for you right now. Don't live another minute without getting serious about Him.

(See also: Acts 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8; Heb. 12:1, 2.)

Words to Live By

Subjection: The word translated as "subjection" in 1 Corinthians 9:27 is the Greek word *doulagogeo* (doo-lag-ague-eh'-o). It means "to take complete control," almost like a warden has complete control of a prisoner. You should never allow your body to tell your mind what to do. That would be like allowing life to live you (give you commands and make your choices), instead of you living life (making the best decisions based on what God wants). Take control and live your life in ways that please God.

might win the more; [20]and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law,[a] that I might win those *who are* under the law; [21]to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God,[a] but under law toward Christ[b]), that I might win those *who are* without law; [22]to the weak I became as[a] weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men,* that I might by all means save some. [23]Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you.*

STRIVING FOR A CROWN

[24]Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it.* [25]And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown.* [26]Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. [27]But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest,

1 Corinthians 9:24–26

Paul's reference to running and boxing would have had special significance to the people of Corinth. Every two years, their city hosted the Isthmian Games, an ancient predecessor to our Summer Olympics. Fans traveled for miles to watch athletic contests of strength and skill.

9:20 [a]NU-Text adds *though not being myself under the law.* **9:21** [a]NU-Text reads *God's law.* [b]NU-Text reads *Christ's law.* **9:22** [a]NU-Text omits *as.*

when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

10 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3all ate the same spiritual food, 4and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness.

6Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, *"The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."*[a] 8Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11Now all[a] these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

12Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it.*

FLEE FROM IDOLATRY

14Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. 16The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

18Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. 22Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD

23All things are lawful for me,[a] but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me,[b] but not all things edify. 24Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's *well-being.*

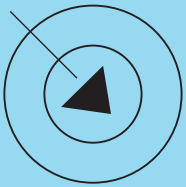
25Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; 26for *"the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness."*[a]

27If any of those who do not believe invites you *to dinner,* and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. 28But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake;[a] for *"the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness."*[b] 29"Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another *man's* conscience? 30But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for *the food* over which I give thanks?

10:7 [a]Exodus 32:6 **10:11** [a]NU-Text omits *all.* **10:23** [a]NU-Text omits *for me.* [b]NU-Text omits *for me.* **10:26** [a]Psalm 24:1 **10:28** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. [b]Psalm 24:1

1 Corinthians 10:16

Not only was Jesus' final meal with His disciples His "last supper" on earth, it was also a ceremony He wanted His followers to repeat on a regular basis. This ceremony, called the Lord's Supper or Communion, involves eating a piece of bread and drinking wine or grape juice. The bread symbolizes Jesus' body, and the wine or juice symbolizes His blood. Jesus wanted His followers to remember His death on the Cross—His sacrifice for them.



PROMISE

God promises not to let you be tempted more than you can handle.

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it (1 Cor. 10:12, 13).

Whenever we're tempted, there is a way out, a way to get away from the urge to do what we know is wrong. Temptations can sometimes get too hard for us to handle on our own, but only because we've passed up a long line of escape routes along the way—places where God was warning us to turn back, to trust Him, to get off the path before temptation turned to regret.

Giving in to temptation is a lot like falling off a cliff. God will always warn you over and over again, far in advance of the forty-foot drop-off. He will continually give you a way to avoid the fall, if you'll listen. But, once you've given in and taken that first step, the only way to go is down. Even if you're standing on the very edge, or hanging on by your fingernails—if you'll call on Him to help you stop trying to fight the battle in your own strength, He'll be right there to put you back on solid ground.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Matthew 6:13; Hebrews 2:18; 2 Peter 2:9

[31]Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. [32]Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, [33]just as I also please all *men* in all *things,* not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

11 Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.

HEAD COVERINGS

[2]Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you. [3]But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God. [4]Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head. [5]But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. [6]For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. [7]For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. [8]For man is not from woman, but woman from man. [9]Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. [10]For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on *her* head, because of the angels. [11]Nevertheless, neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. [12]For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God.

[13]Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? [14]Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? [15]But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her[a] for a covering. [16]But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God.

CONDUCT AT THE LORD'S SUPPER

[17]Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you,* since you come together not for the better but for the worse. [18]For first of all, when you come together as a church,

11:15 [a]M-Text omits *to her.*



LIFE APP

Physical Health / 1 Corinthians 10:31

There seems to be a bit of confusion in our culture. On one hand, we see constant images of people in lifestyles using alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, or other unhealthy things as if that is a picture of life at its best. On the other hand, there is also a huge health craze going on in our society. If we go by many commercials and television shows, we should all eat lots of fiber, no carbs, and exercise for two hours, five days a week. So which is it: a party life without thought for consequences or a super-health-nut life with a strict diet and exercise regimen? Our culture is a little confused, but we don't have to be.

We know that we belong to Christ—we are not our own. Christ lives within us and we live our lives for Him. So our entire lifestyle should revolve around actions, words, and decisions that glorify God and follow His plan for our lives. Everything we do should be based on our relationship with Him. Just as Paul says, "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). Paul was teaching specifically about decisions we make that might encourage or discourage other people. But the truth of his words still speaks to us on another level as well.

What you put into your body, what you eat and drink, should be things that are good for the body because your body belongs to Christ (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). The way you exercise should be based on taking good care of your body to glorify God, not on an obsession to look a certain way at any cost. See your physical health as part of your entire lifestyle; as another way to honor God with everything you have, everything you are, and everything you do.

I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. 20Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others;* and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you.*

INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

23For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat;[a] this is My body which is broken[b] for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it,* in remembrance of Me."

26For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

EXAMINE YOURSELF

27Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood[a] of the Lord. 28But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner[a] eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's[b] body. 30For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

33Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS: UNITY IN DIVERSITY

12 Now concerning spiritual *gifts,* brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: 2You know that[a] you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. 3Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

4There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all:* 8for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same[a] Spirit, 10to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

TALENTS

Why should we never envy the abilities of another?

1 Corinthians 12:12–27

UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN ONE BODY

12For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. 13For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into[a] one Spirit. 14For in fact the body is not one member but many.

11:24 [a]NU-Text omits *Take, eat.* [b]NU-Text omits *broken.* **11:27** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the blood.* **11:29** [a]NU-Text omits *in an unworthy manner.* [b]NU-Text omits *Lord's.* **12:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *when.* **12:9** [a]NU-Text reads *one.* **12:13** [a]NU-Text omits *into.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4–7

What Is Love? Dating sites on the Internet; movies about romance; articles in nearly all the magazines; tweets and posts and nearly everyone you know—it seems everywhere you turn, someone is talking about love. We all dream we'll find it and we spend countless hours wondering about that one special person who will make all our dreams come true.

The stories about love we see portrayed in movies can be misleading. They can make us think love is some kind of warm, fuzzy feeling that just hits us out of the blue. But real love—the kind that lasts forever—is not a feeling. Does that surprise you?

Real, lasting, forever-after love doesn't just zap you, it comes from you. It's not a feeling, because feelings change constantly and most people have no real control over them. Real love is a decision—a conscious choice to act lovingly toward another person.

Read through the description of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 and ask yourself if any of the aspects of love can be lived out without a decision on your part. Then choose to act lovingly toward everyone in your life. One day, your dream partner will appear and you will have learned how to love them with the kind of love that can last forever. (See also: Eph. 5:2; Col. 3:8–14; 1 John 3:16–23; 4:7–11.)

Words to Live By

Love: The word translated as "love" in 1 Corinthians 13:4 is the Greek word *agape* (ag-ah'-pay). *Agape* is the kind of love God has for His people. It is a love that is not changed by circumstance and is not ruled by feelings. It is a decision to act toward others in ways that help them and build them up. When we give others *agape* love, it has nothing to do with how we feel and everything to do with choosing to obey God.

15 If the foot should say, "Because I am
not a hand, I am not of the body," is it there-
fore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should
say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of
the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If
the whole body *were* an eye, where *would*
be the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing,
where *would be* the smelling? 18 But now
God has set the members, each one of
them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And
if they were all one member, where *would*
the body *be?*

20 But now indeed *there are* many mem-
bers, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot
say to the hand, "I have no need of you";
nor again the head to the feet, "I have no
need of you." 22 No, much rather, those
members of the body which seem to be
weaker are necessary. 23 And those *mem-*
bers of the body which we think to be less
honorable, on these we bestow greater
honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have
greater modesty, 24 but our presentable
parts have no need. But God composed
the body, having given greater honor
to that *part* which lacks it, 25 that there
should be no schism in the body, but *that*
the members should have the same care
for one another. 26 And if one member suf-
fers, all the members suffer with *it;* or if
one member is honored, all the members
rejoice with *it.*

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and
members individually. 28 And God has ap-
pointed these in the church: first apostles,
second prophets, third teachers, after that
miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, ad-
ministrations, varieties of tongues. 29 *Are*
all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teach-
ers? *Are* all workers of miracles? 30 Do all
have gifts of healings? Do all speak with
tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly
desire the best[a] gifts. And yet I show you a
more excellent way.

12:31 [a]NU-Text reads *greater.*

THE GREATEST GIFT

13 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
2And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor,* and though I give my body to be burned,[a] but have not love, it profits me nothing.

LOVE
What does real love look like?
1 Corinthians 13:4–8

4Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. 9For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

11When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

13And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

PROPHECY AND TONGUES

14 Pursue love, and desire spiritual *gifts,* but especially that you may prophesy. 2For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him;* however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. 3But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. 4He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. 5I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for[a] he who prophesies *is* greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

TONGUES MUST BE INTERPRETED

6But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? 7Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? 8For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? 9So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. 10There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them *is* without significance. 11Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks *will be* a foreigner to me. 12Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual *gifts, let it be* for the edification of the church *that* you seek to excel.

13Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. 14For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15What is *the conclusion* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. 16Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? 17For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; 19yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

13:3 [a]NU-Text reads *so I may boast.*
14:5 [a]NU-Text reads *and.*



LIFE APP

Texting / 1 Corinthians 13:5

An epidemic addiction has hit our world—it seems nearly everyone you see has a little electronic gadget glued to their hand. Conversation has been replaced by one-line messages typed in a strange, abbreviated language. Wherever a group of people gathers, the sounds of little beeps, buzzes, and chimes fill the air as messages race through space at lightning speed.

Texting has become the most common way for some people to communicate. Cell phones are rarely used to place phone calls; it seems they are often just texting gadgets that happen to have phone call capability.

Parents and other adults may place limitations on where and when you can text. It may even seem to you they get carried away. After all, you're just sending quick messages, right?

What you may not realize is the effect texting has on the people around you. Think of it this way: if you were trying to talk to a teacher and she kept turning away from you to talk to someone else, you'd probably begin to think she really didn't want to talk with you. If you tried to discuss something with your parents and they constantly ignored you while they talked to each other, you'd probably get a bit fed up pretty quickly. That type of behavior is just plain rude—it would send you the message that you just aren't important enough to deserve their complete attention. When you allow texting to continually interrupt a conversation or discussion with others, you tell the ones around you that they are not as important to you as the words that have popped up on your screen.

Allowing a stream of texts to be more important than the people you're with is seriously rude. Take a look at Jesus' life. When He spent time with people, they always had His undivided attention. We are called to follow Jesus' example in the way we live our lives. We are to always treat others with love and respect. A simple rule to follow when you're spending time with other people: talk, don't text.

TONGUES A SIGN TO UNBELIEVERS

20Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

21In the law it is written:

"With men of other tongues and other lips
I will speak to this people;
And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,"[a]

says the Lord.

22Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. 23Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? 24But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. 25And thus[a] the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

ORDER IN CHURCH MEETINGS

26How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. 27If anyone speaks in a tongue, *let there be* two or at the most three, *each* in turn, and let one interpret. 28But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. 29Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. 30But if *anything* is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. 31For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. 32And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

34Let your[a] women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. 35And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

36Or did the word of God come *originally* from you? Or *was it* you only that it reached? 37If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. 38But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.[a]

39Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. 40Let all things be done decently and in order.

THE RISEN CHRIST, FAITH'S REALITY

15 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

3For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

9For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me. 11Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

THE RISEN CHRIST, OUR HOPE

12Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection

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14:21 [a]Isaiah 28:11, 12 **14:25** [a]NU-Text omits *And thus.* **14:34** [a]NU-Text omits *your.* **14:38** [a]NU-Text reads *if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.*

MAKING IT REAL // 1 CORINTHIANS 15:47–49

The Gift of Life After He created the world, God took a handful of dirt and made a man—the human race was born. That's a very humble beginning for people who often think so highly of themselves. Have you felt jealous of anyone lately? Do you think you deserve more than you have? Are you mad at God because your family doesn't have some of the comforts other families do? Maybe it's time to remember where you came from—dust. Yep, you (and all the people you're jealous of) are just a pile of dust that God decided to give life and love.

Your life is a gift. It's a blessing just to be on earth and to be able to enjoy life. But God made you for a reason. He wants to make something special of your life. Your body, mind, and personality are specially crafted by God for His purpose. God wants you to use the time you've got on earth and the gifts you've been given to glorify Him. Your reward comes later. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that God "is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." So stop whining about the things you don't have, get yourself up, and get going. You have a lot to do between now and the time you get to heaven. God has great things in store for you! (See also: Gen. 2:7; 3:19; Ps. 103:14.)

Words to Live By

Image: The word translated as "image" in 1 Corinthians 15:49 is the Greek word *eikon* (i-kone'). To understand it's meaning, think of the word *icon*. We know an icon on a computer program can be clicked to enable a desired action. It's almost like the icon is the same thing as the action; it represents a specific thing. In much the same way, we are to have the "image" of Christ. People should know exactly what we stand for and who we represent.

of the dead? 13But if there is no resurrection
of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14And
if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is*
empty and your faith *is* also empty. 15Yes,
and we are found false witnesses of God,
because we have testified of God that He
raised up Christ, whom He did not raise
up—if in fact the dead do not rise. 16For
if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not
risen. 17And if Christ is not risen, your faith
is futile; you are still in your sins! 18Then
also those who have fallen asleep in Christ
have perished. 19If in this life only we have
hope in Christ, we are of all men the most
pitiable.

THE LAST ENEMY DESTROYED

20But now Christ is risen from the dead,
and has become the firstfruits of those
who have fallen asleep. 21For since by
man *came* death, by Man also *came* the
resurrection of the dead. 22For as in Adam
all die, even so in Christ all shall be made
alive. 23But each one in his own order:

RESURRECTION

What is a Christian's greatest hope?

1 Corinthians 15:12–21

Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who*
are Christ's at His coming. 24Then *comes*
the end, when He delivers the kingdom to
God the Father, when He puts an end to
all rule and all authority and power. 25For
He must reign till He has put all enemies
under His feet. 26The last enemy *that* will
be destroyed *is* death. 27For *"He has put*
all things under His feet."[a] But when He
says "all things are put under *Him*," *it is*
evident that He who put all things under
Him is excepted. 28Now when all things
are made subject to Him, then the Son
Himself will also be subject to Him who
put all things under Him, that God may
be all in all.

15:27 [a]Psalm 8:6

EFFECTS OF DENYING THE RESURRECTION

29Otherwise, what will they do who are
baptized for the dead, if the dead do not
rise at all? Why then are they baptized for
the dead? 30And why do we stand in jeop-
ardy every hour? 31I affirm, by the boasting
in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord,
I die daily. 32If, in the manner of men, I have
fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advan-
tage *is it* to me? If *the* dead do not rise, *"Let
us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"*[a]

33Do not be deceived: "Evil company
corrupts good habits." 34Awake to right-
eousness, and do not sin; for some do not
have the knowledge of God. I speak *this* to
your shame.

A GLORIOUS BODY

35But someone will say, "How are the dead
raised up? And with what body do they
come?" 36Foolish one, what you sow is not
made alive unless it dies. 37And what you
sow, you do not sow that body that shall be,
but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some
other *grain.* 38But God gives it a body as He
pleases, and to each seed its own body.

39All flesh *is* not the same flesh, but *there
is* one *kind of* flesh[a] of men, another flesh
of animals, another of fish, *and* another of
birds.

40*There are* also celestial bodies and ter-
restrial bodies; but the glory of the celes-
tial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial
is another. 41*There is* one glory of the sun,
another glory of the moon, and another
glory of the stars; for *one* star differs from
another star in glory.

42So also *is* the resurrection of the dead.
The body is sown in corruption, it is raised
in incorruption. 43It is sown in dishonor, it
is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness,
it is raised in power. 44It is sown a natural
body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a
natural body, and there is a spiritual body.
45And so it is written, *"The first man Adam
became a living being."*[a] The last Adam *be-
came* a life-giving spirit.

46However, the spiritual is not first, but
the natural, and afterward the spiritual.
47The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of
dust; the second Man *is* the Lord[a] from
heaven. 48As *was* the *man* of dust, so also
are those *who are made* of dust; and as *is*
the heavenly *Man,* so also *are* those *who are*
heavenly. 49And as we have borne the im-
age of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear[a]
the image of the heavenly *Man.*

OUR FINAL VICTORY

50Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and
blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;
nor does corruption inherit incorruption.
51Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not
all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52in
a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the
last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound,
and the dead will be raised incorruptible,
and we shall be changed. 53For this cor-
ruptible must put on incorruption, and this
mortal *must* put on immortality. 54So when
this corruptible has put on incorruption,
and this mortal has put on immortality, then
shall be brought to pass the saying that is
written: *"Death is swallowed up in victory."*[a]

55 *"O Death, where is your sting?*[a]
O Hades, where is your victory?"[b]

56The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength
of sin *is* the law. 57But thanks *be* to God,
who gives us the victory through our Lord
Jesus Christ.

58Therefore, my beloved brethren, be
steadfast, immovable, always abounding
in the work of the Lord, knowing that your
labor is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 16:1

Galatia was a Roman province located in what is now Turkey. Paul was familiar with the area because he and Barnabas started several churches in that region, in cities such as: Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Pisidian Antioch.

COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS

16 Now concerning the collection
for the saints, as I have given
orders to the churches of Gala-
tia, so you must do also: 2On the first *day* of

15:32 [a]Isaiah 22:13 **15:39** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of flesh.* **15:45** [a]Genesis 2:7
15:47 [a]NU-Text omits *the Lord.* **15:49** [a]M-Text reads *let us also bear.* **15:54** [a]Isaiah 25:8
15:55 [a]Hosea 13:14 [b]NU-Text reads *O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?*

the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. 3And when I come, whomever you approve by *your* letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. 4But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.

PERSONAL PLANS

5Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). 6And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. 7For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits.

8But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. 9For a great and effective door has opened to me, and *there are* many adversaries.

10And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also *do.* 11Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace, that he may come to me; for I am waiting for him with the brethren.

12Now concerning *our* brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time.

FINAL EXHORTATIONS

13Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. 14Let all *that* you *do* be done with love.

15I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—16that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with *us.*

17I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. 18For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.

GREETINGS AND A SOLEMN FAREWELL

19The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. 20All the brethren greet you.

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21The salutation with my own hand—Paul's.

22If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.[a] O Lord, come![b]

23The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. 24My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

16:22 [a]Greek *anathema* [b]Aramaic *Maranatha*

2 Corinthians

DATE OF WRITING: FALL A.D. 56
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: GOD CAN POUR POWERFUL MINISTRY THROUGH WEAK VESSELS
PURPOSE: WE ARE TO HAVE NEW COVENANT MINISTRIES.

OUTLINE

1:1–11 .....Paul Gives Thanks to God
1:12—2:17.....The Work of an Apostle for God's People
3:1—7:16.....Guided by the Love of Christ
8:1—9:15.....Excel in Giving
10:1—13:10 .....Paul Is a True Apostle
13:11–14 .....Final Greetings

KEY VERSE:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

THEN /// You can't really understand how amazing 2 Corinthians is without knowing why Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. When Paul wrote his first letter to the church in Corinth, he was telling them off a little bit. He was setting them straight. He was letting them have it.

It's difficult enough to do the right thing. It's even harder when you get defensive and hardheaded. That is exactly how the Corinthian church *could* have responded to Paul's correction—but they didn't. In fact, by the time Paul wrote them the letter that we know as 2 Corinthians he was bragging about how giving and generous they were. He was complimenting them. He was commending them.

As bad as it feels sometimes to be confronted about stuff we do wrong, we are better people if we'll stop and listen. Second Corinthians reminds us of that.

NOW /// Have you ever heard someone say, "That's my thorn in the flesh"? If you have, you are hearing a reference to Paul's letters to the Corinthians. We don't know what Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was, but we know from these letters that there was something about Paul that he wanted to change. This thing provided a constant challenge for him. It made his life harder, and he thought it made him less effective for Christ.

While we don't know exactly what the thorn was that Paul was talking about, we all know what it is to wish we could change something about ourselves. It's okay to ask God to change that thing. Paul asked God more than once to remove his thorn. But he also didn't let it hold him back from doing what God wanted.

REALITY CHECK /// We have a lot to learn from the Corinthians about hearing the truth and responding to it. It's so easy to want to be right, whether we really *are* right or not. It's often a matter of pride. When someone tells us something that shows us we are wrong, we want to defend ourselves at all costs.

It's often at church or when we read the Bible that God confronts us about the sin in our lives. When He does, we have to make the choice that the Corinthians had to make with Paul. We can get mad and defensive, or we can listen and let God make us into better people. It's not worth trying to be right instead of just being humble and letting God make us right.

GREETING

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the
will of God, and Timothy *our* brother,

To the church of God which is at Corinth,
with all the saints who are in all Achaia:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

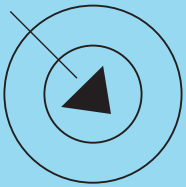
COMFORT IN SUFFERING

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies
and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us
in all our tribulation, that we may be able
to comfort those who are in any trouble,
with the comfort with which we our-
selves are comforted by God. 5 For as the
sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our
consolation also abounds through Christ.
6 Now if we are afflicted, *it is* for your con-
solation and salvation, which is effective
for enduring the same sufferings which
we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, *it is*
for your consolation and salvation. 7 And
our hope for you *is* steadfast, because
we know that as you are partakers of the
sufferings, so also *you will partake* of the
consolation.

COMFORT

What is God's response when we are hurting?

2 Corinthians 1:3–5



PROMISE

God promises to comfort you.

Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God (2 Cor. 1:3, 4).

Trouble can come in all sizes. There's the kind you get yourself into, like staying out too late or tossing water balloons at passing cars. There's the kind that other people cause for you, like when someone lies about you. And there's also the kind that just sort of hits you out of the blue, like when your best friend gets hurt in a car wreck or your grandmother dies on an operating table.

But God's comfort comes in sizes to match every problem. It fits every hole left behind by someone you love. It soothes every wound opened by the daggers of jealousy and anger. It covers every sin with the hope that Christ's blood can forgive completely—and His discipline can keep you from ever visiting this awful place of despair again.

God's comfort—so real, so refreshing—can appear in a Bible verse, a loving arm around your shoulder, a friend to cry with you, or in the peace that comes when you turn to God in prayer. Comfort is always available to you. All you have to do is watch and listen expectantly, knowing that whenever you need Him, God will reach out to you with His unending mercy and His limitless love.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 23; Isaiah 49:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17

DELIVERED FROM SUFFERING

[8]For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. [9]Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, [10]who delivered us from so great a death, and does[a] deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver *us,* [11]you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our[a] behalf for the gift *granted* to us through many.

PAUL'S SINCERITY

[12]For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. [13]For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end [14](as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also *are* ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

SPARING THE CHURCH

[15]And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit— [16]to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. [17]Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? [18]But *as* God *is* faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No. [19]For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. [20]For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. [21]Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God, [22]who also has

1:10 [a]NU-Text reads *shall.* **1:11** [a]M-Text reads *your behalf.*

MAKING IT REAL // 2 CORINTHIANS 2:15, 16

Fragrance of Faith When you do what God wants instead of acting like all the people around you, Paul says that you are, figuratively speaking, a perfume. For some people that perfume smells wonderful. These people are inspired by your relationship with Jesus. If they haven't met Him, they see the peace you have, the way it really makes you happy to follow Him, and they want what you have. If they do know Jesus, your example encourages them to keep getting closer to Him.

Unfortunately, there are others who think your life really stinks. The fact that you do things they wouldn't do—refuse to drink or do drugs, treat everyone well, obey the rules—that bugs them a lot. They can make things pretty unpleasant for you, but they're hurting themselves more than they hurt you and they don't even realize it. By giving you a hard time, they're pushing away Jesus—and knowing Him is the whole reason they were born!

So keep being perfume—a sweet smell that everyone around you can experience. That's what you're called to do. You just never know when someone who considers your life strange may start to appreciate the fragrance of your faith. Instead of hassling you, they may just join you! (See also: Matt. 5:13, 14; 28:19, 20.)

Words to Live By

Saved: The word translated as "saved" in 2 Corinthians 2:15 is the Greek word *sozo* (sode'-zo). It means "deliver, protect, preserve, and make whole." Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus has delivered us from the power of sin. He protects us as His own, He preserves our lives for eternity, and He promises to make us whole and complete—lacking nothing. Because of Jesus, we are saved from all the penalties of sin.

sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

23Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. 24Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

2 But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. 2For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me?

FORGIVE THE OFFENDER

3And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is *the joy* of you all. 4For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

5But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe. 6This punishment which *was inflicted* by the majority *is* sufficient for such a man, 7so that, on the contrary, you *ought* rather to forgive and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. 8Therefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love to him. 9For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. 10Now whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one[a] for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

TRIUMPH IN CHRIST

12Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, 13I had no rest

2:10 [a]NU-Text reads *For indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it.*



LIFE APP

Internet / 2 Corinthians 3:18

If you are reading this, you most likely can't imagine a world without the Internet. You probably rarely, if ever, go to a library. You most likely have never done a research paper without surfing the Net to find the info you need.

Any information you could possibly want is available as quickly as you can feed a search into your browser. It's immediately available—it pops up for you in an instant.

Instant. The word in and of itself isn't particularly good or bad. It just means something that happens without delay or any particular effort. In this world, we are used to pushing a button, flicking a remote, or clicking an icon to get the results we want. When pushing, flicking, or clicking doesn't work instantaneously, we get frustrated by the delay.

But living in a world where "instant" describes so much of life can be very damaging to your life of faith. It can create a mind-set that considers any delay in getting what you want as being wrong—it means something's not working as it should. But life in God's kingdom is not an instant life. A life of faith requires patience and effort.

When we are born into God's kingdom, He begins teaching us and changing us into what we were meant to be. Becoming what God has in mind for us is not something that will happen quickly, certainly not instantly. And it's not something that requires no effort on our part. God will never force us to change. He will give us all we need, but He will always leave the choice up to us. According to the Bible, we are being changed "from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). Bit-by-bit, God is changing us to look more and more like Jesus. It is a process that will continue throughout your entire life. Just remember, anything worth having is worth waiting for.

in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.

14Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And who *is* sufficient for these things? 17For we are not, as so many,[a] peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

CHRIST'S EPISTLE

3 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you or *letters* of commendation from you? 2You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, *that is,* of the heart.

THE SPIRIT, NOT THE LETTER

4And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, 6who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit;[a] for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

GLORY OF THE NEW COVENANT

7But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away, 8how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. 10For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. 11For if what is passing away *was* glorious, what remains *is* much more glorious.

12Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech— 13unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. 14But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. 15But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. 16Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. 18But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST'S GOSPEL

4 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. 2But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who

2 Corinthians 4:7

How much do you know about ancient pottery? Maybe it's time you learned a thing or two. "Earthen vessels" is another name for clay jars that were used to hold oil and grain. Before the clay could be shaped by a potter, stones and other large objects had to be removed from it. After the clay was shaped, the potter had two options for drying it: let the sun do it or stick it in a kiln. A sun-dried jar could hold grain, but it would collapse if it were filled with liquid. A jar heated in a kiln—at temperatures above 900 degrees Fahrenheit—became hard and strong and could be used to store oil and other liquids.

2:17 [a]M-Text reads *the rest.* **3:6** [a]Or *spirit*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7

Treasure Although 2 Corinthians 4:7 is actually speaking of the treasure of knowing God through Jesus, it can also teach us something about ourselves.

Another "treasure" that is within you is the special qualities God has given you. You are filled with unique talents and abilities. It doesn't matter if your teachers don't see your abilities, it doesn't even matter what your family or friends think. Before you were ever born God chose you and formed you and placed His gifts and treasures inside you!

You are special in God's eyes and He is going to use the treasure He placed inside you. He has great plans for you; He wants to bless you with a future filled with hope—a future of success, not suffering! (Check out Jeremiah 29:11.) Remember, you are already filled with God's treasure and with His power! They go beyond your own ability and strength. They come from God. God wants you to realize all He's given you; He wants to see you grow into the amazing person He created you to be. (See also: Ps. 139:13–16; Jer. 1:5; Eph. 2:10.)

Words to Live By

Power: The word translated "power" in 2 Corinthians 4:7 is the Greek word *dunamis* (doo'-nam-is). It means "energy, might, great force, great ability, and strength." To understand what kind of power *dunanmis* is, think of the word *dynamite*.

do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

CAST DOWN BUT UNCONQUERED

7But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8*We are* hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12So then death is working in us, but life in you.

13And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, *"I believed and therefore I spoke,"*[a] we also believe and therefore speak, 14knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present *us* with you. 15For all things *are* for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

SEEING THE INVISIBLE

16Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward *man* is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, 18while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which *are* not seen are eternal.

WORRY
Why should we refuse to worry?
2 Corinthians 4:8–12

4:13 [a]Psalm 116:10

ASSURANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

5 For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2]For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, [3]if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. [4]For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. [5]Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

DEATH
Should a Christian be afraid of death?
2 Corinthians 5:6–8

[6]So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. [7]For we walk by faith, not by sight. [8]We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

JUDGMENT
Will Christians be judged for their actions?
2 Corinthians 5:10

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

[9]Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. [10]For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. [11]Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

BE RECONCILED TO GOD

[12]For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have *an answer* for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. [13]For if we are beside ourselves, *it is* for God; or if we are of sound mind, *it is* for you. [14]For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; [15]and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

[16]Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him thus* no longer. [17]Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. [18]Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, [19]that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

[20]Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. [21]For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

WITNESSING
What has God entrusted us with?
2 Corinthians 5:18–21

MARKS OF THE MINISTRY

6 We then, *as* workers together *with Him* also plead with *you* not to receive the grace of God in vain. [2]For He says:

> *"In an acceptable time I have heard you,*
> *And in the day of salvation I have helped you."*[a]

Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.

[3]We give no offense in anything, that

6:2 [a]Isaiah 49:8

MAKING IT REAL // 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

New Life The Bible talks a lot about God's power. There are lots of stories about how He wiped out armies, cured diseases, and brought dead people back to life. Here, Paul is talking about one of God's most spectacular miracles. It's an invisible thing, but it's very real. When you accept salvation through Jesus, He makes you a totally new creation—a new being that never before existed. What happens is this: Your spirit—the real you—comes to life in a new way. Your mind is enabled to understand truth and your body becomes a temple—the place where God lives.

And other miracles happen when you're born again. When you ask God to forgive you for your sin and accept Jesus as your Savior, God totally forgets every sin you've ever committed. As if that weren't enough, God also frees you from the chains of hurt and pain caused by bad experiences in your past. When you give your life to the Lord, you don't have to define yourself by your past; instead, you can define yourself by what God says about you—you are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14). (See also: Ezek. 36:26; Eph. 4:20–24.)

Words to Live By

New Creation: The words translated in 2 Corinthians 5:17 as "new creation" are the Greek words *kainos* (kahee-nos'), meaning "totally new and different," and *ktisis* (ktis'-is), meaning "the act of creation." When you put these two words together, the meaning you get is more than just being renewed. When Paul says we are a "new creation," he means the ones who belong to the Lord have been transformed into a new type of being, and that transformation continues until it is completed. When we are born again, we are made new by an ongoing act of God.

our ministry may not be blamed. 4But in all *things* we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, 5in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; 6by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, 7by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true; 9as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and *yet* not killed; 10as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

BE HOLY

11O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. 12You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your *own* affections. 13Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.

14Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you[a] are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

"I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people."[b]

17Therefore

"Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.

6:16 [a]NU-Text reads *we.* [b]Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 32:38; Ezekiel 37:27



LIFE APP

Dating / 2 Corinthians 6:14

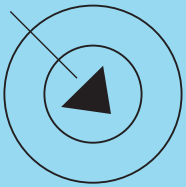
There are some words in the Bible that can be difficult to understand because we don't use them much anymore. One of those words is *yoked.*

When farmers used animals to plow fields it usually required the strength of more than one animal to pull the heavy plow through the dry, hard dirt. So that the animals worked together and didn't try to go off in different directions, the farmer would fashion a wooden bar that fit around the necks of both animals. The yoke or harness would keep the animals working in unison—in the same direction, at the same speed, each pulling their share of the load.

When Paul told the people in Corinth that they should "not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14), he most likely had that farmer's harness in mind; but he was talking about forming close relationships with people who don't share our faith.

As Christians, we obey God and try to live our lives as He directs. Unbelievers live their lives based on what the world considers important instead of living to please God. The things they value and their beliefs about the world aren't based on the truth of God's Word, so the life directions they choose aren't ruled by the Lord. When a believer and an unbeliever are in a close relationship, it's like they are joined together but each one is trying to go in a different direction. When that happens, neither one can really get anywhere in life; they spend all their time struggling against each other.

But when two believers are "yoked" together, they are stronger and able to accomplish so much more than they could on their own. Because both are following where the Lord leads, they can help each other through the hard times and encourage each other to always do as the Lord directs. Being "yoked" to a believer makes life easier and following the Lord more fun.



PROMISE

God promises to comfort people in need.

Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus (2 Cor. 7:6).

Paul is extremely honest. He wasn't always standing on a spiritual mountaintop, and he doesn't mind admitting it. He spends time in 2 Corinthians talking about his suffering, worry, tears, and broken heart. He doesn't try to pretend that just because he loves Jesus, nothing hard ever happens. He admits to his struggles and hardships. He talks about the troubles he's faced. He is real and vulnerable.

Somehow over time, Christians have lost sight of Paul's example. We've replaced honesty with pretending. Too many Christians pretend that their lives are happy while they suffer in total silence. They won't admit to their own needs and weaknesses, yet they wonder why God doesn't do something to help them.

God can bring comfort, peace, and hope to those who are depressed, hurting, or discouraged. Do you need God to comfort you? Then talk to Him. Be honest with Him. Then talk with fellow believers who are close to you. Be brave enough to say, "I love God, but life is tough right now." Whether the Holy Spirit comforts us directly, or speaks to us through others, or uses the Word of God, He will bring comfort to people in need.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalms 23:4; 119:50; 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4

Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you."[a]

2 Corinthians 6:17

Paul was not talking about getting physically dirty in this verse. "Unclean" refers to anything that would make a person unfit to worship or have fellowship with God.

18 *"I will be a Father to you,*
And you shall be My sons and
daughters,
Says the LORD *Almighty."*[a]

7 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

THE CORINTHIANS' REPENTANCE

2 Open *your hearts* to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one. 3 I do not say *this* to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.

5 For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears. 6 Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. 9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

6:17 [a] Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 20:34, 41
6:18 [a] 2 Samuel 7:14

11For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what clearing of yourselves, what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* vehement desire, *what* zeal, *what* vindication! In all *things* you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. 12Therefore, although I wrote to you, *I did* not *do it* for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

THE JOY OF TITUS

13Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. 14For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. 15And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. 16Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.

EXCEL IN GIVING

8 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 3For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, 4imploring us with much urgency that we would receive[a] the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the will of God. 6So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. 7But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—*see* that you abound in this grace also.

CHRIST OUR PATTERN

8I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. 9For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

> ***2 Corinthians 8:10, 11***
> The Christians in Jerusalem were experiencing some tough times. They had endured two earthquakes and a severe famine. Christian churches in other cities offered to give their own money to help their brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul and Barnabas were collecting the money and taking it to Jerusalem.

10And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; 11but now you also must complete the doing *of it;* that as *there was* a readiness to desire *it,* so *there* also *may be* a completion out of what *you* have. 12For if there is first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to what one has, *and* not according to what he does not have.

13For *I do* not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; 14but by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may supply* their lack, that their abundance also may *supply* your lack—that there may be equality. 15As it is written, *"He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack."*[a]

COLLECTION FOR THE JUDEAN SAINTS

16But thanks *be* to God who puts[a] the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. 17For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. 18And we have sent with him the brother whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches, 19and not only *that,* but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and *to show* your ready mind,

8:4 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *that we would receive,* thus changing text to *urgency for the favor and fellowship* . . . . **8:15** [a]Exodus 16:18
8:16 [a]NU-Text reads *has put.*

MAKING IT REAL // 2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

Riches Jesus had it all. He lived in a place of absolute perfection and was loved unconditionally and completely by all the inhabitants of heaven. He ruled the whole universe and walked on streets of gold—comfortable, adored, worshiped. Then, one day, it all changed. God loved His people so much that He couldn't stand to watch them suffer and wander around as lost souls. His people needed someone they could relate to, someone like them, to explain God's plan and purpose. So Jesus decided to come to earth as a human baby. He poured His glorious self into a frail, helpless, human body and gave up all the magnificence of heaven just to help us learn how to live and be right with God. He became poor so that we could know the riches of God's kingdom—joy that can't be destroyed by a busted world, love that never ends, peace when chaos is all around; the blessings of God's kingdom are endless. Jesus said that His riches have become ours by our faith in Him. That's great news—you're rich! (See also: Rom. 8:16, 17; 1 Tim. 6:17–19; James 2:5.)

Words to Live By

Grace: The word translated as "grace" in 2 Corinthians 8:9 is the Greek word *charis* (khar'-ece). It means "favor or preference that is not earned or deserved." God's grace is freely given to His people.

20 avoiding this: that anyone should blame
us in this lavish gift which is administered
by us— 21 providing honorable things, not
only in the sight of the Lord, but also in
the sight of men.

22 And we have sent with them our
brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more
diligent, because of the great confidence
which *we have* in you. 23 If *anyone inquires*
about Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow
worker concerning you. Or if our brethren *are inquired about, they are* messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.
24 Therefore show to them, and[a] before the
churches, the proof of your love and of our
boasting on your behalf.

ADMINISTERING THE GIFT

9 Now concerning the ministering to
the saints, it is superfluous for me
to write to you; 2 for I know your
willingness, about which I boast of you to
the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready
a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up
the majority. 3 Yet I have sent the brethren,
lest our boasting of you should be in vain
in this respect, that, as I said, you may be
ready; 4 lest if *some* Macedonians come
with me and find you unprepared, we (not
to mention you!) should be ashamed of this
confident boasting.[a] 5 Therefore I thought it
necessary to exhort the brethren to go to
you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which *you had* previously promised, that it may be ready as *a matter of* generosity and not as a grudging
obligation.

GIVING
Why should Christians give to others?
2 Corinthians 9:6, 7

THE CHEERFUL GIVER

6 But this *I say:* He who sows sparingly
will also reap sparingly, and he who sows
bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 *So let*
each one *give* as he purposes in his heart,
not grudgingly or of necessity; for God
loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God *is* able to
make all grace abound toward you, that
you, always having all sufficiency in all

8:24 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *and.*
9:4 [a]NU-Text reads *this confidence.*

things, may have an abundance for every good work. 9As it is written:

> *"He has dispersed abroad,*
> *He has given to the poor;*
> *His righteousness endures forever."*[a]

10Now may[a] He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have *sown* and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11while *you are* enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. 12For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, 13while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal sharing with them and all *men,* 14and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. 15Thanks *be* to God for His indescribable gift!

THE SPIRITUAL WAR

10 Now I, Paul, myself *am* pleading with *you* by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence *am* lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you. 2But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

REALITY OF PAUL'S AUTHORITY

7Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he *is* Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we *are* Christ's.[a] 8For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us[a] for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed— 9lest I seem to terrify you by letters. 10"For *his* letters," they say, "*are* weighty and powerful, but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible." 11Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *we will* also *be* in deed when we are present.

LIMITS OF PAUL'S AUTHORITY

12For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 13We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. 14For we are not overextending ourselves (as though *our authority* did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; 15not boasting of things beyond measure, *that is,* in other men's labors, but having hope, *that* as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16to preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

17But *"he who glories, let him glory in the* LORD*."*[a] 18For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

CONCERN FOR THEIR FAITHFULNESS

11 Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. 2For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. 3But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity[a] that is in Christ. 4For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not

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9:9 [a]Psalm 112:9 **9:10** [a]NU-Text reads *Now He who supplies . . . will supply . . . .* **10:7** [a]NU-Text reads *even as we are.* **10:8** [a]NU-Text omits *us.* **10:17** [a]Jeremiah 9:24 **11:3** [a]NU-Text adds *and purity.*



LIFE APP

Obedience / 2 Corinthians 10:5

In 2 Corinthians 10:5 the apostle Paul talks about "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Often, when we think of obedience to God, we think of our actions. If we don't lie or cheat or steal or hurt someone, we may think we're doing okay. But obedience goes further than just our actions. Obedience begins in our minds and in our hearts.

Whether you realize it or not, you are in the middle of a war—this spiritual war is about your heart and mind. The enemy (Satan) wants to distract you from following Christ faithfully. He can throw up all kinds of interference: lustful thoughts about your crush, temptations to gossip or scheme to become more popular at someone else's expense, or obsession with texting and social networking. It's important to realize that all these distractions are strategies of the enemy in the war for your mind and heart.

So what should our strategy in this war be? We would do well to follow Paul's advice to capture every thought for obedience to Christ. Your actions start with your thoughts, so don't wait until your thoughts translate into actions before you deal with them. Go on the offensive. When a thought comes into your mind, immediately decide how you are going to handle it. Is it a positive thought that will lead you to godly actions? Or is it a negative or sinful thought that you need to capture? Once you've made the decision, act swiftly and surely.

You're not on our own in this war. God will give you the strength, courage and wisdom you need to effectively navigate each skirmish with the enemy. Obedience starts in your mind and heart. If you stay faithful to your strategy of capturing thoughts instead of waiting for actions, you will see many more victories.

preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

PAUL AND FALSE APOSTLES

5For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles. 6Even though *I am* untrained in speech, yet *I am* not in knowledge. But we have been thoroughly manifested[a] among you in all things.

7Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? 8I robbed other churches, taking wages *from them* to minister to you. 9And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep *myself.* 10As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. 11Why? Because I do not love you? God knows!

SATAN
How does Satan convince people to follow him?
2 Corinthians 11:14

12But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. 13For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

RELUCTANT BOASTING

16I say again, let no one think me a fool. If otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little. 17What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. 18Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. 19For you put up with fools gladly, since you *yourselves* are wise! 20For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours *you,* if one takes *from you,* if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. 21To *our* shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold—I speak foolishly—I am bold also.

SUFFERING FOR CHRIST

22Are they Hebrews? So *am* I. Are they Israelites? So *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So *am* I. 23Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I *am* more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. 25Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26*in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; 27in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— 28besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. 29Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation?*

30If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. 31The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; 33but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

THE VISION OF PARADISE

12 It is doubtless[a] not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the

11:6 [a]NU-Text omits *been.* **12:1** [a]NU-Text reads *necessary, though not profitable, to boast.*

Lord: [2]I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. [3]And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— [4]how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. [5]Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. [6]For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me *to be* or hears from me.

PRAYER
Does God always answer prayer in the way we hope?
2 Corinthians 12:7–10

THE THORN IN THE FLESH

[7]And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. [8]Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. [9]And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10]Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

SIGNS OF AN APOSTLE

[11]I have become a fool in boasting;[a] you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing. [12]Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. [13]For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!

LOVE FOR THE CHURCH

[14]Now *for* the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. [15]And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

[16]But be that *as it may,* I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning! [17]Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? [18]I urged Titus, and sent our brother with *him.* Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did *we* not *walk* in the same steps?

[19]Again, do you think[a] that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But *we do* all things, beloved, for your edification. [20]For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and *that* I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest *there be* contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; [21]lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

COMING WITH AUTHORITY

13 This *will be* the third *time* I am coming to you. *"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."*[a] [2]I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write[a] to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare— [3]since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. [4]For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.

[5]Examine yourselves *as to* whether you

12:11 [a]NU-Text omits *in boasting.*
12:19 [a]NU-Text reads *You have been thinking for a long time. . . .* **13:1** [a]Deuteronomy 19:15
13:2 [a]NU-Text omits *I write.*

are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. 6But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

PAUL PREFERS GENTLENESS

7Now I[a] pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified. 8For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. 9For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete. 10Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

GREETINGS AND BENEDICTION

11Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

12Greet one another with a holy kiss.

13All the saints greet you.

14The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen.

13:7 [a]NU-Text reads *we.*

Galatians

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 48
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH ALONE
PURPOSE: WE ARE SAVED AND WE LIVE "BY FAITH."

OUTLINE

1:1–10 .....A True Apostle and the True Message
1:11–24 .....God Chose Paul to Be an Apostle
2:1–21 .....Paul Defends His Message
3:1—4:31 .....Justification Only by Faith
5:1—6:10 .....Guided by the Spirit and Love
6:11–18 .....Final Warnings

KEY VERSE:

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

THEN /// Have you ever tried to explain something to someone over and over and over; then, just when you think they're about to get it you realize they don't even know what you're talking about? That's how Paul felt about the Galatians.

Paul had spent time with the churches in Galatia teaching them the basics of Christianity. He thought they had finally gotten the fact that Christ's sacrifice on the cross changed everything. Righteousness was no longer a by-product of rules and regulations followed like robots. Righteousness now came from faith in Christ's one-time sacrifice of Himself. Compared to the kind of life people had faced under Jewish law, this new understanding of righteousness was pure freedom.

Paul was exasperated with the Galatians because, even though he had taught them this new way of thinking, they had reverted back to trying to earn their righteousness by obeying the Jewish law. Paul was irritated. So he sat down and wrote them a letter to get them back on the right track. Because of all this, some people call the Book of Galatians the spiritual Declaration of Independence.

NOW /// There was a group of people called "Judaizers" who came to Galatia and began to influence the church there. The Judaizers believed that anyone who wanted to be a Christian should obey the Jewish customs, including circumcision. Now the Jewish customs were a product of years of traditions passed down from family to family from generation to generation. It would have been a lot for anyone to take, not to mention that Christ had freed the people from those customs. The Judaizers ignored the grace that God offered through Christ. This is why Paul could not ignore their influence.

It's important to understand that Paul did not tell the Galatians that it didn't matter what they did—right is still right and wrong is still wrong; sin will always be sin. But he wanted them to understand that we can't earn our way into heaven by being good or by following certain customs or rituals. When you believe you can be righteous before God by obeying religious laws and following religious customs, it's called legalism.

REALITY CHECK /// One of the famous passages in Galatians says we should bear fruit. In fact, there are several places in the Bible where Christians are compared to growing things like grapevines and fruit-bearing trees. Do you think being a Christian is like being a tree? In some ways it is. The purpose of an apple tree is to bear apples. The way you know whether that tree is doing what it is supposed to do is when you pick an apple and take a bite. That's how we are as Christians. The test of whether we are growing spiritually is the fruit we produce. Galatians says our fruit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (5:22, 23).What kind of fruit do people pick off your branches?

GREETING

1 Paul, an apostle (not from men nor
through man, but through Jesus
Christ and God the Father who raised
Him from the dead), 2and all the brethren
who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

3Grace to you and peace from God the
Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, 4who
gave Himself for our sins, that He might
deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,
5to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

ONLY ONE GOSPEL

6I marvel that you are turning away so soon
from Him who called you in the grace of
Christ, to a different gospel, 7which is not
another; but there are some who trouble
you and want to pervert the gospel of
Christ. 8But even if we, or an angel from
heaven, preach any other gospel to you
than what we have preached to you, let
him be accursed. 9As we have said before,

so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

10For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

CALL TO APOSTLESHIP

11But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it,* but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

13For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it. 14And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

15But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, 16to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, 17nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

CONTACTS AT JERUSALEM

18Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter,[a] and remained with him fifteen days. 19But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20(Now *concerning* the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)

21Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which *were* in Christ. 23But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to* destroy." 24And they glorified God in me.

DEFENDING THE GOSPEL

2 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with *me.* 2And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. 3Yet not even Titus who *was* with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4And *this occurred* because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), 5to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

GOD
Does God love some people more than others?
Galatians 2:6

6But from those who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed *to be something* added nothing to me. 7But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as *the gospel* for the circumcised *was* to Peter 8(for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), 9and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10*They desired* only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

Galatians 2:8

One of the best ways to determine whether a person is a Gentile or not is to ask this question: "Are you Jewish?" If the person says no, he or she is a Gentile. Jewish people in Paul's day set themselves apart from Gentiles by following the customs and rules of the Old Testament, particularly the law God gave to Moses.

NO RETURN TO THE LAW

11Now when Peter[a] had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he

1:18 [a]NU-Text reads *Cephas.* **2:11** [a]NU-Text reads *Cephas.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // GALATIANS 2:20

Live by Faith Obviously, you're still breathing and your heart's still beating. If you're reading this, you are alive. And Paul was certainly still alive when he wrote his letter to the Galatians. So what did he mean when he said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"? Like he did so many times, Paul was describing something that was not *physically* true but *spiritually* true. When you put your faith in Jesus, something changes inside you. The old you—the old spirit—dies, and a new spirit is born in you. You become Christ-centered instead of self-centered. You have a new life in Christ and it's totally different from your old life without Him. You've got a new reason to live. Before you gave your heart to Jesus, you were on your own. Now you've got the King of Kings with you all the time—loving you, forgiving you, guiding you, inspiring you. When your old self dies and Christ lives fully in you, you are free to become the best version of yourself. (See also: Rom. 6:4–11; 2 Cor. 5:21.)

Words to Live By

Crucified: We all know that Jesus died on a cross—He was crucified. There are movies in which an actor portrays Jesus being beaten and nailed to a cross, so the physical cruelty is something we know all too well. But Jesus didn't just suffer physical pain. When Jesus hung on the cross, He took into Himself all the sin that would ever be committed by people—past, present, and future. The Bible actually says He became sin (2 Cor. 5:21). When we feel the guilt of only one sin, it can make us deeply unhappy. It's beyond imagining how Jesus must have felt when He carried the weight of every sin within Himself.

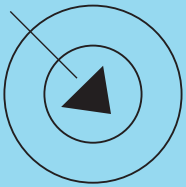
was to be blamed; 12for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

14But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you[a] compel Gentiles to live as Jews?[b] 15We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

17"But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! 18For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 20I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain."

FAITH
Why should Christians be able to live faithful lives?
Galatians 2:20

2:14 [a]NU-Text reads *how can you.* [b]Some interpreters stop the quotation here.



PROMISE

God promises that you are His child by faith.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26).

If you have accepted Christ, you are God's child, and He is your Father. Through faith in Jesus Christ, you were able to join the family of God. But what exactly is faith?

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith is not just wishful thinking; it is our solid belief and trust in what we know to be true, even when we can't see it. Although you've never seen God with your physical eyes, you can still know He exists and He loves you, and you can put your faith in Him. He is more than worthy of that faith.

God cares for you in much the same way a loving and loyal earthly father cares for his children, only more so. God is concerned with every detail of your life. He wants to give you good things. He wants to see you grow and learn and be everything He's designed you to be. He really wants you to know Him—deeply and powerfully. How can you get to know your Father better? Spend time with Him in prayer and study His Word.

You're God's child. You're a prince or a princess in His kingdom because the King is your Dad! He loves you so much that He's adopted you as His very own. By faith, take your place as a child of God.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Matthew 7:11; John 1:12, 13; Romans 8:15, 16; 1 John 3:1

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

3 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth,[a] before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you[b] as crucified? 2This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? 4Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain?

5Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?— 6just as Abraham *"believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*[a] 7Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."*[a] 9So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

THE LAW BRINGS A CURSE

10For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, *"Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."*[a] 11But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for *"the just shall live by faith."*[a] 12Yet the law is not of faith, but *"the man who does them shall live by them."*[a]

13Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, *"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"*[a]),14that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

3:1 [a]NU-Text omits *that you should not obey the truth.* [b]NU-Text omits *among you.*
3:6 [a]Genesis 15:6 **3:8** [a]Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14 **3:10** [a]Deuteronomy 27:26
3:11 [a]Habakkuk 2:4 **3:12** [a]Leviticus 18:5
3:13 [a]Deuteronomy 21:23



WORLD APP

Equality / Galatians 3:28

Our world is full of all kinds of people: male, female, tall, short, dark-complexioned, fair-skinned, funny, serious, brainy, athletic, and so on. No two people are exactly alike. With so many diverse people in the world, you might think we would all be fascinated and excited when we meet someone new, who is not similar to us.

But that is often not the case. Many times when we encounter someone different from us, we become suspicious, guarded, intimidated, conceited, or confrontational. It's easy to fall for the lie that just because someone doesn't look like you or act like you, they are not quite as important as you. We make these kind of judgments based on skin color, gender, or other aspects of physical appearance. We also make these kinds of judgments based on ethnicity or family history. Whatever our reasons for deeming some people more valuable than others, it is wrong to do so. God makes no such distinctions and neither should we.

As a matter of fact, in Galatians 3:28, Paul (the writer of Galatians) gives us some examples to show that we are all equal in the sight of God: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Jesus constantly teaches us to reach out to everyone; every single person is important. He gave Himself as a sacrifice to provide eternal life to "whoever believes in Him" (John 3:16). Not any specific race who believes in Him; not only the tall, dark, and handsome men who believe in Him; not only those who speak a certain language who believe in Him; not only the wealthy who believe in Him. He said, "Whoever believes in Him."

We need to recognize the God-given value in ourselves and every person we meet. Remember that *different* doesn't have to mean better or worse. *Different* can just mean different. We are all equal in Christ Jesus.

THE CHANGELESS PROMISE

15Brethren, I speak in the manner of men:
Though *it is* only a man's covenant, yet *if it*
is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.
16Now to Abraham and his Seed were the
promises made. He does not say, "And to
seeds," as of many, but as of one, *"And to*
your Seed,"[a] who is Christ. 17And this I say,
that the law, which was four hundred and
thirty years later, cannot annul the cov-
enant that was confirmed before by God in
Christ,[a] that it should make the promise of
no effect. 18For if the inheritance *is* of the
law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave
it to Abraham by promise.

PURPOSE OF THE LAW

19What purpose then *does* the law *serve?*
It was added because of transgressions,
till the Seed should come to whom the
promise was made; *and it was* appointed
through angels by the hand of a mediator.
20Now a mediator does not *mediate* for one
only, but God is one.

21*Is* the law then against the promises of
God? Certainly not! For if there had been a
law given which could have given life, truly
righteousness would have been by the law.
22But the Scripture has confined all under
sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ
might be given to those who believe. 23But
before faith came, we were kept under
guard by the law, kept for the faith which
would afterward be revealed. 24Therefore
the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ,
that we might be justified by faith. 25But af-
ter faith has come, we are no longer under
a tutor.

DISCRIMINATION
Are all people equal in the eyes of God?
Galatians 3:26–28

SONS AND HEIRS

26For you are all sons of God through
faith in Christ Jesus. 27For as many of you
as were baptized into Christ have put on
Christ. 28There is neither Jew nor Greek,
there is neither slave nor free, there is nei-
ther male nor female; for you are all one in
Christ Jesus. 29And if you *are* Christ's, then
you are Abraham's seed, and heirs accord-
ing to the promise.

Galatians 4:1, 2

Slaves may have been considered second-class citizens in New Testament times, but that didn't stop their masters from entrusting their kids to the slaves' care. Slaves regularly supervised the education of their master's children. According to the custom of the day, most girls received their education at home. Boys, on the other hand, attended school, where they learned to read and write.

4 Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he
is a child, does not differ at all from
a slave, though he is master of all,
2but is under guardians and stewards until
the time appointed by the father. 3Even so
we, when we were children, were in bond-
age under the elements of the world. 4But
when the fullness of the time had come,
God sent forth His Son, born[a] of a woman,
born under the law, 5to redeem those who
were under the law, that we might receive
the adoption as sons.

6And because you are sons, God has sent
forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts,
crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7Therefore you
are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son,
then an heir of[a] God through Christ.

FEARS FOR THE CHURCH

8But then, indeed, when you did not know
God, you served those which by nature are
not gods. 9But now after you have known
God, or rather are known by God, how *is*
it that you turn again to the weak and beg-
garly elements, to which you desire again
to be in bondage? 10You observe days and
months and seasons and years. 11I am
afraid for you, lest I have labored for you
in vain.

12Brethren, I urge you to become like me,
for I *became* like you. You have not injured
me at all. 13You know that because of physi-
cal infirmity I preached the gospel to you
at the first. 14And my trial which was in my

3:16 [a]Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 24:7 **3:17** [a]NU-Text omits *in Christ.* **4:4** [a]Or *made* **4:7** [a]NU-Text reads *through God* and omits *through Christ.*

flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus. 15What[a] then was the blessing you *enjoyed?* For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. 16Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

17They zealously court you, *but* for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. 18But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. 19My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, 20I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.

Galatians 4:23

Sarah and Hagar both gave birth to a son of Abraham. But Sarah was Abraham's wife and Hagar was Sarah's slave. Before you get the wrong idea about Abraham, you should know his encounter with Hagar was Sarah's idea. God had promised Abraham and Sarah they would have a son. Sarah realized she was too old to have a child, so she thought the next best thing would be for her servant to have Abraham's son. And that's what happened. Hagar gave birth to a son named Ishmael. God, however, made it clear that Ishmael was not the son He had promised. Despite the fact that she was ninety years old, Sarah herself became pregnant and gave birth to a son named Isaac—the one God had promised.

TWO COVENANTS

21Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24which things are symbolic. For these are the[a] two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— 25for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— 26but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27For it is written:

"Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!
Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more
children
Than she who has a husband."[a]

28Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was,* are children of promise. 29But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, even so *it is* now. 30Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? *"Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."*[a] 31So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

5 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free,[a] and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. 2Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. 3And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. 4You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. 5For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

LOVE FULFILLS THE LAW

7You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8This persuasion does not *come* from Him who calls you. 9A little leaven leavens the whole lump. 10I have

4:15 [a]NU-Text reads *Where.* **4:24** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *the.* **4:27** [a]Isaiah 54:1
4:30 [a]Genesis 21:10 **5:1** [a]NU-Text reads *For freedom Christ has made us free; stand fast therefore.*



WORLD APP

Ethics / Galatians 5:22, 23

To have ethics means to respect the rules and to have personal integrity (be faithful to operate with honesty and honor). Ethical people can be trusted. They not only follow the law, they try to always be truthful and reliable in all that they do.

Christians should be ethical people—they should always obey the law, have integrity, and never fail to follow through on a commitment. But a Christian's conduct should not just be ruled by laws and a sense of responsibility. A Christian's choices and behavior should be ruled by the Holy Spirit.

In Galatians 5:22, 23, Paul lists nine qualities the Holy Spirit brings into the life of a believer: love, joy, peace, long-suffering (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. As much as we may try to work up the ability to live out those qualities and be ethical people of integrity, we will always fall short. However, Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit when we chose to accept Him as our Savior. The Holy Spirit places within us the ability to live our lives based on characteristics that please God, not just man.

But the Holy Spirit will not force you to operate with the qualities He brings into your heart. The choice is still yours. Think of it this way: When you're hungry you may see a tree full of juicy fruit, just waiting to be picked. But if you don't pull off some fruit and eat it, you'll still be hungry. It's much the same with the "fruit" of the Holy Spirit; it's there for you whenever you need it, but you have to make the choice to "pick" it and make it part of your life.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // GALATIANS 5:22–25

A Fruitful Life The Spirit of God lives in each believer. He changes us from the inside out and makes us more like Jesus. He brings power into our lives that we would otherwise be without—power to live as God wants. The Holy Spirit will always let us know the right thing to do and the best way to behave. People who have the Spirit of God inside are able to choose godly actions and reactions; they are not ruled by their feelings, but by the Holy Spirit. But God's Spirit will never force a believer to do anything. It's always a choice, a decision to do the right thing.

Scripture tells us that the Spirit will bring us love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (the ability to tell yourself "No"). Each of those traits is available to us, because they are given to us by the Holy Spirit. But just like you will never know the taste of a fresh-picked apple unless you take it off the tree and eat it, you will never know all the wonderful "fruit" that can be in your life unless you decide to give it a try. Like the Bible says, "Taste and see that the LORD is good" (Ps. 34:8). (See also: Prov. 3:5, 6; 13:10; Matt. 6:33.)

Words to Live By

Holy Spirit: The God Christians worship is actually the "Holy Trinity"—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—together they are one God. Although it is impossible to understand how God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit can be one being, we know it's true. The Holy Spirit is the One who teaches us and helps us live our lives as God wants. He is God and should be worshiped and praised.

confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

11 And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. 12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*[a] 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery,[a] fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders,[a] drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

LUST
How can we avoid being ruled by lustful living?
Galatians 5:16–22

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live

5:14 [a]Leviticus 19:18 **5:19** [a]NU-Text omits *adultery.* **5:21** [a]NU-Text omits *murders.*



LIFE APP

Meaning / Galatians 6:14

Everyone is looking for meaning to life. We want our lives to have value and purpose—to mean something. Many sincere people look for this meaning by winning the praise of others. They think their life will have significance and value if enough people respect or admire them. Some relationships suffer because the people involved try to fill their need for purpose in life through the other person; and that will never be successful. Others may look for meaning through serving others; they may even travel the world helping people in need. And while that's wonderful, there may still be a lack of meaning in their lives that no amount of good-intentioned service can give them. The only place to truly find the meaning of life is in Christ Jesus. Next to Christ, nothing else on earth even comes close to providing the sense of value and purpose we all crave.

We see this clearly in Paul's life, especially when he says, "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14). He also says in Philippians that all the things on earth that had previously been "gain" to him (things in which he had tried to find life's meaning), "these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him" (Phil. 3:7–9a).

Paul found the only true and lasting meaning of life—Jesus Christ. All those things on earth that he thought might give him meaning paled in comparison to knowing and serving Christ. It wasn't even a difficult choice for Paul; he gave up everything—he considered himself crucified to the world—just to have Christ. This is the same Christ who gives true meaning to our lives. We were made to love, worship, serve, and enjoy our relationship with God and the eternal life provided through Christ Jesus. In that, we find true meaning in life.

in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
26Let us not become conceited, provoking
one another, envying one another.

BEAR AND SHARE THE BURDENS

6 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in
any trespass, you who *are* spiritual
restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5For each one shall bear his own load.

BE GENEROUS AND DO GOOD

6Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

7Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

GLORY ONLY IN THE CROSS

11See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! 12As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. 14But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom[a] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

BLESSING AND A PLEA

16And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

17From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

6:14 [a]Or *by which* (the cross)

Galatians 6:11

Many people in New Testament times used secretaries to write letters for them. Some Bible experts believe that Paul needed a secretary because he had very poor eyesight. Apparently, Paul had dictated this letter to a secretary, but then wrote the last paragraph in his own handwriting, so the churches in Galatia would know it really came from him.

Ephesians

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 60
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: THE CHURCH IS GLORIOUS
PURPOSE: CHRISTIANS ARE TO LOVE AND SERVE ONE ANOTHER.

OUTLINE

1:1, 2.....Greetings
1:3—3:21.....Christ Gives Spiritual Blessings
4:1—6:20.....A New Life in Unity with Christ
6:21–24.....Final Greetings

KEY VERSE:

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

THEN /// The Book of Ephesians is a letter of encouragement that Paul wrote from jail. Yes that's right, Paul was a prisoner under house arrest and wrote letters to churches telling them to be strong and keep the faith. That's commitment, huh? So what *does* someone write about from such a prison? What Paul wrote about was God's unending love. Almost half of his letter to the Ephesians is about how much God loves them.

The last half of Paul's letter is about loving each other whether we are family members or church members or work associates. Paul explains that we should live with God's love in us pouring out to those around us. There's a lot of good advice in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, advice about being patient and loving and forgiving and being honest. It's amazing, isn't it, that a prisoner could write a letter to a church in the first century that has so much to do with the lives we are living today?

NOW /// If you're going to play football for a team, you suit up. You wear protective gear on every joint and a helmet for your head. If you are going to go scuba-diving, you suit up as well. You carry tanks and you wear flippers. For almost anything we do, there is a uniform and some gear attached. It's no different for the Christian walk. In Ephesians Paul describes how we suit up spiritually and what kind of gear we need to carry. Among other things, he describes our shield of faith and our helmet of salvation (6:11–17). It makes sense, doesn't it, that we would be able to equip ourselves for something so important as the ultimate battle between good and evil?

REALITY CHECK /// Do you realize that God has gifted you? Do you realize that He has given you a certain set of skills that allow you to minister to other people? Ephesians 4 gives one of several lists of gifts in the New Testament. Some people feel like they don't have any gifts at all, but they're wrong. Everyone has a gift from God. Sometimes we get so used to our own gifts that we don't even notice them. Most often, we tend to notice the gifts that are different from our own. If you don't know what your gifts are, start noticing what comes easy to you and what you enjoy the most. Those might be your best clues.

GREETING

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

REDEMPTION IN CHRIST

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both[a] which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. 11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him you also *trusted,* after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

1:10 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *both.*

MAKING IT REAL // EPHESIANS 1:11–14

Heirs of the Promise When someone dies, they may leave their valuable possessions as a gift to someone they appreciated—someone who meant a lot to them while they lived. That gift is called an inheritance. Sometimes an inheritance is big—a house or a car or lots of cash—sometimes it can be something small, like a watch or a piece of jewelry. Regardless of the size of the inheritance, if you receive one, it means someone really cared about you.

When Jesus died, He left an inheritance for all the people who believe in Him. But He did not leave us money that would just get spent or things that would one day come to an end; Jesus left us a gift that is eternal—life forever with God.

Since that gift isn't something we can have until the day we go to be with Jesus in God's kingdom, He left us a guarantee (a promise) that we would one day receive our inheritance. That guarantee is the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit lives within us, we can be sure that we will one day live with Jesus in God's perfect kingdom. (See also: 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; Eph. 1:3; Col. 1:12; 3:23, 24; 1 Pet. 1:3–9.)

Words to Live By

Guarantee: The word translated as "guarantee" in Ephesians 1:14 is the Greek word *arrhabon* (ar-hrab-ohn'). An *arrhabon* is a pledge or a promise that an agreement will be fulfilled. The Holy Spirit is God's divine pledge that He will do all He has promised.

14 who[a] is the guarantee of our inheritance
until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL WISDOM

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith
in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,
16 do not cease to give thanks for you,
making mention of you in my prayers:
17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation
in the knowledge of Him,
18 the eyes of your understanding[a] being enlightened;
that you may know what is the hope of His calling,
what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
19 and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe,
according to the working of His mighty power
20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead
and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places,*
21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion,
and every name that is named,
not only in this age but also in that which is to come.
22 And He put all *things* under His feet,
and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church,
23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

2 And you *He made alive,* who were dead in trespasses and sins,
2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world,
according to the prince of the power of the air,
the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,
3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh,
fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,
and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

WORKS
Can eternal life be earned?
Ephesians 2:4–10

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

1:14 [a]NU-Text reads *which.* **1:18** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *hearts.*



LIFE APP

Pornography / Ephesians 2:1–7

Pornography is not a new thing. As a matter of fact, artifacts from the early Roman Empire prove it was very much a part of ancient life. Regardless of how long it's been around, it is a harmful and degrading aspect of any society.

Though some may argue that pornography hurts no one, the facts tell a different story. What about the women who are photographed; are they not degraded and used? What about the child who accidentally picks up a porn magazine? What about the fact that so many serial killers blame explicit pornography for their desire to sexually assault and kill? By choosing to allow pornography into our lives, we are condoning the industry that tries to replace a wholesome, godly view of sex (read Song of Solomon if you want proof) with a perverted, ugly, degrading, and sometimes even dangerous substitute.

The Bible does not specifically mention pornography (the word itself has its roots in the Greek word *pornographia*, which means to write about a prostitute or sexual immorality). But Scripture makes it clear that immoral actions are sinful. As far as the world is concerned, immorality is anything that goes against accepted, socially correct behavior. As Christians, we don't look to society to define correct behavior; we look to God and His Word. And God's Word calls immorality a sin (Gal. 5:19).

There is a debate carried on often and loudly between politicians and porn producers and publishers. They continually try to find a definition of pornography. So how do you know what is pornographic and what is not? Where exactly is that line? A good way to judge what you should and should not allow into your eyes and ears is to ask yourself if God would be pleased by your choice. If the answer is no, then steer clear. God didn't make up a bunch of rules just because He could. All of the directions we receive from God are because He knows what is good for us and for the rest of the world. Listen closely. He'll never steer you wrong.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // EPHESIANS 2:4–10

Child of the King A prince is tragically separated from his parents at birth. The child grows up alone, totally unaware of his royal home and family. For years the parents search for their son, sending out soldiers to every region to look for the one who belongs to them. Finally, the boy is found, living in poverty, robbing for food, and acting like a savage. A soldier tells the boy about his father—the king of the entire land. In an instant, the beggar child realizes the person he was meant to be. He is suddenly aware he is the son of a king—a prince of the kingdom. Immediately, the boy is given a new life, new power, and a new home. He even has a place to sit beside his father's throne.

You, too, are the child of a King. God has been merciful. He knew you were dead in your sins, ruled by selfish desires, and destined for eternal punishment. He loved you and graciously gave you new life. With your new life has come new power and a new home with Christ in heaven. (See also: John 14:1–4; 2 Cor. 5:1, 2; Phil. 3:20.)

Words to Live By

Workmanship: The word translated in Ephesians 2:10 as "workmanship" is the Greek word *poiema* (poy'-ay-mah). This word means "crafted by an artist." God is the Master Artist. The universe is His creation (Rom. 1:20), and those who believe in Jesus are His greatest work of art.

[5]even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), [6]and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, [7]that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8]For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, [9]not of works, lest anyone should boast. [10]For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

BROUGHT NEAR BY HIS BLOOD

[11]Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—[12]that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. [13]But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

CHRIST OUR PEACE

[14]For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, [15]having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is,* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, [16]and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. [17]And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. [18]For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Ephesians 2:14

The temple area in Jerusalem was divided into a series of courts. The outermost court, which was called the Court of the Gentiles, was the only area of the temple that non-Jews were allowed to enter.

CHRIST OUR CORNERSTONE

[19]Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with

MAKING IT REAL // EPHESIANS 2:8

A Matter of Faith Being saved means receiving the forgiveness of sins that God offers you because of Jesus' death and resurrection. It is being spiritually born again into God's eternal kingdom. The only way to receive the gift of salvation (being saved) is through faith. That doesn't mean you just hope God's promises are true, or that you think Jesus probably died for you. Faith *knows* those things are real.

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." That means faith is more than believing, it is realizing the absolute truth of God's Word and expecting Him to do all He says. It is that kind of faith that allows us to receive the new life God has for us. In fact, faith is the only way we can receive anything from God.

It's human nature to try to get on God's good side by doing good things, but all the good deeds in the world will not impress Him. The only thing that pleases God is faith. (See also: Rom. 10:9; Gal. 3:7, 29.)

Words to Live By

Believe: The word "believe" can be a bit misleading because, in today's world, we use it to mean "wish," or "hope," or "think." In the New Testament, this word is translated from the Greek word *pisteuo* (pist-yoo'-oh). To have faith in God means to completely trust Him to do as He says and to be totally convinced of the absolute truth of His Word.

the saints and members of the household of God, 20having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

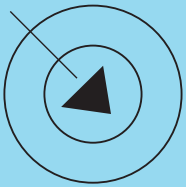
THE MYSTERY REVEALED

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—
2if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

PURPOSE OF THE MYSTERY

8To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9and to make all see what *is* the fellowship[a] of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;[b] 10to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places,* 11according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. 13Therefore I ask that you do

3:9 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *stewardship* (dispensation). [b]NU-Text omits *through Jesus Christ.*



PROMISE

God promises to have a plan for you.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).

Sometimes life can begin to seem a little bit stale or boring. You may feel like you're just doing the same old thing, day after day. Same song, different verse: wake up, go to school, go to practice, come home, hang out, and go to bed, just so you can get up tomorrow and do it all over again. That doesn't seem like much of a plan, does it?

Maybe not. But God does have an exciting plan for your life—a plan that will give you purpose and fulfillment beyond your wildest dreams. Following God's plan takes commitment from you. You don't just accidentally fulfill what He's planned for you to do. Seek God and ask Him to reveal His plan to you and to give you understanding about how you can fulfill it. Then, determine to make every day count for Him and for His plan.

Pay attention to every decision you face—even the ones that seem insignificant. Take seriously every person you meet—even the ones you don't necessarily like very much. Embrace every situation you find yourself in—even the ones that seem to make no sense at all. They're shaping you, molding you, preparing you for the next decision, the next person, or the next situation.

Lose yourself in doing what God wants in every aspect of your life. Live your everyday life in light of His plan!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 100:3; Jeremiah 29:11;

not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

APPRECIATION OF THE MYSTERY

14For this reason I bow my knees to the
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,[a] 15from
whom the whole family in heaven and
earth is named, 16that He would grant
you, according to the riches of His glory,
to be strengthened with might through
His Spirit in the inner man, 17that Christ
may dwell in your hearts through faith;
that you, being rooted and grounded in
love, 18may be able to comprehend with
all the saints what *is* the width and length
and depth and height— 19to know the love
of Christ which passes knowledge; that
you may be filled with all the fullness of
God.

20Now to Him who is able to do exceed-
ingly abundantly above all that we ask or
think, according to the power that works
in us, 21to Him *be* glory in the church by
Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and
ever. Amen.

WALK IN UNITY

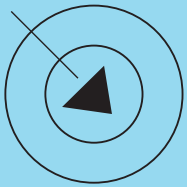
4 I, therefore, the prisoner of the
Lord, beseech you to walk worthy
of the calling with which you were
called, 2with all lowliness and gentleness,
with longsuffering, bearing with one an-
other in love, 3endeavoring to keep the
unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
4*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as
you were called in one hope of your call-
ing; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism;
6one God and Father of all, who *is* above
all, and through all, and in you[a] all.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

7But to each one of us grace was given ac-
cording to the measure of Christ's gift.
8Therefore He says:

> *"When He ascended on high,*
> *He led captivity captive,*
> *And gave gifts to men."*[a]

3:14 [a]NU-Text omits *of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
4:6 [a]NU-Text omits *you;* M-Text reads *us.*
4:8 [a]Psalm 68:18



PROMISE

God promises you boldness and confidence.

[Christ Jesus our Lord], in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him (Eph. 3:12).

Because of the saving work of Jesus Christ, all believers are given the confidence and boldness to come to God. Before you knew Jesus, you were like a stranger to the family of God. You may have even been afraid to try to talk to God or be in His holy presence.

Through Christ, you have now become a member of God's family. In this family, you can run to your Father at any time. You don't have to beg for His attention, or be afraid of His presence. He loves you. He knows you. You are His child. Don't be scared to run to your heavenly Father. He wants and expects you to come to Him all the time, even when you have doubts or questions, or when you need comfort. There's no need to be timid; You belong to Him, and you can boldly turn to Him with every need.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Hebrews 4:16; 10:19; 1 John 5:14

[9](Now this, *"He ascended"*—what does it mean but that He also first[a] descended into the lower parts of the earth? [10]He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

[11]And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, [12]for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, [13]till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; [14]that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, [15]but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— [16]from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

EDUCATION

What should be the end result of learning about God?

Ephesians 4:14, 15

THE NEW MAN

[17]This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of[a] the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, [18]having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; [19]who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

[20]But you have not so learned Christ, [21]if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: [22]that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, [23]and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, [24]and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

DO NOT GRIEVE THE SPIRIT

[25]Therefore, putting away lying, *"Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,"*[a] for we are members of one another. [26]*"Be*

4:9 [a]NU-Text omits *first.* **4:17** [a]NU-Text omits *the rest of.* **4:25** [a]Zechariah 8:16



LIFE APP

Anger / Ephesians 4:26, 27

What makes you angry? What really makes your blood boil? It's different things for different people, but there is no one on earth who doesn't get ticked off sometimes. We all get angry. And, sometimes, we can get the message that anger is wrong, maybe even a sin. But is it always sinful?

There are a lot of places where the Bible tells us stories of people who got angry (like Moses in Exodus 32) yet they didn't sin. Jesus Himself got angry when the money changers tried to steal from people right in the church (John 2:13–17) and we know He never sinned. So obviously, anger itself is not wrong.

Anger is an emotional reaction to some situation in life that you don't like. Anger is just like any other emotion, it just happens. And emotions aren't good or bad, they're just feelings. It's what we choose to do with them that can be sinful. That's why Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be angry, and do not sin." As long as people are people, we're going to get angry about something at sometime. But we must choose what to do with that anger. It's that choice that can lead us to commit sinful acts. If you choose to react to your anger by hitting, yelling, seeking revenge, or just holding bitter feelings in your heart, you have chosen to sin.

So when you find yourself getting upset with someone or some situation, choose carefully what you do about it. You can let your anger control you and lead you to make sinful choices. Or you can control your anger and respond to the situation in a way that pleases God. One will just bring more trouble; the other will make a bad situation better. Remember: either you control your anger or it will control you.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // EPHESIANS 4:29–32

The Power of the Tongue It seems nearly impossible to go anywhere without hearing filthy words. But even worse are the things people talk about: the Internet is filled with horrifying stories of murder and violence; social media pages are used to bully and threaten others; magazine articles reveal far too much about the lives of celebrities; nude pictures and sexting fly through cyberspace for anyone to see.

Proverbs 18:21 says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit." It may surprise you to realize that words can bring death or life. When you speak (either verbally or in writing), you send words out that can be very destructive. You may have heard the saying: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me!" While words can't cause physical damage, they can severely wound other people. And when others are hurt, they most often go on the defense and tear into the one who's hurt them. That's how enemies are made.

We need to learn to put a guard over our mouths. Our mouths can get us in trouble more than almost anything else. We've all had an opportunity to get upset and "go off" on someone. When we do, we end up saying things we wish we hadn't. The worst thing is, once words are spoken, we can't take them back. It's like trying to put toothpaste back in the tube—impossible. (See also: Prov. 12:18; 15:1, 2, 4; James 3:1–12.)

Words to Live By

Edification: The word translated as "edification" in Ephesians 4:29 is the Greek word *oikodome* (oy-kod-om-ay'). It is a compound word meaning "a house or dwelling" and "housetop from where proclamations are made." The idea is that when we speak positive words to someone, we raise them up (lift their spirits) and help them be more stable and secure in life.

angry, and do not sin":[a] do not let the sun go down on your wrath, [27]nor give place to the devil. [28]Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. [29]Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. [30]And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [31]Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. [32]And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

ATTITUDE
Can we control our reactions and emotional responses to others?
Ephesians 4:26–32

WALK IN LOVE

5 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. [2]And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

SEX
How serious is sexual immorality?
Ephesians 5:3–5

[3]But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; [4]neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather

4:26 [a]Psalm 4:4



LIFE APP

Identity Theft / Ephesians 5:8–11

You've most likely heard about cybercrimes; one of the most severe and dreadful is identity theft. Using highly developed computer programming skills and engineering ability, people with no consideration for the law or for other people steal personal information about others from Internet records. Then they use this information for illegal activity: fraud, theft, crimes against the government; the list is endless of the ways cybercriminals can abuse others by using what they have stolen. These people can commit crimes without anyone knowing who's behind the illegal activity. Their crimes are secret—done without anyone's knowledge until the disastrous effects start showing up in their victims' lives.

Identity theft is not a new concept. It existed long before computers were even a dream, let alone a reality. The first identity theft happened when Satan's lies caused Adam and Eve to sin. After that disastrous choice, instead of living in perfect harmony with each other and with God—totally connected to Him as family—their sin caused them to lose that perfect connection. One they sinned, they gave Satan a foothold in their lives. The evil enemy of mankind stole their identity as the perfect, sinless children of God.

Now, people who don't know the Lord don't realize they are victims of the most widespread identity theft the world has ever known. Satan continually schemes to destroy lives, and too many people are unaware of his evil activity. Many people don't even know what their identity was meant to be. They don't know God wants them to be His children. So they are totally unaware that Satan continues to steal from them by keeping them in the dark.

The next time you hear someone talk about identity theft, tell them about the scheme Satan has plotted against them. Let them know their rightful identity as a child of almighty God.

MAKING IT REAL // EPHESIANS 5:23

Jesus Rules Your brain controls everything your body does. If you want to walk across the room, your brain tells your feet to go and they go. If your shoulder itches, your brain tells your fingers to scratch, and they do it. If your foot moves when your brain doesn't tell it to, you call that a spasm. If your brain tells your hand to make a fist and your hand lies still, you know you've got a problem—something isn't right. The brain is the boss.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul talked a lot about the church—Christians—being the body of Christ. Everyone plays a different part, has a different function. Jesus is the Head—the brain. That means that everything you do—as a part of His body—needs to be directed by Jesus. If you do something without Him, it's spastic and useless. And if He tells you to do something and you don't or can't, you know that something is wrong—something in your relationship needs attention. Realize Jesus is the only One who can direct you successfully through life and keep you operating as a productive part of His body. (See also: 1 Cor. 12:12–31; Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18.)

Words to Live By

Savior: The word translated as "Savior" in Ephesians 5:23 is the Greek word *soter* (so-tare'). At its root, this word means "to save." It designates a deliverer, preserver, or rescuer. Jesus is the One who rescues us from the effects of sin and gives us eternal salvation.

giving of thanks. 5For this you know,[a] that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7Therefore do not be partakers with them.

Ephesians 5:5

Few things are as offensive to God as idol worship. Throughout the Bible, God warned His people not to worship pagan deities. Unfortunately, His people rarely heeded His warnings. The Israelites were always quick to adopt the gods and idols of their pagan neighbors. In Paul's day, however, the word *idol* took on a broader meaning. It came to refer not only to statues and pagan gods, but to anything that was more important than God in a believer's life.

WALK IN LIGHT

8For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9(for the fruit of the Spirit[a] *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them.* 12For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14Therefore He says:

"Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light."

WALK IN WISDOM

15See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

5:5 [a]NU-Text reads *For know this.* **5:9** [a]NU-Text reads *light.*

17Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*. 18And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21submitting to one another in the fear of God.[a]

DRINKING
Is drunkenness wrong?
Ephesians 5:18

MARRIAGE—CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

22Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.

25Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. 30For we are members of His body,[a] of His flesh and of His bones. 31 *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."*[a] 32This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband.

CHILDREN AND PARENTS

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 *"Honor your father and mother,"* which is the first commandment with promise: 3 *"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."*[a]

OBEDIENCE
What promise does God give those who obey their parents?
Ephesians 6:1–3

4And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

BONDSERVANTS AND MASTERS

5Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.

9And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also[a] is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Ephesians 6:11

Paul spent a lot of time chained to soldiers while under arrest; he had excellent opportunities to examine their battle dress. Roman foot soldiers wore armor and carried shields for protection. The armor was made of thick leather or metal. Helmets came in all shapes and sizes. Some covered the entire head with metal and provided a protective screen for the face.

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

10Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11Put on the

5:21 [a]NU-Text reads *Christ.* **5:30** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **5:31** [a]Genesis 2:24 **6:3** [a]Deuteronomy 5:16 **6:9** [a]NU-Text reads *He who is both their Master and yours.*

MAKING IT REAL // EPHESIANS 6:1–3

Obedience Versus Rebellion God gave you to your parents so that they could raise you. He chose them especially to care for you. The promise in Ephesians 6:3 says that if you obey your father and your mother, "it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." Also, when you honor the authority that God has put over you, you get His blessing. Kids who choose to rebel and disobey miss out. God uses the people in authority over us to teach us how to live successfully. When you ignore or fight against the instructions God gives you through leaders and parents, life can get pretty messy and be much more difficult than it needs to be.

Can you imagine any adult ever saying, "I rebelled against my parents as a child. I disobeyed their every word and worried them sick. It was the right thing to do. My life is so much better because I always broke their rules." That's just not going to happen. Those who lived their childhood and teen years in rebellion are much more likely to live in guilt and regret because they were so ugly to their parents and had to suffer the consequences of their determination to do things their own way.

God is the Master Designer and this is His design: obedience leads to right choices and a good life, but rebellion is sin and leads to guilt and regret. (See also: Prov. 15:31, 32; Col. 3:20.)

Words to Live By

Honor: The word translated as "honor" in Ephesians 6:2 is the Greek word *timao* (tim-ah'-oh). To *honor* means "to consider someone extremely valuable and worthy of respect." "Honor your mother and your father" is one of God's Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:12). It isn't a choice; it's a command from God.

whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,[a] against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. 13Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— 19and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

A GRACIOUS GREETING

21But that you also may know my affairs *and* how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; 22whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and *that* he may comfort your hearts.

23Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

6:12 [a]NU-Text reads *rulers of this darkness.*

Philippians

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 61
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: WE FIND TRUE JOY IN CHRIST
PURPOSE: JOY IS EXPERIENCED BY THOSE WHO LIVE A TRULY CHRISTIAN LIFE.

OUTLINE

1:1–11 .....Greetings and a Prayer
1:12–30.....What Life Means to Paul
2:1–18 .....Christ's Example of True Humility
2:19–30.....News About Paul's Friends
3:1—4:9 .....All for Christ
4:10–20.....Paul Thanks the Philippians
4:21–23.....Final Greetings

KEY VERSE:

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Philippians 1:21).

THEN ///

Philippians is one of the books Paul wrote while he was under house arrest in Rome. In fact, Paul spent a lot of time under arrest and behind bars. Paul was in and out of jail because he believed that obeying Jesus was the most important thing he could do. That scared the extremely non-Christian government of his time. They didn't want Jesus' message to be spread; they wanted the people to listen only to them. They wanted to keep the people living in fear and oppression. If Paul told everyone about Jesus, the government would lose its power to dominate. So the government officials tried to silence Paul. Of course, he kept preaching and they kept taking him into custody. Since Paul was really focused on spreading the gospel, jail seemed like as good a place as any to do this.

NOW ///

Have you ever written a thank-you note? When someone gives you a gift or does something nice for you, it's right and proper to sit down and write a short note saying "thank you." Then you mail it. It should not be a text, not an e-mail, but an actual piece of snail mail with an envelope and a stamp.

Part of the reason Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians was to thank them for supporting his ministry and for their love and friendship. He wrote this letter while under lock and key. But even from behind that locked door, Paul knew real joy—the joy that can be known only through Jesus. And he wanted to share that joy with his friends in Philippi.

Being joyful is not at all about circumstances. It doesn't come from outside, it comes from deep within; and it is available even when life is filled with trouble. Paul understood this. Even when he had chains on his hands and feet, nothing could control his heart and mind. Paul realized that life is more than the difficult moments; it's a journey to be walked in joy with the Lord leading the way.

So if you need a pick-me-up, Philippians is the book to read. Maybe we should subtitle it "Philippians: looking up when everything looks down."

REALITY CHECK ///

There's a big difference between joy and happiness. Happiness is what you feel when circumstances in your life go right. If you make good grades and get what you want for your birthday—those kinds of things make you happy. Because happiness is related to circumstances, it comes and goes with the good times in life. Joy, on the other hand, is more than an emotion. It is a perspective, a way of looking at life. We have joy when we feel secure inside that, no matter how our circumstances might change, God is still in control. That's why Paul could write a letter about gratitude and joy from a depressing circumstance like house arrest. He might not have been happy, but in the end he knew that God was in control of his life.

GREETING

1 Paul and Timothy, bondservants of
Jesus Christ,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus
who are in Philippi, with the bishops[a] and
deacons:

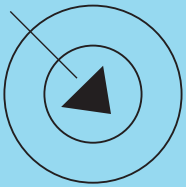
2 Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

THANKFULNESS AND PRAYER

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance
of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine mak-
ing request for you all with joy, 5 for your
fellowship in the gospel from the first day
until now, 6 being confident of this very
thing, that He who has begun a good work
in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus
Christ; 7 just as it is right for me to think this
of you all, because I have you in my heart,
inasmuch as both in my chains and in the
defense and confirmation of the gospel, you
all are partakers with me of grace. 8 For God
is my witness, how greatly I long for you all
with the affection of Jesus Christ.

9 And this I pray, that your love may

1:1 [a]Literally *overseers*



PROMISE

God promises to complete a good work in you.

Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6).

Jesus is coming back again. It may be difficult to fully grasp that reality in the midst of your day-to-day life. But one day, in unmistakable power and glory, He will physically make His return trip to this Earth. When He does, no one in the world will have to wonder what's happening. Upon His return, He will finish some important business. One of those little unfinished matters is you.

Don't worry, though. If you're one of His children, He's coming back not to pull the curtain down on you but to raise the blinds and allow you to see what He's been doing in your life. And one day—one great, big, glorious day—you will see what's been going on behind the scenes this whole time. What now seem to be random strings of unrelated events or experiences will then look like a beautiful tapestry sewn by God, with every loose end connected.

God finishes what He starts. Let Him get started with you.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 139:16; John 17:24; Acts 1:9–11; 20:24

abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, [10]that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, [11]being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

CHRIST IS PREACHED

[12]But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, [13]so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; [14]and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

[15]Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: [16]The former[a] preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; [17]but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. [18]What then? Only *that* in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

TO LIVE IS CHRIST

[19]For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, [20]according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. [21]For to me,

Philippians 1:7

Talk about a slow judicial system! Paul lived under house arrest in Rome for two years while he waited for Caesar to hear his case. Since electronic monitoring devices weren't available in Paul's day, he had soldiers guarding him day and night. The guards worked four-hour shifts, with at least one person handcuffed to Paul at all times. Even though he was officially a prisoner, Paul was allowed to receive visitors. That gave him an opportunity to share the message of Christ not only with the people who came to see him, but with the soldiers as well.

1:16 [a]NU-Text reverses the contents of verses 16 and 17.

to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. 22But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23For[a] I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. 24Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. 25And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, 26that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

STRIVING AND SUFFERING FOR CHRIST

27Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, 28and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation,[a] and that from God. 29For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear *is* in me.

HUMILITY
How do we live out true humility?
Philippians 2:1–4

UNITY THROUGH HUMILITY

2 Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. 3*Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

THE HUMBLED AND EXALTED CHRIST

5Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. 8And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. 9Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

LIGHT BEARERS

12Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

ATTITUDE
How can God's people make a difference in the world?
Philippians 2:14, 15

14Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

17Yes, and if I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

TIMOTHY COMMENDED

19But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. 20For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. 21For all seek their own, not the things which are of

1:23 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *But.*
1:28 [a]NU-Text reads *of your salvation.*

MAKING IT REAL // PHILIPPIANS 2:8

Humility For a great story about how humble Jesus was, look at John 13:1–17. It's a fascinating story about humility. Can you imagine sitting in the same room as Jesus only to have Him come up to you and wash your feet? Your feet . . . the ugliest and smelliest part of your body! Wow! Jesus displayed the ultimate act of humility in this illustration. And we are to follow His example.

But, what does it really mean to be humble? It means that you aren't impressed by yourself and are willing to put your desires aside to love and serve other people. It means you recognize that anything good about you comes directly from God; you can't be or do anything worthwhile on your own.

If you know anything about the life and ministry of Jesus, then you know that He was a humble servant. He even said that He didn't come to be served but to serve (Matt. 20:28). If that was Jesus' attitude, how much more should it be ours? If we are willing to be humble servants to those around us, we are imitating Christ; and that's what our Christian walk is all about. (See also: Prov. 11:2; Matt. 23:12.)

Words to Live By

Obedient: The word translated in Philippians 2:8 as "obedient" is the Greek word *hupekoos* (hoop-ay'-ko-os). It means "to willingly listen to and submit to those in authority." Anyone in authority over us was given that place of honor by God. It's important to obey them; it's most important to be obedient to God.

Christ Jesus. 22But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel. 23Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. 24But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.

EPAPHRODITUS PRAISED

25Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; 26since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. 29Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; 30because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

ALL FOR CHRIST

3 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you *is* not tedious, but for you *it is* safe.

Philippians 3:2

Paul wasn't talking about loyal household pets in this verse. He was talking about packs of wild, vicious canines that roamed the Near East, eating anything they could find—including garbage—and attacking people. "Dog" was popular among Jews as an insulting name for a Gentile. Paul turned the insult around in this verse. The people he called dogs were those who insisted that circumcision was necessary for Christians.

2Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! 3For we are

LIFE APP

Reputation / Philippians 2:25–30

Epaphroditus represented well. Paul made a point to endorse his stellar reputation in this letter to the Philippians. Epaphroditus got a shout-out in the Bible! That's quite the reputation builder. You may think that he must have preached powerfully all over the world, or done some other great act with global impact.

Actually, Epaphroditus was a Christian from Philippi who was sent by the church to minister to Paul in Rome. Epaphroditus wasn't immediately successful. On his journey, he became so sick he almost died. But he remained faithful and eventually received healing. In this letter, Paul is sending him back to Philippi so the people there can see for themselves that he is okay. And Paul is sending him back with a high recommendation: "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me" (Phil. 2:29, 30).

In one way of thinking, Epaphroditus' mission could be seen as not so successful. He went to help Paul, ended up almost dying, and then had to go back home. However, Paul made it clear that Epaphroditus' mission was a resounding success simply because he was faithful. He didn't take on an attitude of complaining or self-pity, even though he almost died. He even showed concern for his fellow Christians back home because he knew they were worried about him.

Epaphroditus' sterling reputation was earned by being faithful in his mission and godly in his actions and attitudes. You can do the same. You don't have to get deathly sick to earn a godly reputation. But you can learn from Epaphroditus and determine to do whatever God calls you to do to the best of your ability. And you can choose to honor God in your reactions and attitudes. God's opinion of us is way more important than anyone else's. But a positive reputation can draw other people to God. That's representing well.



LIFE APP

Gentleness / Philippians 4:5

"Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5). The apostle Paul wrote these words to the church in Philippi. Just a few verses earlier he begged two church members to make up from a disagreement between them that was affecting the whole church. He went on to encourage the entire church to show the spirit that allows for the solving of disagreements and the restoring of fellowship: gentleness.

Biblical gentleness is not being weak and mousy, inviting others to take advantage of or wound you. Instead, it is a spirit of fairness and calmness. Think about it, if you're having a disagreement, are you more likely to be brought to forgiveness and restoration by someone who is shouting in anger or by someone who is speaking with calm confidence, seeking to be fair to everyone?

As we continually follow Christ, we can develop this characteristic of gentleness. Even when our whole world is going crazy, we can be calm, cool, and collected, trusting that God will give us the wisdom and patience we need to persevere and conquer any obstacle. We don't have to let fear drive us to attack others or throw fits of rage. Instead of being like a leaf blown around in a storm, we can be a strong rock that comes through the storm with our strength intact. And others will be drawn to this powerful gentleness. We can help restore unity within the body of Christ by dealing fairly and peacefully with everyone. We can draw unbelievers to the Lord by letting them see the supernatural strength of our unwavering gentleness through all of our actions and interactions. This is how Paul tells the church to live, letting everyone see their gentleness—the persevering gentleness that the world cannot produce or understand, but that only comes from God.

MAKING IT REAL // PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Think About It Have your parents ever gotten on your case about the music you listen to? More than likely, they aren't so concerned with how it sounds as they are about what it says. It just might be a good idea to put your music collection through the Philippians 4:8 test. Do the lyrics talk about true things, noble things, justice, purity—things that are good in the eyes of God? If what you are listening to makes you think about things that are impure, wrong, or immoral, it fails the test.

It may seem harmless to listen to music that doesn't pass the test, but it could be more dangerous than you can imagine. What goes into your ears becomes a part of you. It sits in your brain and becomes something you know. And people act on what they know. Without realizing it, the lyrics of the songs you hear can change the way you think, and eventually, the way you live. Garbage in, garbage out.

So instead of arguing with your parents over music (or anything else that is feeding your mind the garbage thinking of the world), really pay attention to what they're saying. And the next time you buy a CD or download a song, give it the "4:8" test and ask yourself if God would be pleased. (See also: Prov. 4:24; 23:7; Matt. 12:34–37; Col. 3:1, 2.)

Words to Live By

Meditate: The word translated in Philippians 4:8 as "meditate" is the Greek word *logizomai* (log-id'-zom-ahee). It means "to think deeply, to reason, or to attempt to understand or grasp." *Logizomai* should not be confused with the type of meditation promoted by some Eastern religions that suggest you should try to empty your mind of thought and just "be." *Logizomai* is reigning in your thoughts and forcing them into good and holy places.

the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit,[a] rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, 4though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Philippians 3:5

The Pharisees were a political and religious group within the Jewish community. They studied the Scriptures constantly and insisted on strict obedience to God's Old Testament laws. Most Jewish people respected the Pharisees' dedication and knowledge. In turn, the Pharisees tended to look down on anyone who didn't meet their standards.

7But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

12Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may

3:3 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *who worship in the Spirit of God.*

lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do,* forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

15Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule,[a] let us be of the same mind.

OUR CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN

17Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. 20For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

4 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

BE UNITED, JOYFUL, AND IN PRAYER

2I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3And[a] I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.

WORRY
How can Christians fight against worry?
Philippians 4:4–9

4Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

5Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

6Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

THOUGHTS
Can we direct our thoughts in positive ways?
Philippians 4:8

MEDITATE ON THESE THINGS

8Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. 9The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

PHILIPPIAN GENEROSITY

10But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. 11Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13I can do all things through Christ[a] who strengthens me.

14Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. 15Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. 17Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that

3:16 [a]NU-Text omits *rule* and the rest of the verse. **4:3** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Yes.* **4:13** [a]NU-Text reads *Him who.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // PHILIPPIANS 4:13

Strength If you've ever read about the apostle Paul, you know he often had a rough time. He was thrown in jail, beaten up, and had rocks thrown at him more than once. He was robbed, lived through a shipwreck, and often went hungry. At times he barely had enough clothes to keep him warm. So Paul wasn't just spitting hot air when he told the Philippians, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." He knew for sure that God would enable him to make it through any situation.

It doesn't matter if you can't relate to Paul's life. It doesn't matter if you aren't an apostle or a missionary living in the jungle. It doesn't matter if you think you'll never have to go through any of the stuff Paul faced. What does matter is that Paul was strong because Jesus lived inside of him, and the same Jesus lives in you. Because of Jesus, just like Paul, you can face *anything*. You can face a really tough exam. You can face your parents when you've messed up big-time. You can face your friends when they think you're lame for doing what God wants. You can face the future even when it's frightening. Just don't try to do it by yourself. The strength to face all those things comes only from Jesus. He'll make you strong. (See also: Ps. 68:35; Hab. 3:19.)

Words to Live By

All: We all know what this word means, right? *All* means "all." So when we read in Philippians 4:13 that we can "do all things through Christ," that's just what it means—there is nothing beyond us when Jesus is on our side. We just have to remember we can't do anything of value on our own. Only Jesus has the power to strengthen us and the wisdom to lead us through the difficult things in life.

abounds to your account. 18Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. 19And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20Now to our God and Father *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

GREETING AND BLESSING

21Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. 22All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.

23The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.[a] Amen.

4:23 [a]NU-Text reads *your spirit.*

Colossians

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 60
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: KNOWING THE SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST
PURPOSE: FAITH IS TO BE LIVED OUT DAILY.

OUTLINE

1:1, 2.....Greetings
1:3–8.....A Prayer of Thanks
1:9—2:19.....The Person and Work of Christ
2:20—4:6.....New Life with Christ
4:7–18.....Final Greetings

KEY VERSE:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:1, 2).

THEN /// Paul wrote to the church at Colosse because they had fallen prey to some heretics (false teachers). There were people in the Colossian church who were teaching that Christianity was just too easy. Righteousness *couldn't* be as easy to obtain as simply having faith in Christ. There had to be more to it than that.

Paul wrote to say, "Let's go over it again. There's no more to it. If you add more to it, then you are wrong. Faith in Christ is all there is." Because of this, Colossians is a good book to read to review the basics of Christianity. At the bottom of it all, the message of Christ is simple and clear. Humans needed to be righteous in order to relate to God. Christ gave His life to provide that righteousness for us. When we put our faith in Christ's sacrifice God sees us through Christ's righteousness. There is nothing we can do to add to that. If we think we can add to it, then we need to read the Book of Colossians and let Paul set us straight.

NOW /// Several of Paul's letters were written to correct some heresy (wrong teaching or belief) that had slipped into the church. Do you know when something is heresy and when it is not? Here are some tests:

1. Does this way of thinking honor Christ as the one true God?
2. Does this way of thinking require anything more than faith to be righteous?
3. Does this way of thinking help me to be more obedient to God or less?

Be wise and ask questions about what you are taught. Don't let someone fool you into believing a lie.

REALITY CHECK /// Paul was so important to the early church. He set church members straight when they drifted from the truth. He encouraged them when they were overwhelmed. He was like a big brother and a teacher rolled into one.

We all should have someone in our lives who can and will keep it real with us when it comes to our walk of faith. If you don't, look around you. Find someone who trusts God and has lived the Christian life for a long time. Find someone you can trust to help you decide what to believe and what to stand against. Find someone who will tell you the truth even when it hurts or even when it makes you angry. We all need a Paul in our lives.

GREETING

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the
will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To the saints and faithful brethren
in Christ *who are* in Colosse:

Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.[a]

THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST

3 We give thanks to the God and Father of
our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for
you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ
Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5 be-
cause of the hope which is laid up for you
in heaven, of which you heard before in
the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which
has come to you, as *it has* also in all the
world, and is bringing forth fruit,[a] as *it is*
also among you since the day you heard
and knew the grace of God in truth; 7 as
you also learned from Epaphras, our dear
fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of

Colossians 1:7

Epaphras was a Gentile (non-Jew) who became a Christian, probably as a result of Paul's teaching. Epaphras returned to his native city of Colosse to tell others about Jesus and to start a church. During the two years Paul was under house arrest, Epaphras visited him, cheering up the apostle with stories about the good things that were happening in the church at Colosse.

1:2 [a]NU-Text omits *and the Lord Jesus Christ.*
1:6 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *and growing.*

MAKING IT REAL // COLOSSIANS 1:10, 11

Enduring Trouble Remember the story in Luke 8:43–48 about the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years? Talk about enduring. This woman had patiently endured illness for nearly as long as some of us have been alive. Luke reports that she had spent all of her money on doctors. They helped her as much as they could, but she still didn't get well; she just continued to get worse. Finally, she heard that Jesus was passing by. She knew if she could just touch Him she would be healed. So she fought her way through a huge mob, found Jesus, and pushed her way to His side. She reached out her hand and touched His clothes. And she was healed! Do you think she was happy? You bet she was!

In Colossians 1:10 and 11, the apostle Paul assures you that you have been given the power to endure anything. Anything! It doesn't matter how hopeless your circumstances seem; if you will just push past all your fear and confusion, tap into the power of God, and trust Him to work things out for your good, He will give you the strength to endure until your answer arrives.

Once you know that God will always give you the strength to endure trouble and will send you help at just the right time, it makes difficult times a bit easier. You can be patient as you wait for God to touch your life because you know He always comes through for you. (See also: Rom. 5:3, 4; Phil. 4:13.)

Words to Live By

Might: The word translated in Colossians 1:11 as "might" is the Greek word *dunamis* (doo'-nam-is). It means "energy, great force, ability, and strength." In 2 Corinthians 4:7, it is translated as "power." The strength God gives us to make it through difficult times is not just enough to get by; we can walk right through trouble with patience and joy because God gives us power from His own supply.

Christ on your behalf, [8]who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST

[9]For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; [10]that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him,* being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; [11]strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; [12]giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. [13]He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, [14]in whom we have redemption through His blood,[a] the forgiveness of sins.

[15]He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. [16]For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. [17]And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. [18]And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

JESUS
Did Jesus create the world?
Colossians 1:15, 16

1:14 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *through His blood.*

WORLD APP

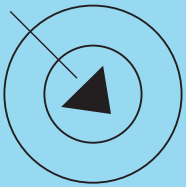
Global Warming / Colossians 1:16–18

The debate rages—is the world headed for disastrous climate changes or is global warming just a hoax? While many scientists are convinced that our world is headed for a catastrophic natural disaster, others seem just as sure the natural cycle of the earth's orbit and its angle toward the sun account for the higher water and air temperatures of recent decades. Which one is right?

Most likely the debate will continue. The truth is we just don't know enough to be able to predict the fate of our world. Scientists can only use the information they have gathered about the earth's climate in the past century or so. Before that, the ability to collect such data just didn't exist. The climate of our world may have gone through changes exactly like we're seeing now many times, or global warming may be an absolute reality.

Rather than allow predictions of catastrophe and doom to cause you to fear tomorrow, it is important to remember that God is the One in control. He made the earth and everything on it. We should always take care of the earth; that's what God expects. He trusts us to do whatever we can to keep our presence on His world from ruining the beauty He created. But nothing happens to God's creation without His knowledge, and mankind is not capable of doing anything to this earth that God does not allow. According to Colossians 1:17, "In [Jesus] all things consist." This means that Jesus actually holds every created thing together. He is the One who sustains the universe.

Don't fear the fate of the world. It belongs to God, and nothing will happen without His knowledge. Men may debate over climates and causes, but we know from the Book of Revelation that this world will come to an end. How and when that happens is totally up to God. Until that day, we can be sure Jesus will take care of us and our world.



PROMISE

God promises to present you above reproach in His sight.

And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister (Col. 1:21–23).

It seems like people are always dividing up: teams, clubs, cliques, or groups. With everyone taking sides, there are a lot of ways you can be left out. Your grades might keep you from the Honor Society or your first-choice college. Lack of skill could keep you off the basketball team. A forgotten invitation may keep you from a friend's party.

To not be included in a group can be hurtful and disappointing. Though the world may leave you standing alone wishing you could be a part, you will never be left out of the love of Jesus. You don't have to be good enough or popular enough or smart enough for Him to choose you. He loves and accepts you just as you are. All that is required to be a part of Jesus' group—His family—is accepting Him as your Savior and Lord. Then you can know the joy of always belonging. Jesus promises that, one day in heaven, He will call your name, and you will never be left out again. Because of Christ, you will be made perfect enough to stand with Him—holy, sinless, and free from the guilt of your sin. You'll be loved, accepted, and forever included with Jesus and all the saints of heaven.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Ephesians 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Hebrews 7:25

RECONCILED IN CHRIST

19For it pleased *the Father that* in Him all
the fullness should dwell, 20and by Him
to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him,
whether things on earth or things in
heaven, having made peace through the
blood of His cross.

21And you, who once were alienated and
enemies in your mind by wicked works,
yet now He has reconciled 22in the body
of His flesh through death, to present you
holy, and blameless, and above reproach in
His sight— 23if indeed you continue in the
faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not
moved away from the hope of the gospel
which you heard, which was preached to
every creature under heaven, of which I,
Paul, became a minister.

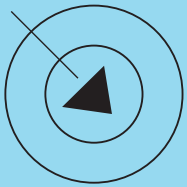
SACRIFICIAL SERVICE FOR CHRIST

24I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and
fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the
afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body,
which is the church, 25of which I became
a minister according to the stewardship
from God which was given to me for you,
to fulfill the word of God, 26the mystery
which has been hidden from ages and from
generations, but now has been revealed to
His saints. 27To them God willed to make
known what are the riches of the glory of
this mystery among the Gentiles: which[a] is
Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28Him we
preach, warning every man and teaching
every man in all wisdom, that we may pre-
sent every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29To
this *end* I also labor, striving according to
His working which works in me mightily.

NOT PHILOSOPHY BUT CHRIST

2 For I want you to know what a great
conflict I have for you and those in
Laodicea, and *for* as many as have

1:27 [a]M-Text reads *who.*



PROMISE

God promises to wipe out the record against you.

And you . . . He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us (Col. 2:13, 14a).

We live in a culture that seems addicted to so-called "reality" shows on television. These programs are heavy on the show and light on the actual reality, most of the time. But one type of reality show gives us a clear, and sometimes shocking, view of our justice system: a televised visit to the court room. We can now watch the real-life drama as lawyers argue, judges overrule, and witnesses tell their story; the defendants try to prove their innocence and the prosecutors try to prove them guilty; all the while, the deepest, darkest details of people's lives are reported and broadcast in high-definition reality for the world to see.

Imagine that in one of these gripping cases, the only piece of evidence against the defendant is a video recording. The prosecution claims the recording actually shows the defendant committing the crime—it's absolute proof of the defendant's guilt. With arrogant confidence, the prosecutor prepares to play the video and win the case. But when he presses the button on the player, nothing happens. There's no picture, no sound, no evidence. Everything has been erased, as if it never happened.

On Judgment Day (the day Jesus returns from heaven), everyone in the world will stand before God and be judged. How terrifying and hopeless that could be if we were left to face it on our own! All the evidence of our sins would be against us. We are all sinners (Rom. 3:23) and none of us could plead "not guilty" against all that evidence.

But if you've asked Christ into your heart, all that evidence will have been erased, as if it never happened . . . deleted from memory by a nail-scarred hand. Because of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, we can plead "not guilty." He's already taken our "guilty" verdict and our punishment. Our sins are not only forgiven but wiped out and forgotten. We will be seen as clean and holy—innocent of all sin through Christ Jesus our Lord.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 43:25; Romans 3:24

not seen my face in the flesh, 2that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and[a] of Christ, 3in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. 5For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your *good* order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

6As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it[a] with thanksgiving.

Colossians 2:1

Built on the banks of the Lycus River in what is now known as Turkey, Laodicea was known for its wealth in New Testament times. Other passages in the Bible seem to suggest that the Christians in Laodicea had lost their enthusiasm for and commitment to the things of God.

2:2 [a]NU-Text omits *both of the Father and.*
2:7 [a]NU-Text omits *in it.*

[8]Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. [9]For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; [10]and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

BAPTISM
Why are Christians baptized?
Colossians 2:11–13

NOT LEGALISM BUT CHRIST

[11]In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins[a] of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, [12]buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. [13]And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, [14]having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. [15]Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Colossians 2:15

In the days of the Roman Empire, when a Roman general returned home after a successful military campaign, he was honored with a special ceremony called a triumph. A parade was thrown in his honor, with the general leading the way in his chariot and prisoners of war following along behind. Those prisoners were then divided into two groups: those who would be executed and those who would become slaves of the Roman Empire.

[16]So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, [17]which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. [18]Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not[a] seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, [19]and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.

[20]Therefore,[a] if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—[21]"Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," [22]which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? [23]These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

NOT CARNALITY BUT CHRIST

3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. [2]Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. [3]For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4]When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

[5]Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. [6]Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, [7]in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

[8]But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. [9]Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, [10]and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, [11]where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

2:11 [a]NU-Text omits *of the sins.* **2:18** [a]NU-Text omits *not.* **2:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Therefore.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // COLOSSIANS 3:1

Eternal Perspective Paul says that because you have a new life in Christ, you are to set your heart and mind on the things that really matter—the eternal things. He isn't saying that you should lose your sense of reality because your head is always somewhere else. What he means is that life in this world will be better if you live it with the power and perspective that comes from God. You will handle success, failure, and disappointment with maturity and poise when you see things from God's point of view.

God sees everything that happens on this earth with eyes that easily recognize the things that really make a difference—the things that will last. He has an eternal perspective. That means He sees all the events of today in light of eternity. To begin to have that perspective in your own life, you can ask yourself questions that will help direct your understanding: Does today's "crisis" have any bearing on eternity? Will it matter when I get to heaven? Will it even matter in one hundred years? Is it worth all the anxiety, worry, and pain?

An eternal perspective lets you give others a lot of grace. You will be able to treat people in your life with more understanding and compassion. You'll be more patient with people and events when you realize that, because of Christ, some things are just not a big deal. Since you have been raised to life with Christ, think about things with a heavenly mind-set. Let the truth of eternity guide your decisions and reactions about the world. (See also: Gal. 2:20.)

Words to Live By

Raised: The word translated as "raised" in Colossians 3:1 is the Greek word *sunegeiro* (soon-eg-i'-ro). It means "to rise together from death." Jesus didn't just die for us, He also rose for us. Now we are no longer bound by the spiritual death caused by sin; we can join with Jesus in His resurrection and rise to new life; a spiritual life that never ends.

FORGIVENESS
Whose example must we follow in forgiving others?
Colossians 3:12, 13

CHARACTER OF THE NEW MAN

12 Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and
beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness,
humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bear-
ing with one another, and forgiving one
another, if anyone has a complaint against
another; even as Christ forgave you, so you
also *must do.* 14 But above all these things
put on love, which is the bond of perfec-
tion. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your
hearts, to which also you were called in
one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word
of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,
teaching and admonishing one another in
psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, sing-
ing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
17 And whatever you do in word or deed,
do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving
thanks to God the Father through Him.

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as
is fitting in the Lord.

PEACE
Where do we find true peace?
Colossians 3:15

MUSIC
Why should Christians sing about the Lord?
Colossians 3:16



LIFE APP

Longsuffering / Colossians 3:12, 13

"Longsuffering" is not a word we use much these days. It can sound old-fashioned or even slightly depressing; it can bring to our minds images of endless suffering and sorrow. But in reality, it's a strong and encouraging word. It means patience or endurance. It actually refers to perseverance and consistency—having the strength to keep trying, to hold on and not give up. This is an important word for Christians; it's a character trait we'll develop as we become more like Christ; it is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

Longsuffering doesn't mean that you should have some strange fascination with suffering. It doesn't mean you shouldn't stand up for yourself or that you should suffer in order to be more worthy of the things of God. Longsuffering means having the strength to be faithful even when circumstances are challenging. It is about having patience with others, even when their words or actions may get on your last nerve. It is about having the faith to believe that God is always in control, so even when you are discouraged, you can keep going and not give up.

The apostle Paul recognized the importance of longsuffering in the Christian life. He encouraged the Colossian church to "put on" character traits such as kindness, humility, and longsuffering (Col. 3:12). This included "bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do" (Col. 3:13). In order to treat others with kindness and to bear with (support and accept) them, you have to exercise longsuffering. Let's be honest, sometimes people are difficult to deal with, even Christians. But it's important to find a way to get along and maintain unity, even when someone makes it tough to do. Developing an attitude of longsuffering will allow you to show compassion and mercy to others, which will honor God and attract other people to Him.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // COLOSSIANS 4:2

Prayer What is prayer? Prayer is simply communication with God—just talking and listening to Him. You see, prayer moves the hand of God, and the hand of God moves the world! He wants us to come to Him in prayer.

There's not a right or wrong way to pray. All you have to do is talk to God like you would with your best friend. A lot of people have the idea that prayer is only talking to God. That's only half of it. You really can't communicate with someone without another important activity—listening. Prayer is a two-way street. Not only does God want you to talk to Him; He also wants to talk to you. He will talk to you through His Word and also by reminding you, with a gentle voice inside, of the truth you already know.

We can go to God when we're in a mess and need help; but don't get in the habit of praying only when you need help. God wants you to "continue" in prayer—pray and then keep praying. You do that by talking to God throughout the day, just like you would with a close friend. If you were to only talk to a close friend once in a while, what would happen? Your friendship wouldn't be that close. If we expect our relationship with Christ to be strong, we must never stop praying. Take some time to talk to God right now and see what He has to say. (See also: Matt. 21:22; 26:41; John 15:7; Rom. 12:12; 1 Thess. 5:17.)

Words to Live By

Thanksgiving: The word translated as "thanksgiving" in Colossians 4:2 is the Greek word *eucharistia* (yoo-khar-is-tee'-ah). It is an act of worship toward God that expresses your gratitude for all the blessings God has given you.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not
be bitter toward them.
20 Children, obey your parents in all
things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.
21 Fathers, do not provoke your children,
lest they become discouraged.
22 Bondservants, obey in all things your
masters according to the flesh, not with
eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever
you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not
to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you
will receive the reward of the inheritance;
for[a] you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who
does wrong will be repaid for what he has
done, and there is no partiality.

4 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

CHRISTIAN GRACES

2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 3 meanwhile
praying also for us, that God would open to
us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains,
4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to
speak.
5 Walk in wisdom toward those *who are*
outside, redeeming the time. 6 *Let* your
speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with
salt, that you may know how you ought to
answer each one.

WITNESSING
How should Christians speak to others?
Colossians 4:6

FINAL GREETINGS

7 Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will
tell you all the news about me. 8 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that
he[a] may know your circumstances and
comfort your hearts, 9 with Onesimus, a
faithful and beloved brother, who is *one*

3:24 [a]NU-Text omits *for.* **4:8** [a]NU-Text reads *you may know our circumstances and he may.*



LIFE APP

E-mail / Colossians 4:6

Communication is an important part of all relationships: romantic, business, friendships, family. We communicate in all kinds of ways, such as face-to-face talks, telephone conversations, body language, and maybe even an old-fashioned, handwritten letter sent by snail mail. Another way we communicate in almost all relationships is email. Most people use email at work to send files or talk about a project. But we use emails in our personal lives as well. Rather than taking the time to write out a whole letter, buy a stamp, and go to a mailbox, it's so much easier to just type your thoughts out quickly and push *send*. As convenient as email is, it does have its drawbacks.

When you're reading an email, you can't hear the tone of the writer's voice. You can't pick up clues from their body language. All you have are words on a screen that can be easily misinterpreted. On the flipside, it's easy to write in an email, things you would never say in person. When you're upset or angry, email can seem like a great friend just waiting for you to pour out all your emotions—complete freedom to express yourself with no filter. The problem comes when you send those unfiltered emotions on to the recipient; you can't take those words back. They may have been easy to type when you were all worked up, but you will have to see that person again. And when you do, *awkward* would be an understatement.

The Colossians didn't have email, but Paul's advice to them can work for us as well: "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6). As a Christian, you are representing Christ in all of your actions and words. Never write anything in an email that you would be ashamed to say out loud, in public. Remember that all your speech, whether talking or typing, should be full of grace, reflecting the love of Christ to others.

of you. They will make known to you all things which *are happening* here.

10Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), 11and Jesus who is called Justus. These *are my* only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

12Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete[a] in all the will of God. 13For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal[a] for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. 14Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. 15Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his[a] house.

CLOSING EXHORTATIONS AND BLESSING

16Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea. 17And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

18This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

4:12 [a]NU-Text reads *fully assured.*
4:13 [a]NU-Text reads *concern.* **4:15** [a]NU-Text reads *Nympha . . . her house.*

1 Thessalonians

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 51
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: RECOGNIZE THE TWIN COMFORTS: PAST MINISTRY AND THE FUTURE RETURN OF THE LORD
PURPOSE: LIVE GODLY LIVES WHILE WAITING FOR JESUS TO RETURN.

OUTLINE

1:1–4 .....Greetings
1:5—3:13 .....The Thessalonians' Faith and Example
4:1–12 .....Abound in Christ
4:13—5:11 .....What to Expect When the Lord Returns
5:12–28 .....Paul Gives Final Instructions and Greetings

KEY VERSE:

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints (1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13).

THEN /// If there's one thing you can say about the church at Thessalonica, it's that they had a lot of questions about Jesus' second coming. For one thing, they wanted to know what would happen when Christ returns to the people who had already died. Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians, in part, to answer this specific question.

Because the people of Thessalonica had so many questions, we know more about what will happen when Christ returns. Did you know He'll return in the sky? Did you know that the people who have already died will meet Him first? Did you know that there will be a shout and a trumpet?

Some of the most famous verses about Christ's second coming are in 1 Thessalonians. It's a message of hope, particularly if you've lost someone you love due to death. This book tells us, "Don't worry, death isn't the end of everything. You'll see them again."

NOW /// People have been looking forward to Jesus' coming to earth since the beginning of time. Even in the Garden of Eden God promised Someone would come eventually and take care of that evil snake that got Adam and Eve in huge trouble. In Old Testament times, people were waiting for Christ's *first* trip to earth. Since Jesus came to earth, died, and then went to heaven, though, we have been waiting for His next trip to earth. In the first trip, He came as a Servant to die for our sins. When He comes back, He'll come as a triumphant King who will change life as we know it. We are not so different from people back in Bible days. We are still waiting for God's promise to be revealed. Jesus is coming!

REALITY CHECK /// Jesus really could come back during your lifetime. Many of the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments have come true just in the last century. Whether He does or doesn't return while you are alive, live your life so that you are ready to go to heaven at any moment. It's okay to think that maybe you would like to grow up first or achieve some goal in your life. God gave us this life to enjoy. The point is that we should keep our lives as clear of sin as possible and continue to grow in our relationship with God. If we do that, then when Christ returns, we will be ready.

GREETING

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.[a]

THEIR GOOD EXAMPLE

2 We give thanks to God always for you all,
making mention of you in our prayers,
3 remembering without ceasing
your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope
in our Lord Jesus Christ
in the sight of our God and Father,
4 knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.
5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only,
but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit
and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.
6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord,
having received the word in much affliction,
with joy of the Holy Spirit,
7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.
8 For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth,
not only in Macedonia and Achaia,
but also in every place.
Your faith toward God has gone out,
so that we do not need to say anything.
9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you,
and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,
10 and to wait for His Son from heaven,
whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1:1 [a]NU-Text omits *from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

PAUL'S CONDUCT

2 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. 2But even[a] after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. 3For our exhortation *did* not *come* from error or uncleanness, nor *was it* in deceit.

4But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God *is* witness. 6Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. 7But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. 8So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. 9For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:9

Church leaders in New Testament times often took second jobs to support themselves and their families. Paul's second job was making tents, a skill he may have learned as a lad in Cilicia. After all, Cilicia was known for exporting a special kind of cloth made from goat's hair—a cloth that was used to make tents.

10You *are* witnesses, and God *also,* how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; 11as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged[a] every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, 12that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

THEIR CONVERSION

13For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. 14For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, 15who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, 16forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

LONGING TO SEE THEM

17But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. 18Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. 19For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20For you are our glory and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3:1, 2

The trip from Athens to Thessalonica was about three hundred miles. You might say Athens is still an important city in Greece today. It's the nation's capital.

CONCERN FOR THEIR FAITH

3 Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, 2and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, 3that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. 4For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. 5For this reason, when I could no longer

2:2 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *even.*
2:11 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *implored.*



LIFE APP

Determination / 1 Thessalonians 2:12

You may have heard it said that "when the going gets tough, the tough get going." People have been saying that for years, but is there truth to that statement? What is it that makes a person tough enough to keep going when things are difficult? Where can we get the godly determination we need?

As Christians, we get everything we need from God. As we walk through all the challenges in this world, we can always remember Paul's advice to "walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12). So the question becomes, how do we walk worthy of God during the most difficult parts of our journey?

Paul gives us some good advice in the Book of Philippians; it's an example from his own life. He talks about the fact that he continued to press on through the difficult times of his life in order to become a more mature follower of Christ. How did he go about this? He said, ". . . but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13, 14). Paul kept his focus in life on knowing and following Christ. He was determined to not give up anywhere along the way. He didn't let the past hold him back; but he kept walking forward, no matter what, because of Christ.

Just like Paul, you can keep walking forward and walking worthy of God through every tough time in life. You don't have to let guilt from past mistakes and sins hold you back. You don't have to let self-doubt left over from past failures paralyze you. With godly determination, you can keep walking forward. Being determined doesn't mean just making a decision and stubbornly standing by it. Godly determination means keeping Christ as your focus and deciding that you will not give up, whether in good times or tough times, because He is the source of your strength.

MAKING IT REAL // 1 THESSALONIANS 4:4, 5

Sex According to the Bible, the requirement for sex is *marriage*, not just love. God gave sex to marriage as a gift. When two people make a permanent commitment to each other, God gives them the privilege and gift of sex. When married people engage in a sexual relationship, it is a physical expression of the miraculous bond God created between them—the two have become one. We don't really know all that means; some of the things of God are just beyond our understanding. We do know God is offended and hurt when we allow physical lust to destroy the beauty that should be reserved for marriage.

Sex outside of marriage can have so many horrible consequences. You know what they are—diseases that can kill you, babies you aren't ready to have, stress like you've never known, horrible guilt or shame. The list goes on. The best way to avoid all the drama of premarital sex is to avoid situations where you might be tempted.

In God's Word, premarital sex is called "fornication." It is a sin God hates because it steals something precious from His people. God says sex outside marriage is wrong and harmful. So do what pleases God and wait. Waiting might be really hard right now, but one day when you find the person God created just for you, you'll be so glad you did. (See also: 1 Cor. 6:18; 1 Thess. 4:3.)

Words to Live By

Sanctification: The word translated as "sanctification" in 1 Thessalonians 4:4 is the Greek word *hagiasmos* (hag-ee-as-mos'). It means "the process of making something holy or totally dedicated to God." It can also be translated as "holiness" or "purity." God is in the process of changing us from the inside out and making us pure and holy before Him.

endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

ENCOURAGED BY TIMOTHY

6But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also *to see* you—
7therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. 8For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

9For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, 10night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

11Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. 12And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you, 13so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

PLEA FOR PURITY

4 Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; 2for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

3For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because

MIR MAKING IT REAL // 1 THESSALONIANS 5:5

Light Versus Dark Are you more concerned about someone stealing your car or breaking into your house during the day or at night? Crime and violence can happen anytime, but we are more likely to be on the lookout for it at night. Criminals are more likely to break the law at night because the darkness hides their actions.

In John 3, Jesus told Nicodemus that some people don't like the light because they don't want their evil deeds exposed (v. 20). But Paul says because you're a Christian, you can have a different attitude and live a different way. You belong to the light because the Bible says God is light (1 John 1:5). You should live your life in such a way that it doesn't matter if people know all about you, because you have nothing to hide. Your life should be an open book in which everyone can learn about Jesus. Even your mistakes and failures don't have to embarrass you, because you know that Jesus has taken care of all that. You can be a walking, talking picture of God's grace and mercy. When you belong to Jesus, your entire life can be filled with His light. Instead of stumbling around in the darkness of sin, God's light will shine out before you and lead you around any obstacle in your path. Belonging to the light gives you incredible freedom! (See also: Matt. 5:14–16; John 3:19; 12:36; Eph. 5:8–11.)

Words to Live By

Light: 1 Thessalonians 5:5 calls Christians "sons of light." That's because God is light (1 John 1:5) and we are His children. We should be like our Father and be light for the world. Light helps people see, so we should live our lives so people can see the truth of God's Word; light helps things grow, so we should help one another grow up in the Lord; and light keeps us healthy, so we should tell everyone about our Lord who heals.

the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. 7For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. 8Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who has also given[a] us His Holy Spirit.

LUST
Is sexual purity God's will for His people?
1 Thessalonians 4:3–5

A BROTHERLY AND ORDERLY LIFE

9But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; 10and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; 11that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

DEATH
How should Christians view the death of a believer?
1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

THE COMFORT OF CHRIST'S COMING

13But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.[a]

4:8 [a]NU-Text reads *who also gives.* **4:14** [a]Or *those who through Jesus sleep*



LIFE APP

Prayer / 1 Thessalonians 5:17

The word *prayer* can sometimes sound intimidating. You may think that in order to pray you have to know a lot of fancy words and all the acceptable "Christian" phrases. You may wonder if you have to pray out loud in a holy-sounding voice for everyone to hear. But the truth is that no fancy words or pious voice will make a difference when you pray.

Prayer is a conversation with God. It's coming to Him with a humble and thankful heart and talking to Him. When you pray, you can praise God for His majesty and holiness. You can thank Him for all His blessings, and ask Him for your needs. You can talk to Him about what's going on in your life and in the world, and ask Him how He wants to use you to make a difference in your world. A conversation with God doesn't need to happen on any kind of schedule. You don't have to make an appointment with God. You can have an ongoing conversation with Him throughout the day. Paul encourages everyone to do this in his first letter to the Thessalonians: "Pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:17, 18).

What an amazing privilege—to have the invitation to talk with the Creator and Master of the universe anytime we will call on His name! Through talking to God in prayer, we not only learn more about Him and grow closer to Him, but He has also chosen to allow our prayers to make a real difference; not only for ourselves, but for others. "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16).

Prayer will help us mature in our faith and become more like Christ. The results are felt within our hearts and seen in how we live our lives.

15For this we say to you by the word of
the Lord, that we who are alive *and* re-
main until the coming of the Lord will by
no means precede those who are asleep.
16For the Lord Himself will descend from
heaven with a shout, with the voice of
an archangel, and with the trumpet of
God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.
17Then we who are alive *and* remain shall
be caught up together with them in the
clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And
thus we shall always be with the Lord.
18Therefore comfort one another with
these words.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

5 But concerning the times and the
seasons, brethren, you have no need
that I should write to you. 2For you
yourselves know perfectly that the day of
the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.
3For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then
sudden destruction comes upon them, as
labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And
they shall not escape. 4But you, brethren,
are not in darkness, so that this Day should
overtake you as a thief. 5You are all sons of
light and sons of the day. We are not of the
night nor of darkness. 6Therefore let us not
sleep, as others *do,* but let us watch and be
sober. 7For those who sleep, sleep at night,
and those who get drunk are drunk at
night. 8But let us who are of the day be so-
ber, putting on the breastplate of faith and
love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation.
9For God did not appoint us to wrath, but
to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus
Christ, 10who died for us, that whether we
wake or sleep, we should live together with
Him.

11Therefore comfort each other and ed-
ify one another, just as you also are doing.

VARIOUS EXHORTATIONS

12And we urge you, brethren, to recognize
those who labor among you, and are over
you in the Lord and admonish you, 13and
to esteem them very highly in love for their
work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

14Now we exhort you, brethren, warn
those who are unruly, comfort the faint-
hearted, uphold the weak, be patient with
all. 15See that no one renders evil for evil to
anyone, but always pursue what is good
both for yourselves and for all.

PRAYER
How often should we pray?
1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

16Rejoice always, 17pray without ceasing,
18in everything give thanks; for this is the
will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

19Do not quench the Spirit. 20Do not de-
spise prophecies. 21Test all things; hold fast
what is good. 22Abstain from every form of
evil.

BLESSING AND ADMONITION

23Now may the God of peace Himself sanc-
tify you completely; and may your whole
spirit, soul, and body be preserved blame-
less at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
24He who calls you *is* faithful, who also will
do *it.*

25Brethren, pray for us.

26Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

27I charge you by the Lord that this epis-
tle be read to all the holy[a] brethren.

28The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be*
with you. Amen.

5:27 [a]NU-Text omits *holy.*

2 Thessalonians

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 51
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: HOW TO LIVE AND WHAT TO WATCH FOR AS WE AWAIT THE RETURN OF THE LORD
PURPOSE: UNTIL JESUS DOES RETURN, LIVE DISCIPLINED, GODLY LIVES.

OUTLINE

1:1, 2.....Greetings
1:3–12.....The Lord's Return Will Bring Justice
2:1–12.....The Lord Has Not Returned Yet
2:13–17.....Stand Fast
3:1–15.....Pray and Work
3:16–18.....A Final Prayer

KEY VERSE:

Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us (2 Thessalonians 3:5, 6).

THEN /// The church at Thessalonica took what Paul said to heart. In fact, some of them maybe took it too much to heart. In Paul's first letter to this church, he had written that they needed to live their lives in anticipation of Christ's return. Later, he found out that some of them had responded to this by quitting their jobs and literally just *hanging out* waiting for Christ to come back. These people who were hanging out began to do what anyone does when they hang out too much: they got bored, which led to gossiping, which led to nit-picking, which led to arguing, which led to some big problems in the church.

Paul wrote his second letter to this church to remind them that waiting for Christ's return is a way of living. It *is not* standing in the yard all day and looking at the sky. It *is* living holy lives and connecting with God every day.

NOW /// Gossip can seem very harmless when you're sitting with a friend, laughing and talking about someone else. At first, it doesn't seem like it will hurt anyone. Of course, there's always the chance that the person you're gossiping about will hear you or hear about what you said; but if you're careful, that won't happen, will it? Maybe not, but that's not really the point. When we gossip about each other we disrespect each other. We forget that we are all a part of the body of Christ. When we disrespect someone, we become like a cancer destroying the very body that we are a part of. It may seem harmless, but it is a big deal. That's why Paul made a big deal about it.

REALITY CHECK /// Have you ever heard that expression about being too heavenly minded to be any earthly good? When someone says that, they are usually talking about someone who has faith, but not a practical faith that makes a difference in the everyday details of life. That's also sort of what Paul was writing about in his second letter to the church at Thessalonica.

The people in Thessalonica were doing something that *sounded* good. They were looking for Christ's return. But they forgot that, while Christ's return is important, waiting for Him isn't the *only* thing God told us to do. He also told us to do good deeds in this life and to be kind to other people. He told us to make a living and to spend time with family.

Be careful whenever you find yourself being like the Thessalonians—obeying part of God's Word without considering the rest. If you pay close attention to the way you live and follow the Lord in all you do, He will return to find you doing the very things He asked of you. How sad if He were to return and find you just sitting around waiting for Him to take you home. Christianity is about real life lived with real faith, not a life put on hold while you wait to go to a better place.

GREETING

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians
in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

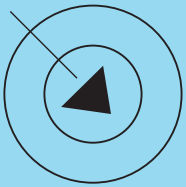
2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOD'S FINAL JUDGMENT AND GLORY

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of

2 Thessalonians 1:1

Paul was in the middle of a very busy missionary journey when he wrote this second letter to the church in Thessalonica. Apparently, Paul was writing from Corinth, where he was staying after preaching in Athens, Berea, and Thessalonica. Silvanus (better known as Silas) and Timothy are mentioned because they were with Paul when he started the church in Thessalonica.



PROMISE

God promises to give you rest from your troubles.

Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:6–8).

Have you been laughed at lately? Have you taken any verbal jabs for being a Christian? Have you been made fun of because you did the right thing? Maybe you have been deeply moved by stories of Christians across the world who endure countless hardships, and even torture, for their faith. Sometimes the ridicule, schemes, anger, or even persecution from those who oppose Christ can seem devastating and discouraging.

But take heart, because relief is on its way. When Jesus comes, He promises to give His children rest from their troubles. We won't have to fight anymore. Jesus will take over with His powerful angels and a flaming fire. He will take care of our enemies and all who would persecute us. Sometimes the battle is bigger than we are and the trouble seems overwhelming. Remember that you do not stand alone. The Lord will not only fight on your behalf, but He will also give you rest—the kind of rest that is full of the peace and comfort that only comes from God Himself.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 37:7–9; Jeremiah 31:13; Hebrews 4:9

every one of you all abounds toward each other, 4so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, 5*which is* manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; 6since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe,[a] because our testimony among you was believed.

11Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and the work of faith with power, 12that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE GREAT APOSTASY

2 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ[a] had come. 3Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin[a] is revealed, the son of perdition, 4who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God[a] in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

5Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6And now you know what is restraining, that he

1:10 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *have believed.* **2:2** [a]NU-Text reads *the Lord.* **2:3** [a]NU-Text reads *lawlessness.* **2:4** [a]NU-Text omits *as God.*

2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4

You may know the "man of sin" better as the Antichrist. Led by Satan, this false prophet will claim to be God and will make himself an enemy of all Christians. Exactly who will this man be? We don't know. One of the few things we do know about him is that he will become a world leader.

may be revealed in his own time. 7For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He[a] who now restrains *will do so* until He[b] is taken out of the way. 8And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

STAND FAST

13But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 14to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

16Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, 17comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

PRAY FOR US

3 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, 2and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

3But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one. 4And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

5Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

WARNING AGAINST IDLENESS

6But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he[a] received from us. 7For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

LAZINESS

Is laziness something the Lord will tolerate in His people?

2 Thessalonians 3:10–12

2 Thessalonians 3:17

Apparently, some impostors had been sending out letters full of false teachings and then signing Paul's name to them. To make sure the people in Thessalonica knew this was a genuine letter, Paul signed his name to it. You may be wondering why Paul only signed it, as opposed to writing the letter himself. Some Bible experts believe Paul suffered from an eye disease that made it necessary for him to dictate his letters to a secretary.

10For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not

2:7 [a]Or *he* [b]Or *he* **3:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *they.*

work, neither shall he eat. 11For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. 12Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

13But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good. 14And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

BENEDICTION

16Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all.

17The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

18The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

1 Timothy

DATE OF WRITING: FALL A.D. 62
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: REMOVAL OF FALSE DOCTRINE, PRESERVATION OF PUBLIC WORSHIP, AND PROPER LEADERSHIP ARE NEEDED IN THE CHURCH
PURPOSE: YOUNG ADULTS HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ROLE TO PLAY IN CHRIST'S CHURCH.

OUTLINE

1:1, 2.....Greetings
1:3—3:13.....Instructions for Church Life
3:14—4:11.....Be Faithful to Your Calling
4:12—6:21.....Paul's Advice to Timothy

KEY VERSE:

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses (1 Timothy 6:12).

THEN /// Have you ever gotten a letter or an e-mail from someone older who is really important to you? How do you read it? Do you skip over parts or maybe not even finish? Probably not. You most likely read every word and maybe even read some of them twice.

That might have been how it was for Timothy when he got letters from Paul. Timothy was like a son to Paul. Paul loved him and took him on trips and talked to him about things that mattered. Paul really invested in Timothy's life. Timothy had much to learn. Paul had plenty to teach. We get to read a lot of truth because of the close relationship these two men enjoyed. God used their relationship to teach us about following Christ and how to live as His church.

NOW /// Paul wrote to Timothy about the kind of people who should be leading the church. His words are just as true today as they were then. Church leaders aren't better than anyone else in the church, but they have huge responsibilities. Because of all they are responsible for, they must be the kind of people who can be trusted. Paul said the leaders of the church should have self-control and wisdom. He also said they should be good family members and family leaders. Above all, the leaders of a church are servants to the Lord and His people.

It's important to realize church leaders are to be respected. They willingly accept all the responsibility for a large group of people. They spend their days seeking the Lord and trying to lead the people in their church in right and godly ways.

How do you respond to the leaders in your church? Do they have your respect? Are you thankful for all they do to lead you into a closer relationship with the Lord? Why not tell them? It just may make their day!

REALITY CHECK /// One of the neat things about Paul's letter to Timothy was that Paul was writing to a young person. When you read about the people God used in the Bible, many times they were older people. Some of them were having babies even when they were too old to have babies. Some of them spent years teaching and preaching. But Timothy was a young guy, just starting out in ministry. Paul's letters to Timothy remind us that God uses people of all ages. He can use us no matter how old or young we are, as long as we are willing to have faith and love others.

GREETING

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by
the commandment of God our Savior
and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,

2 To Timothy, a true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our
Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

NO OTHER DOCTRINE

3 As I urged you when I went into
Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you
may charge some that they teach no other
doctrine, 4 nor give heed to fables and end-
less genealogies, which cause disputes
rather than godly edification which is in
faith. 5 Now the purpose of the command-
ment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good
conscience, and *from* sincere faith, 6 from
which some, having strayed, have turned
aside to idle talk, 7 desiring to be teachers of
the law, understanding neither what they
say nor the things which they affirm.

1 Timothy 1:4

How much do you know about your family tree? Do you know the name of your great-grandfather? How about your great-great-grandfather? Do you have any famous ancestors? The Jewish leaders of New Testament times could have answered these questions with no problem. Apparently, they took great pride in being able to trace their ancestors all the way back to Abraham. We're talking about genealogies that stretched back over two thousand years!

8But we know that the law *is* good if one
uses it lawfully, 9knowing this: that the law
is not made for a righteous person, but
for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the*
ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy
and profane, for murderers of fathers and
murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10for
fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers,
for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any
other thing that is contrary to sound doc-
trine, 11according to the glorious gospel of
the blessed God which was committed to
my trust.

GLORY TO GOD FOR HIS GRACE

12And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who
has enabled me, because He counted me
faithful, putting *me* into the ministry,
13although I was formerly a blasphemer,
a persecutor, and an insolent man; but
I obtained mercy because I did *it* igno-
rantly in unbelief. 14And the grace of our
Lord was exceedingly abundant, with
faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.
15This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of
all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came
into the world to save sinners, of whom I
am chief. 16However, for this reason I ob-
tained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ
might show all longsuffering, as a pat-
tern to those who are going to believe on
Him for everlasting life. 17Now to the King
eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who
alone is wise,[a] *be* honor and glory forever
and ever. Amen.

WISDOM
Who is the source of all wisdom?
1 Timothy 1:17

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

18This charge I commit to you, son
Timothy, according to the prophecies
previously made concerning you, that by
them you may wage the good warfare,
19having faith and a good conscience,
which some having rejected, concern-
ing the faith have suffered shipwreck, 20of
whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander,
whom I delivered to Satan that they may
learn not to blaspheme.

PRAY FOR ALL MEN

2 Therefore I exhort first of all that
supplications, prayers, intercessions,
and giving of thanks be made for all
men, 2for kings and all who are in author-
ity, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable
life in all godliness and reverence. 3For
this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of
God our Savior, 4who desires all men to be
saved and to come to the knowledge of the
truth. 5For *there is* one God and one Media-
tor between God and men, *the* Man Christ
Jesus, 6who gave Himself a ransom for all,
to be testified in due time, 7for which I was
appointed a preacher and an apostle—I
am speaking the truth in Christ[a] *and* not
lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith
and truth.

SALVATION
Who does God desire to save?
1 Timothy 2:3, 4

MEN AND WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

8I desire therefore that the men pray every-
where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath
and doubting; 9in like manner also, that
the women adorn themselves in modest
apparel, with propriety and moderation,
not with braided hair or gold or pearls or
costly clothing, 10but, which is proper for
women professing godliness, with good
works. 11Let a woman learn in silence with

1 Timothy 2:9

It would probably be safe to describe the women of ancient, pagan cultures as "high-maintenance." They often spent hours creating elaborate hair arrangements for themselves. They wore fancy clothing and expensive jewelry to attract attention. However, most of the women who fit these descriptions were prostitutes. In Ephesus, the place where Timothy was working, these women could be found at the pagan temple of Diana.

1:17 [a]NU-Text reads *to the only God.*
2:7 [a]NU-Text omits *in Christ.*

all submission. 12And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 13For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

QUALIFICATIONS OF OVERSEERS

3 This *is* a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop,[a] he desires a good work. 2A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,[a] but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence 5(for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil. 7Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

8Likewise deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, 9holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. 10But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being *found* blameless. 11Likewise, *their* wives *must be* reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. 12Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well. 13For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

THE GREAT MYSTERY

14These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 15but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 16And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

> God[a] was manifested in the flesh,
> Justified in the Spirit,
> Seen by angels,
> Preached among the Gentiles,
> Believed on in the world,
> Received up in glory.

THE GREAT APOSTASY

4 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

A GOOD SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST

6If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. 7But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. 8For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 9This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 10For to this *end* we both labor and suffer reproach,[a] because we trust in the living God, who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. 11These things command and teach.

TAKE HEED TO YOUR MINISTRY

12Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit,[a] in faith, in purity. 13Till I come, give attention to reading, to

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3:1 [a]Literally *overseer* **3:3** [a]NU-Text omits *not greedy for money.* **3:16** [a]NU-Text reads *Who.* **4:10** [a]NU-Text reads *we labor and strive.* **4:12** [a]NU-Text omits *in spirit.*

MAKING IT REAL // 1 TIMOTHY 4:12

Be Trustworthy If you've never given your parents reason to distrust you, they probably trust you more than you know. It's everyone else they worry about. But, if you've broken your parents' trust and want to restore it, read Proverbs 23:22–25. Look at the things that make parents proud: truth, wisdom, listening to instruction, and trying to understand. Not only will these qualities help you in your relationship with your parents, they will help you with all the relationships in your life.

Begin trying to make these characteristics a part of you. It may take time if you've lost your parent's trust, but once they see you've made the choice to change, you can watch your parents' attitude toward you change. You don't have to transform overnight, just work on one thing at a time. For instance, if you say you'll be home at midnight, be there. Showing up late with a lame excuse doesn't prove you're trustworthy. After you get the "on-time thing" down, start working on something else. Before long, they'll realize you mean what you say and say what you mean. What a great way to live! (See also: Prov. 23:22–25.)

Words to Live By

Example: The word translated as "example" in 1 Timothy 4:12 is the Greek word *tupos* (too'-pos). It means "a pattern or an imitation." It carries the meaning of having an impact on something by providing a pattern to follow, like a metal gear is formed by liquefied metal being poured into a die or a preformed pattern. We can help others become like Christ by being an example to them—by providing them a pattern to follow.

exhortation, to doctrine. 14Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. 15Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. 16Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

TREATMENT OF CHURCH MEMBERS

5 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers, 2older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.

HONOR TRUE WIDOWS

3Honor widows who are really widows. 4But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and[a] acceptable before God. 5Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. 6But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. 7And these things command, that they may be blameless. 8But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1 Timothy 5:3

If you think it was Paul's idea for Christians to help widows, orphans, and others in need, think again. He was merely repeating the law that God had given to Moses centuries earlier. A widow usually lived with her husband's family or with one of her children. However, if she had no family to live with, the church was responsible for taking care of her.

9Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and not unless* she has been the wife of one man, 10well

5:4 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *good and.*

MAKING IT REAL // 1 TIMOTHY 5:4

Grandparents The most wonderful thing you can give your grandparents is your time. Spending time with them shows them that they are important to you. A grandparent's love is like no other person's; they love you just because you are you. They would love to get to know you better, to be seen with you, to be listened to by you. Making time for your grandparents lets them know that you appreciate all they've done for you and all the love they have shown.

One of the best ways you can honor them is to ask questions and learn from them. They have lived long lives and have probably seen more interesting things than you would imagine. You may be amused or fascinated by some of the experiences they've had. They can also share with you what they've learned about the Lord along their life's journey. Senior adults complain that one of the hardest things about growing older is not feeling useful anymore. Believe it or not, inside where it really counts, your grandparents don't feel like old people. They feel much the same on the inside as they did when they were much younger—they want to know they have a place in this world and something worthwhile to give to others. Let your grandparents know that they are still needed, they are valuable, and they are greatly loved. You hold such a tender place in their hearts—your grandparents will consider their time with you a treasure. (See also: Lev. 19:32; Prov. 17:6.)

Words to Live By

Piety: The word translated in 1 Timothy 5:4 as "piety" is the Greek word *eusebeo* (yoo-seb-eh'-o). It means "respect expressed in practical, meaningful ways." To say you respect your family means nothing if your actions say otherwise. Put your words into actions and treat your family with *eusebeo*. You'll be amazed at the result.

reported for good works: if she has brought
up children, if she has lodged strangers, if
she has washed the saints' feet, if she has
relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently
followed every good work.

11But refuse *the* younger widows; for
when they have begun to grow wanton
against Christ, they desire to marry, 12having
condemnation because they have
cast off their first faith. 13And besides
they learn *to be* idle, wandering about
from house to house, and not only idle
but also gossips and busybodies, saying
things which they ought not. 14Therefore
I desire that *the* younger *widows* marry,
bear children, manage the house, give
no opportunity to the adversary to speak
reproachfully. 15For some have already
turned aside after Satan. 16If any believing man or[a] woman has widows, let them
relieve them, and do not let the church be
burdened, that it may relieve those who
are really widows.

HONOR THE ELDERS

17Let the elders who rule well be counted
worthy of double honor, especially those
who labor in the word and doctrine. 18For
the Scripture says, *"You shall not muzzle
an ox while it treads out the grain,"*[a] and,
"The laborer *is* worthy of his wages."[b] 19Do
not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.
20Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

21I charge *you* before God and the Lord
Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you
observe these things without prejudice,
doing nothing with partiality. 22Do not lay
hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other
people's sins; keep yourself pure.

23No longer drink only water, but use a
little wine for your stomach's sake and your
frequent infirmities.

5:16 [a]NU-Text omits *man or.*
5:18 [a]Deuteronomy 25:4 [b]Luke 10:7

MIR MAKING IT REAL // 1 TIMOTHY 6:6

It's All About Him Becoming a Christian doesn't mean you have to be poor for the rest of your life. Nor does it mean that the bright red sports car you've been dreaming of will appear in your driveway if you give all your money to the church. Christianity does make you rich, Paul says, by teaching you to look at things in a new way. The reason that a relationship with Jesus makes you content with what you have is that the more you get to know Him, the less your stuff matters. It's fine to enjoy driving a sports car or wearing nice clothes, but what makes you truly, deeply happy is really knowing Jesus and being a part of what He is doing in the world around you. Get preoccupied with His plan for you.

If your life up until now has been all about stuff and not at all about God, don't give up. Repent. Go after God with everything you've got. Tell Him, "I'm sorry I settled for the stuff of this world and for superficial happiness." Determine to make His work your passion. Use your energy building His kingdom and you won't even notice what kind of stuff you have or don't have, because it simply won't matter. What does a lot of junk mean when compared to a holy God? (See also: Phil. 4:11; Heb. 13:5.)

Words to Live By

Gain: The word translated in 1 Timothy 6:6 as "gain" is the Greek word *porismos* (por-is-mos'). It means "to be provided for" or "to acquire." The meaning of this word can best be understood through another passage of Scripture, Matthew 6:25–33, specifically verse 33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Don't worry about stuff. Just seek God and He'll make sure you always have exactly what you need.

[24]Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding *them* to judgment, but those of some *men* follow later. [25]Likewise, the good works *of some* are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

HONOR MASTERS

6 Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. [2]And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

ERROR AND GREED

[3]If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, [4]he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, [5]useless wranglings[a] of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of* gain. From such withdraw yourself.[b]

MONEY
What are the dangers of greed?
1 Timothy 6:9, 10

[6]Now godliness with contentment is great gain. [7]For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain[a] we can carry nothing out. [8]And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. [9]But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish

6:5 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *constant friction.* [b]NU-Text omits this sentence. **6:7** [a]NU-Text omits *and it is certain.*

LIFE APP

Spiritual Health / 1 Timothy 6:11, 12

We know how important physical fitness is for a healthy lifestyle. To be healthy, we try to eat balanced meals with not too much fat or sugar while we make sure to exercise consistently. Many of us even keep hand sanitizer and sanitizing air sprays available at a moment's notice to protect us from unseen germs. It's right and good to take our physical health seriously. But there's another kind of health that's even more important: spiritual health.

Eventually, no matter how physically healthy we are, our bodies will wear down and physical death will come for us all. But we are spiritual beings and our spiritual life will continue through eternity. Being spiritually healthy matters from this day forward—forever. But how do we stay spiritually healthy in a challenging world full of temptation? Timothy encourages us to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness" (1 Tim. 6:11).

To stay spiritually healthy, you need to be intentional. You need to know what's going on in the world, yet not be influenced by the ways of the world. You must try to see everything that happens through the lens of your faith in Christ—like spiritual glasses that allow you to see the things in life that really matter. And let that faith strengthen you as you stand strong against temptations and evil. Let the power of Christ rise up in your life so you have the strength and perseverance you need to actively pursue the things of God.

Spiritual health requires that you stay close to God. Read His Word often and talk to Him through prayer throughout your days. Make Him the focus of your life. And as you are growing closer to Him and becoming more like Him, His love will flow into and out through your life. You will find that you have more patience for yourself and others. You will be able to reach out in gentleness and service to help those around you. This is spiritual health—staying ever close to Christ and letting His life live through you.

and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

THE GOOD CONFESSION

11But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, 15which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RICH

17Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18*Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

GUARD THE FAITH

20O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— 21by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

Grace *be* with you. Amen.

1 Timothy 6:13

Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea, the site of Jesus' trial. As the highest authority in the land, Pilate had the power to sentence criminals to death. After questioning Jesus, though, Pilate declared Him innocent of all charges. That didn't sit well with the crowd that had gathered outside. Fearing the Jewish leaders would incite a revolt, Pilate went along with their plan and allowed Jesus to be executed.

2 Timothy

DATE OF WRITING: FALL A.D. 67
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: COMMITMENT TO MINISTRY IS VITALLY IMPORTANT
PURPOSE: COMMITMENT TO SCRIPTURE AND HOLY LIVING IS ESSENTIAL.

OUTLINE

1:1, 2.....Greetings and Prayer for Timothy
1:3–18.....Do Not Be Ashamed of the Lord
2:1–26.....How to Be a Good Soldier of Jesus Christ
3:1–9.....Perilous Times Are Coming
3:10—4:8.....Keep Being Faithful
4:9–22.....Personal Instructions and Final Greetings

KEY VERSE:

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 2:3).

THEN /// Even as important as Paul was to Timothy on a regular day, this last letter must have been particularly important. Paul was in jail when he wrote this letter to Timothy, and it was the last thing Paul wrote before he died. Wow. It's pretty amazing that we can read Paul's final words to somebody he loved so much. Timothy probably hung on every word when he read this letter the first time. He took the message to heart and became a great leader. Timothy put into practice all the things Paul and his mom and his grandma had taught him. When he did that, he not only pleased God; he also honored the people who taught him about God.

NOW /// When you read 2 Timothy, remember to hang on every word, just like Timothy did. Even more so, don't just read, but also understand. Remember to ask yourself, "How should this affect my life?" And then live it.

You can learn from 2 Timothy how important it is to use your spiritual gifts and to remain loyal to Christ no matter what the circumstances. This letter can also give you insight into how to handle the Word of God—faithfully and accurately. Paul strongly encouraged Timothy to always be ready to share the message of Christ, at any time. You cannot know for sure everything you will encounter in life, but you can determine to follow this teaching from Paul. By being faithful to Christ throughout all circumstances, and by being diligent in studying and applying His Word, you can do your best to always be ready, no matter what life holds.

REALITY CHECK /// Timothy had three important influences in his life (that we know of). One was his grandmother. Her name was Lois. Another was his mom, Eunice. The third was Paul. All these people taught Timothy about life and faith; they helped him to grow—they were his mentors.

As you grow up, you will become more and more independent and find your own way in the world. But no matter how old you get, it will always be important to listen to those who are older and wiser than you. Life can be really difficult sometimes and we all keep learning and growing every day. Why try to live your life totally on your own when others have already learned things that could make your own life go more smoothly? Who do you know who can mentor you? Visit with them. Ask them questions. Trust them to help you make good decisions. Be somebody's Timothy and let somebody be your Paul.

GREETING

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ[a] by the
will of God, according to the promise
of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, a beloved son:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the
Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

TIMOTHY'S FAITH AND HERITAGE

3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure
conscience, as *my* forefathers *did,* as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers
night and day, 4 greatly desiring to see you,
being mindful of your tears, that I may be
filled with joy, 5 when I call to remembrance
the genuine faith that is in you, which
dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and
your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is
in you also. 6 Therefore I remind you to stir
up the gift of God which is in you through
the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not
given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of
love and of a sound mind.

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner,
but share with me in the sufferings for
the gospel according to the power of God,
9 who has saved us and called *us* with a holy
calling, not according to our works, but
according to His own purpose and grace
which was given to us in Christ Jesus before
time began, 10 but has now been revealed
by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ,

1:1 [a] NU-Text and M-Text read *Christ Jesus.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

No Fear The Spirit of God lives in believers. He gives you strength so you never have to be afraid. But that doesn't mean you should just ignore it if you are threatened or bullied. If anyone ever tries to force you to behave in ways you know are wrong, uses social media or any other forum to bully or frighten you, or makes inappropriate advances toward you, tell an authority. There are sick people in this world who choose to mistreat others; sin can so completely take over a life that it perverts and controls the person who has chosen to submit to evil, dangerous temptations. Evil like this must be revealed where you find it or else it will just grow stronger, hurting you and maybe even others. Also, those who suffer from an inability to control dangerous and destructive behavior need to receive whatever help is necessary to keep them from continuing in their sinful ways. When you report them, they may just get the help they need.

Though there are some things in this world that are truly frightening, the Spirit of God lives inside of you. He doesn't want you living your life in fear. So, trust Him and don't be afraid of life. Do the right thing and be confident that God will protect you and go before you. (See also: Ps. 56; Is. 35:4; Phil. 4:13.)

Words to Live By

Spirit: The word translated as "spirit" in 2 Timothy 1:7 is the Greek word *pneuma* (pnyoo'-mah). *Pneuma* is the rational, aware part of a person that allows them to respond to God. It should not be confused with the Holy Spirit, and it certainly isn't another word for ghost. It's the part of you that makes you who you are.

who has abolished death and brought life
and immortality to light through the gospel, 11to which I was appointed a preacher,
an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.[a]
12For this reason I also suffer these things;
nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know
whom I have believed and am persuaded
that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

FAITH
In whom do Christians trust and believe?
2 Timothy 1:8–12

BE LOYAL TO THE FAITH

13Hold fast the pattern of sound words
which you have heard from me, in faith
and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14That
good thing which was committed to you,
keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

15This you know, that all those in Asia
have turned away from me, among whom

2 Timothy 1:15

Paul wasn't referring to the ancient Chinese or Japanese when he said the people of Asia had rejected him. Asia was the name of a Roman province located in what is now Turkey. At the time Paul wrote this letter, Nero, the Roman emperor, was stepping up his persecution of Christians throughout the empire.

are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 16The Lord
grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not
ashamed of my chain; 17but when he arrived
in Rome, he sought me out very zealously
and found *me.* 18The Lord grant to him that
he may find mercy from the Lord in that
Day—and you know very well how many
ways he ministered *to me*[a] at Ephesus.

1:11 [a]NU-Text omits *of the Gentiles.* **1:18** [a]*To me* is from the Vulgate and a few Greek manuscripts.



LIFE APP

Expectations / 2 Timothy 1:9

Expectations are everywhere. You're expected to make the grade, to make the shot, or to hit the note. You may even expect yourself to be the very best at whatever you try. It seems almost everything we do is somehow based on expectations.

So it's very tempting for us to apply that same logic to our relationship with God. We may think that God has a list of expectations for us to meet before He will love us. We may think our relationship with Him depends on how well we avoid the spiritual "don't" list and how much we get accomplished on the spiritual "do" list. But that's not how it works with God.

God loves you and has extended His grace to you based on the sacrifice of Jesus. We live for God because He loves us and has saved us, not to earn His love and salvation. Paul tells us that God "has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began" (2 Tim. 1:9).

The expectations of Christians come as we respond to God's love. We want to live lives that please Him—lives that show the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23). We are not obligated to live up to everyone's expectations. The expectations that matter are those that come in the pursuit of a life that glorifies God. God will accomplish His will in our lives. We are to follow Him faithfully, going where He calls us to go and doing what He calls us to do. That is our expectation to live by. Along our journey, we will mess up. But one expectation we know is secure is that God will forgive us because "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

BE STRONG IN GRACE

2 You therefore, my son, be strong
in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
2And the things that you have heard
from me among many witnesses, commit
these to faithful men who will be able to
teach others also. 3You therefore must
endure[a] hardship as a good soldier of Je-
sus Christ. 4No one engaged in warfare
entangles himself with the affairs of *this*
life, that he may please him who enlisted
him as a soldier. 5And also if anyone com-
petes in athletics, he is not crowned un-
less he competes according to the rules.
6The hardworking farmer must be first to
partake of the crops. 7Consider what I say,
and may[a] the Lord give you understand-
ing in all things.

8Remember that Jesus Christ, of the
seed of David, was raised from the dead
according to my gospel, 9for which I suffer
trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of
chains; but the word of God is not chained.
10Therefore I endure all things for the sake
of the elect, that they also may obtain the
salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eter-
nal glory.

11*This is* a faithful saying:

For if we died with *Him,*
We shall also live with *Him.*
12If we endure,
We shall also reign with *Him.*
If we deny *Him,*
He also will deny us.
13If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself.

APPROVED AND DISAPPROVED WORKERS

14Remind *them* of these things, charg-
ing *them* before the Lord not to strive
about words to no profit, to the ruin of
the hearers. 15Be diligent to present your-
self approved to God, a worker who does
not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing
the word of truth. 16But shun profane
and idle babblings, for they will increase
to more ungodliness. 17And their mes-
sage will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus
and Philetus are of this sort, 18who have
strayed concerning the truth, saying that
the resurrection is already past; and they
overthrow the faith of some. 19Neverthe-
less the solid foundation of God stands,
having this seal: "The Lord knows those
who are His," and, "Let everyone who
names the name of Christ[a] depart from
iniquity."

TEMPTATION
What should we do when faced with temptation?
2 Timothy 2:22

20But in a great house there are not only
vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood
and clay, some for honor and some for
dishonor. 21Therefore if anyone cleanses
himself from the latter, he will be a ves-
sel for honor, sanctified and useful for the
Master, prepared for every good work.
22Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righ-
teousness, faith, love, peace with those
who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
23But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes,
knowing that they generate strife. 24And a
servant of the Lord must not quarrel but
be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25in
humility correcting those who are in op-
position, if God perhaps will grant them
repentance, so that they may know the
truth, 26and *that* they may come to their
senses *and escape* the snare of the devil,
having been taken captive by him to *do*
his will.

WITNESSING
Why should God's people share the good news with others?
2 Timothy 2:24–26

PERILOUS TIMES AND PERILOUS MEN

3 But know this, that in the last days
perilous times will come: 2For men
will be lovers of themselves, lovers
of money, boasters, proud, blasphem-
ers, disobedient to parents, unthankful,

2:3 [a]NU-Text reads *You must share.*
2:7 [a]NU-Text reads *the Lord will give you.*
2:19 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the Lord.*



LIFE APP

Purity / 2 Timothy 2:22

Purity is not a virtue that is often encouraged in the world around us. Many movies, television shows, and even people in your school make fun of purity as an old-fashioned concept that is unrealistic for young people today. But it's not the opinion of others that should concern us; it's God's opinion that matters. God teaches us in His Word that our bodies are His temple, so we should take care of them and treat them respectfully, as they belong to Him (1 Cor. 6:19, 20); we should glorify God in everything we do.

We can go ahead and admit that purity is not easy. It's difficult to even go one day without being bombarded by sexual images or themes. Whether it's a song when you turn on the radio, a commercial using sex to sell something, or even someone at school who seems to be dressing in a way that shows off as much of his or her body as possible, sex is everywhere. So even when you want to be faithful in keeping yourself pure, how do you stay strong in the midst of such constant temptations? Let's take some advice from Paul: "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22).

Instead of focusing on the things you *can't* do and remain pure, concentrate on the things you *can* do. When you see something that is tempting you to lust, look away—flee! And actively seek righteousness by spending time with God and in His Word. Determine to live a life of love and peace, being faithful to God and serving others with a gracious heart. And seek out other believers who are also dedicated to keeping themselves pure to honor God. Surround yourself with God's goodness so that wherever you are, you can focus on things that will help you run away from lustful temptations and run toward God and His love for you.

MAKING IT REAL // 2 TIMOTHY 3:15–17

The Bible The Bible is an awesome book. It's full of answers and advice and wisdom. It's full of stories about war and deceit and natural disasters and family feuds. It tells you how to live and be successful, and it tells you what to look out for. It's the richest, best piece of literature ever written and it's the number one best seller of all time.

But beyond all of that, the Bible is the Word of God. Although God used the minds and hands of people to accomplish the writing of the Bible, He is the One who determined what it would say. The Bible is God's instruction book; in it, He reveals His love and His plan for you.

When Jesus lived on earth, He prayed: "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17). (If you are a follower of Jesus, this prayer was for you!) Jesus says that God's Word is truth. And what does truth do for you? It makes you free (John 8:32). God's Word sets you free to live the life God planned for you. The truths of the Bible are like keys that can open up a whole new life; keys that will "unlock" problems and give you answers for anything you face in life: relationships, school, depression, confusion, guilt, stress, frustration, bad self-image, loneliness, lack of direction, apathy, boredom, you name it. The truth of God's Word can unlock a life filled with God's unlimited blessings. (See also: Ps. 119:11, 105; Prov. 30:5; Is. 40:8; John 1:1–18; 8:31, 32; 17:17; Heb. 4:12; 1 John 1:1–4.)

Words to Live By

Inspiration: The word translated in 2 Timothy 3:16 as "inspired" is the Greek word *theopneustos* (theh-op'-nyoo-stos). It is a compound word formed by combining the Greek words *theos* (God) and *pneo* (breathe). The Bible was not written through the intellect or inspiration of man; it was "God-breathed." God infused the Bible with the very breath of His life. We can trust every word in Scripture because it came directly from God.

unholy, 3unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was.

THE MAN OF GOD AND THE WORD OF GOD

10But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. 12Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them,* 15and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:8

If you don't recognize the names of Jannes and Jambres, don't be surprised. They're not mentioned in the Old Testament. According to Jewish tradition, Jannes and Jambres were the names of the Pharaoh's court magicians. When Moses was trying to persuade Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to let the Israelites go, he performed a series of miracles to demonstrate God's power. Believe it or not, Jannes and Jambres were actually able to copy some of the miracles. However, when the time came to reverse them, God's power enabled Moses, but Jannes and Jambres were powerless.

2 Timothy 3:11

If you'd like to visit the modern equivalents of Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, head for Turkey. As far as city authorities were concerned, Paul overstayed his welcome in each city he visited. When people began responding to the message Paul preached in Antioch, city officials ran him out of town. His next stop was Iconium. When the people there started converting to Christianity, Paul was forced to leave out of fear for his life. His next stop was Lystra, Timothy's hometown.

BIBLE

Why did God give us the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

PREACH THE WORD

4 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at[a] His appearing and His kingdom: 2Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

PAUL'S VALEDICTORY

6For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

THE ABANDONED APOSTLE

9Be diligent to come to me quickly; 10for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. 11Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. 12And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.

2 Timothy 4:13

New Testament documents were not written in book form; they were written on long pieces of paper or leather called scrolls. Since scrolls could be twenty-five feet long or more, people discovered that the best way to store them was to roll them around a wooden rod.

14Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. 15You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

16At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

THE LORD IS FAITHFUL

17But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be

4:1 [a]NU-Text omits *therefore* and reads *and by* for *at*.



PROFILE
TIMOTHY

Timothy was raised in a racially mixed family. His mother, who was Jewish, had taught him the Old Testament Scriptures. Because his father was a Greek, Timothy enjoyed a social position that allowed him to move freely in the Roman world. So, Timothy was well educated in the things of the world as well as the things of God.

When Paul came to Timothy's hometown, Lystra, he used the same approach that had proven effective elsewhere: he preached to those who already knew God's Word but did not know about Jesus. He challenged them to compare the claims of Jesus against the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament. Timothy took Paul up on the challenge and became convinced Jesus was Lord and Savior. Paul eventually recruited Timothy as a member of his traveling gospel team.

Timothy served Paul in various capacities: companion, scribe (or record keeper/secretary), and messenger. Although he was young and had a lot to learn, Timothy was an important part of Paul's life and a very loyal companion. For nearly two thousand years, the letters Paul wrote to Timothy have had a huge influence on our understanding of the kingdom of God.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Paul was a powerful model and mentor in Timothy's life. Paul may have even been somewhat intimidating to Timothy because he was much older and, seemingly, much more outspoken. But Paul helped Timothy become a powerful leader in the church.

Some people love the spotlight; others can't stand to be the center of attention. Although Timothy represented Paul in places like Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus, he was apparently never comfortable when all eyes (and ears) were on him. Paul constantly encouraged Timothy to rely on God for boldness.

You may never be called on to travel to distant places to tell others about Jesus, but all of us should be willing to share our faith with those who don't know the Lord. God gave Timothy the nerve to face the spotlight and not be afraid. He will also give you all you need to tell others about God's love. All you have to do is ask.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Timothy enters the Bible in Acts 16. Several of Paul's letters mention him, and two were addressed to him (1 and 2 Timothy).

Timothy trusted God to help him share the truth of Jesus and make a real difference in his world. If you ask God to give you the courage to speak out, you can, too!

preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!

COME BEFORE WINTER

19Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.

21Do your utmost to come before winter.

Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.

FAREWELL

22The Lord Jesus Christ[a] be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

4:22 [a]NU-Text omits *Jesus Christ.*

Titus

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 64
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: PAUL HELPS TITUS SET THE CHURCH AT CRETE IN ORDER
PURPOSE: GRACE CREATES BELIEVERS WHOSE GOOD WORKS HONOR GOD.

OUTLINE

1:1–4 .....Greetings and a Prayer for Titus
1:5–16 .....Instructions for Church Officials
2:1—3:11 .....Instructions for Church People
3:12–15.....Personal Advice and Final Greetings

KEY VERSE:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age (Titus 2:11, 12).

THEN ///

Do you know what a "stereotype" is? It is an assumption that is made when people in a certain group get a reputation for being a certain way. If you meet someone who is really smart, you might assume he or she will be boring or strange. Or, if you meet a girl who is a cheerleader, you might assume she'll be really energetic and a lot of fun. Those things may or may not be true, but you have fallen for a stereotype.

Titus was the young pastor of the churches on the island of Crete (south of Greece). People from Crete definitely were stereotyped. They were stereotyped as thugs and troublemakers. When most people thought about Crete, they thought of gangs and crime. If ever there was a pastor who needed and deserved a letter of instruction from the apostle Paul, it was Titus.

Titus had been one of Paul's traveling companions. On several occasions he had proven himself to be a good problem solver. Maybe that's why he was given a pastor's job in this particular place. Understandably, Paul had a lot to say to Titus about the kinds of leaders he should choose for his churches. He also wrote about civil obedience (obeying the law). Paul knew that Titus had quite a challenge before him, but he was the right man for the job.

NOW ///

Although we may not live in a place as crazy or dangerous as Crete was in Titus' day, we can still learn a lot from Paul's instructions. Just as false teachers posed problems in Titus' world, they still do today. In his letter to Titus, Paul shows us the importance of good teaching and sound doctrine to combat false teaching.

He reminds us that salvation is not based on our works, but comes from God's work of kindness and love toward us (Titus 3:4). This salvation that we gain through Christ is what frees us up to do good works we just couldn't do on our own. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to accomplish these things.

While teaching about these good works, Paul also gave Titus plenty of practical advice. He encouraged Titus to keep urging the people toward purity, service, and kindness. How would it look if those were the qualities we showed the world every day?

REALITY CHECK ///

Personal trainers are everywhere today. They're not only for celebrities anymore. As physical fitness has become more important to more people, personal trainers have become more in demand.

Paul's letter to Titus teaches us about another kind of personal training—a training in which we are all both trainers and trainees. Christians should step up to mentor and teach younger Christians. But this is not training in word only; they have to live out the things they are teaching, or their words will fall on deaf and disappointed ears. Younger Christians need to realize that they do have a lot to learn, and their mentors have a lot to teach. They should listen with open minds and eager hearts to recognize strong teaching and to decide how to apply it in their lives.

As a Christian, you will find yourself in the role of trainee and also in the role of trainer. Whichever role you're in, seek to do it with all your heart and to the best of your ability.

GREETING

1 Paul, a bondservant of God and an
apostle of Jesus Christ, according
to the faith of God's elect and the
acknowledgment of the truth which ac-
cords with godliness, 2in hope of eternal
life which God, who cannot lie, promised
before time began, 3but has in due time
manifested His word through preaching,
which was committed to me according to
the commandment of God our Savior;

4To Titus, a true son in *our* common faith:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ[a] our Savior.

1:4 [a]NU-Text reads *and Christ Jesus.*

Titus 1:5

Crete is an island in the Mediterranean Sea, southeast of Greece. Paul left Titus behind in Crete to organize the new church that Paul had started on his final missionary journey.

QUALIFIED ELDERS

5For this reason I left you in Crete, that you
should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I
commanded you— 6if a man is blameless,
the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or
insubordination. 7For a bishop[a] must be
blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to
wine, not violent, not greedy for money,
8but hospitable, a lover of what is good,
sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,
9holding fast the faithful word as he has
been taught, that he may be able, by sound
doctrine, both to exhort and convict those
who contradict.

LEADERSHIP

What are the qualities of a good leader?

Titus 1:7–9

THE ELDERS' TASK

10For there are many insubordinate, both
idle talkers and deceivers, especially those
of the circumcision, 11whose mouths must
be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought
not, for the sake of dishonest gain. 12One
of them, a prophet of their own, said,
"Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy
gluttons." 13This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be
sound in the faith, 14not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who
turn from the truth. 15To the pure all things
are pure, but to those who are defiled and
unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their
mind and conscience are defiled. 16They
profess to know God, but in works they
deny *Him,* being abominable, disobedient,
and disqualified for every good work.

QUALITIES OF A SOUND CHURCH

2 But as for you, speak the things
which are proper for sound doctrine:
2that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in
patience; 3the older women likewise, that
they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of
good things— 4that they admonish the
young women to love their husbands, to
love their children, 5*to be* discreet, chaste,
homemakers, good, obedient to their own
husbands, that the word of God may not be
blasphemed.

6Likewise, exhort the young men to
be sober-minded, 7in all things showing
yourself *to be* a pattern of good works;
in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence,
incorruptibility,[a] 8sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing
evil to say of you.[a]

9*Exhort* bondservants to be obedient to
their own masters, to be well pleasing in all
things, not answering back, 10not pilfering,
but showing all good fidelity, that they may
adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all
things.

TRAINED BY SAVING GRACE

11For the grace of God that brings salvation
has appeared to all men, 12teaching us that,
denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we
should live soberly, righteously, and godly
in the present age, 13looking for the blessed
hope and glorious appearing of our great
God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14who gave
Himself for us, that He might redeem us
from every lawless deed and purify for
Himself *His* own special people, zealous for
good works.

15Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke
with all authority. Let no one despise you.

GRACES OF THE HEIRS OF GRACE

3 Remind them to be subject to rulers
and authorities, to obey, to be ready
for every good work, 2to speak evil of
no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all
humility to all men. 3For we ourselves were

1:7 [a]Literally *overseer* **2:7** [a]NU-Text omits *incorruptibility.* **2:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *us.*



PROFILE
TITUS

For one who made such a difference, Titus is, in large part, a mystery to us. He was a Greek believer in Jesus who joined Paul's traveling band of gospel messengers. His effectiveness as a representative of Paul is evident from the way the apostle trusted Titus with difficult and important tasks. Titus served as Paul's example of what God could do in the life of a non-Jewish person. When the Jerusalem church debated whether Gentiles (non-Jews) could be called true followers of Jesus without first becoming Jewish converts, Paul presented Titus as proof of Gentile believers.

Titus' faith in Jesus was undeniable. His character paved the way for other Gentiles to enter the church. The gospel was emphasized as a universal invitation based partly on people like Titus in the early church.

Like Timothy, Titus served Paul in official capacities. He was involved in his most difficult assignment, on the island of Crete, when Paul wrote him the letter that bears his name.

Titus reminds us that the gospel and the work of the church must be intentionally passed from one generation to another. The process isn't automatic. It is both spiritual and relational. Those who are further along must take responsibility for those who are just beginning. Titus received the torch of the gospel and passed it on faithfully.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Few believers are too young to begin thinking of those who are younger. Teen believers can have a powerful influence on their peers and on younger children. Kids will often listen more attentively to a teenager share his or her faith than they will to an adult. Those who are younger offer you opportunities right now to make a difference for Christ. Have you helped with or led a children's Sunday School class? Explore other possibilities with your pastor.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Outside the letter that bears his name, Titus is mentioned in the following places: 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:6–16; 8:6, 16–24; 12:18; Galatians 2:1–5; and 2 Timothy 4:10.

Others came to the Lord because Titus lived what he believed. His faith made a difference in his world. Yours can, too!

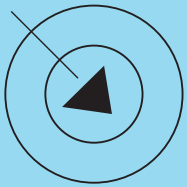
also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should

ETERNAL LIFE

What is a Christian's greatest hope?

Titus 3:7



PROMISE

God promises to purify you.

[Jesus Christ] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works (Titus 2:14).

Sometimes people think God's grace is nothing more than the forgiveness of sins. It would be enough if that was all there was to it—just the forgiveness of every sin in your whole life, even the ones you won't commit for another twenty or thirty years.

But God knows you need more than just a clean slate to become all He wants you to be. You also need a heart that's tender toward Him, a mind that can be molded to think like His, and a soul that yields its will to the wishes of His Spirit.

This verse tells you that Jesus "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us . . . and purify for Himself His own special people." You're one of His people and special in His sight. And He wants to help you become all you can be. He wants you to learn all it means to be a part of His kingdom and how to live a life that pleases God. To do that, He will allow you to learn to make choices that are good in God's sight—He will give you chances to stand up against temptation and choose to do the right thing. But He doesn't expect you to stand all alone. Jesus will always be with you and His Holy Spirit will always guide you to make right choices if you will listen. Read your Bible, pray for God's help, and when temptation comes, you'll be ready to see it for what it is and turn away.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 51:10; Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:22

be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

Titus 3:9

Paul's reference to genealogies has to do with the obsession of some Jewish leaders with being able to trace their family tree all the way back to Abraham. Knowing the name of one's great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather was very important to some people in New Testament times.

AVOID DISSENSION

9But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. 10Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, 11knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

FINAL MESSAGES

12When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. 14And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

FAREWELL

15All who *are* with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

Philemon

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 60
AUTHOR: PAUL
THEME: BROTHERLY LOVE GOES BEYOND CLASS OR STATION
PURPOSE: COMING TO KNOW CHRIST TRANSFORMS INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.

OUTLINE

1–3.....Greetings to Philemon
4–22 .....Paul's Appeal to Philemon About Onesimus
23–25.....Final Greetings and a Prayer

KEY VERSE:

No longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If then you count me as a partner, receive him as you would me (Philemon 16, 17).

THEN ///

If you haven't had to ask for a reference letter yet, you probably will one day. A reference letter is a formal note from someone who knows you that tells others your good qualities and characteristics. You might use a reference letter to get a job, to get into a school, or to enter an extracurricular program. But somewhere along the way you're going to have to ask someone to give you a good reference so others can know what kind of person you are.

Philemon is a reference letter written by Paul for a slave named Onesimus (o-NES-i-muss). In those days, people who were broke or bankrupt had the option of "selling" themselves as servants or slaves; they made a bargain with a creditor to work off their debt. That way they could get work experience and pay the person they owed. Usually, at some point in time, they could then choose either to remain servants or move on as free persons.

Onesimus was a slave, but he had run away and so had not kept up his end of the bargain. But after he ran off, Onesimus met Paul and became a Christian. He knew he needed to go back and finish paying his debt. In order to pave the way for him, Paul wrote this letter asking Philemon (the owner) to forgive Onesimus and to accept him back into Philemon's home.

NOW ///

How would you feel if you were Philemon and got this letter from Paul?

From Philemon's perspective he had the right to be angry. His servant had run off and had taken money, too. When Paul wrote this letter asking Philemon to forgive, he wasn't just asking Philemon to do what Philemon already knew he should do. Paul was asking Philemon to do something that was totally unexpected. That's hard to take sometimes. When people wrong us or let us down, we want them to pay the price for what they did. And sometimes, people should be held accountable and suffer the consequences of their wrong choices. But sometimes God calls us to lay down our rights, to give the person who wronged us a very undeserved break. Is it so amazing God would ask this of us? After all, He only asks that we do for others what He has done for us—forgive and let it go.

REALITY CHECK ///

We've considered things from Philemon's perspective, but how hard do you think it was for Onesimus to return to the scene of his crime? How hard do you think it was for him to face the man he had robbed and abandoned? How much courage do you think it took for him to travel back to the captivity he had known? It probably took a lot out of him, but he did it because his life had changed. He had put his faith in God. He had accepted God's forgiveness. That meant he couldn't live the same as he had before. Things had to change. The first change was facing up to some consequences. Sometimes we have done things that are wrong, maybe we've even hurt someone. When that happens, we must also return to the "scene of our crime." We must go to those we have hurt or wronged and ask them to forgive us. It's difficult and it can even be frightening; but we must be willing to face our failures and, just like Onesimus, do everything we can to make them right.

GREETING

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy *our* brother,

To Philemon our beloved *friend* and
fellow laborer, 2to the beloved[a] Apphia,
Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the
church in your house:

3Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

PHILEMON'S LOVE AND FAITH

4I thank my God, making mention of you
always in my prayers, 5hearing of your
love and faith which you have toward the
Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, 6that
the sharing of your faith may become
effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you[a] in Christ

2 [a]NU-Text reads *to our sister Apphia.*



PROFILE
ONESIMUS

God often makes a difference through unexpected people. Onesimus was a runaway slave. He and the apostle Paul found each other in Rome. Perhaps they had met previously in the house of Philemon in Colosse when Paul had visited. But this time, Onesimus himself became a believer in Jesus.

Eventually Paul and Onesimus decided the slave must return to his master. Paul's letter to Philemon included the apostle's effort to reintroduce the former runaway to his master as a fellow believer. In an almost humorous way, Paul was certain that Philemon would give Onesimus a good welcome.

Through Onesimus' experience, we are reminded that we cannot run away from God. Onesimus' experience also reminds us that when we run away from problems, God often works things out so that we have to return to the scene of our departure as part of our training. So Onesimus went home. It is possible that Onesimus eventually became a leader of the church in Colosse. But he didn't make a difference by running away. It wasn't until he met Christ and then returned home that he was in a position to be truly "useful," which is what his name means.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

If one of your problem-solving approaches is to run away, you can learn a lot from Onesimus. His escape was only temporary. In the meantime, God did reach and change him. God can certainly make that kind of difference in your life.

Perhaps you can think of places and people from which you have run. Are there broken relationships and situations in your life that still need to be resolved? God wants to help. Other believers can help, too. Ask God to lead you to a Paul who can give you wisdom and who can run interference during your return.

? WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Onesimus is mentioned briefly in Colossians 4:9 and several times in Philemon.

Though Onesimus made some mistakes in his life, he allowed the Lord to change him and give him a new start. His decision to stop running and stand strong with the Lord made a difference in his life and in the lives of others. If you follow his example, you can make a difference, too!

Jesus. 7For we have[a] great joy[b] and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

THE PLEA FOR ONESIMUS

8Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, 9*yet* for love's sake I rather appeal *to you*—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ— 10I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten *while* in my chains, 11who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.

12I am sending him back.[a] You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart, 13whom I wished to keep with me, that on

6 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *us.* **7** [a]NU-Text reads *had.* [b]M-Text reads *thanksgiving.*
12 [a]NU-Text reads *back to you in person, that is, my own heart.*

Philemon 2

Home Bible studies are nothing new. In fact, people met together in their houses to read Scripture and pray long before there were any churches. Church buildings as we know them today—places set aside specifically for Christian worship and Bible study—were not common until the third century. So when you see the word *church* in the Bible, it's referring to a group of Christ's followers in a certain area.

Philemon 10

Onesimus was living dangerously when he ran away from Philemon, his master. In the Roman Empire, slaves were considered to be nothing more than property. They were bought, sold, and used as their masters saw fit. The punishment for a runaway slave was a severe beating or, in some cases, crucifixion.

your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel. 14But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.

15For perhaps he departed for a while for this *purpose,* that you might receive him forever, 16no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

PHILEMON'S OBEDIENCE ENCOURAGED

17If then you count me as a partner, receive him as *you would* me. 18But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. 19I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides. 20Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord.

21Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. 22But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.

FAREWELL

23Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, 24*as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

25The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

Hebrews

DATE OF WRITING: BEFORE A.D. 64
AUTHOR: UNCERTAIN
THEME: JESUS CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT
PURPOSE: JESUS PROVIDES ALL WE NEED FOR A VITAL PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

OUTLINE

1:1–4 .....The Greatness of God's Son
1:5—2:18 .....Jesus Is Greater Than Angels
3:1—4:13 .....Jesus Is Greater Than Moses and Joshua
4:14—7:28 .....Jesus Is Our Great High Priest
8:1—9:22 .....Jesus Brings a Better Covenant
9:23—10:39 .....Jesus' Sacrifice Is Once and for All
11:1–40 .....Some of God's People Who Had Great Faith
12:1—13:17 .....Follow the Example of Jesus
13:18–25 .....Final Prayers and Greetings

KEY VERSE:

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1).

THEN ///

Have you ever read Cliffs Notes? They are small paperback books that tell you, in shortened form, the story of famous classics (like Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*). They help you understand the highlights of the plot and the significance of the different story lines. Cliffs Notes were not meant to be substituted for reading the classic; they are meant to supplement it. Hebrews is like Cliffs Notes for the whole Bible. The writer of Hebrews walked back through the whole history of the Hebrews starting with their earliest and most famous ancestors, Abraham and Moses.

The Hebrews were a people with a strong, *strong* sense of tradition. To say that they thought highly of their ancestors is putting it mildly. The whole point of walking back through this history in the Book of Hebrews was to point out that Jesus was greater than any of their ancestors. Now if you were to say to a Hebrew that someone was greater than Moses, you would be making a bold statement—a statement worth fighting over—so you'd better be sure. The writer of Hebrews was sure. He was trying to convince his Hebrew readers that Jesus was, indeed, the Messiah who all their ancestors had pointed them toward.

NOW ///

The Hebrews, being so strong in tradition, relied heavily on the law they had received. Then Jesus came—the Messiah who fulfilled everything their ancestors had foretold. Jesus told people they needed to love God with everything they had and to love each other. Period. Life wasn't about every minute detail of the law anymore. This didn't feel good to the Hebrews. How would they know if they were living a good life if they didn't have the specifics of the law to show them when they messed up? They had put their faith in the law to make them righteous. Now they needed to put their faith in Jesus and *He* would make them righteous.

This is still true for us. Living good lives is not something we do in an attempt to earn our salvation. Rather, we live righteously out of love, in response and obedience to Jesus Christ because of His great love and sacrifice for us.

REALITY CHECK ///

The writer of Hebrews talks a lot about the law the Hebrews had lived by. Let's look at it a little more closely.

As humans will do, the Hebrews had analyzed the laws until they had expanded them to include every possible scenario. For instance, if the law said that you weren't supposed to work on the Sabbath, the Hebrews wrote laws explaining what "work" actually was and when the "Sabbath" actually was; they actually went so far as to decide how many steps you could take before it was considered "work." You can imagine that things got a little confusing.

We can confuse ourselves sometimes, too, by getting caught up in a list of things we shouldn't do. We can also get all tied up trying to live out a list of things we should do. It's right that there are things we should not do and other things we should, but doing or not doing can't earn us salvation. Jesus is the only way to salvation. Just like the Christians who received the letter to the Hebrews, we need to understand that we should live righteously not to earn salvation but because Jesus has already provided it for us.

GOD'S SUPREME REVELATION

1 God, who at various times and in
various ways spoke in time past to
the fathers by the prophets, 2has in
these last days spoken to us by *His* Son,
whom He has appointed heir of all things,
through whom also He made the worlds;
3who being the brightness of *His* glory
and the express image of His person, and
upholding all things by the word of His
power, when He had by Himself[a] purged
our[b] sins, sat down at the right hand of the
Majesty on high, 4having become so much
better than the angels, as He has by in-
heritance obtained a more excellent name
than they.

1:3 [a]NU-Text omits *by Himself.* [b]NU-Text omits *our.*

THE SON EXALTED ABOVE ANGELS

5For to which of the angels did He ever say:

"You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You"?[a]

And again:

"I will be to Him a Father,
And He shall be to Me a Son"?[b]

6But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says:

"Let all the angels of God worship Him."[a]

7And of the angels He says:

"Who makes His angels spirits
And His ministers a flame of fire."[a]

8But to the Son *He says:*

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.
9 *You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;*
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."[a]

10And:

"You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.
11 *They will perish, but You remain;*
And they will all grow old like a garment;
12 *Like a cloak You will fold them up,*
And they will be changed.
But You are the same,
And Your years will not fail."[a]

13But to which of the angels has He ever said:

"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"?[a]

14Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

ANGELS
How do angels help Christians?
Hebrews 1:14

DO NOT NEGLECT SALVATION

2 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him,* 4God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

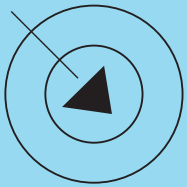
THE SON MADE LOWER THAN ANGELS

5For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. 6But one testified in a certain place, saying:

"What is man that You are mindful of him,
Or the son of man that You take care of him?
7 *You have made him a little lower than the angels;*
You have crowned him with glory and honor,[a]
And set him over the works of Your hands.
8 *You have put all things in subjection under his feet."*[a]

For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things

1:5 [a]Psalm 2:7 [b]2 Samuel 7:14
1:6 [a]Deuteronomy 32:43 (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scrolls); Psalm 97:7 **1:7** [a]Psalm 104:4
1:9 [a]Psalm 45:6, 7 **1:12** [a]Psalm 102:25–27
1:13 [a]Psalm 110:1 **2:7** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the rest of verse 7. **2:8** [a]Psalm 8:4–6



PROMISE

God promises to aid you when you are tempted.

For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted (Heb. 2:18).

It's not unusual to hear someone excuse personal faults by saying, "Well, that's just the way I am"—as if it would be unfair to expect anything better out of him or her. It's true that everyone has flaws and is susceptible to certain temptations. Some people have a hard time being nice when things aren't going well for them; some people are tempted to cheat because they're so driven to make a good grade; some people try to escape their problems through the abuse of alcohol or drugs. That's just the way they are.

But Jesus never said that it was okay to do wrong because you have a weakness. He taught that you should do the right thing anyway. He wasn't being heartless. He wasn't looking down from some ivory tower shouting, "You must resist temptation!" When He lived on the earth as a man, Jesus was flesh and blood, just like you. He knows what it is like to be tempted. He isn't leaving you to overcome your weaknesses all by yourself. He's right there with you, giving you the courage to make the right choice. He's saying, "You can do it!" He's God. He's given you the strength to overcome any weakness or temptation, and He knows you can!

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Romans 8:37; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 4:15, 16

put under him. 9But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY

10For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12saying:

> *"I will declare Your name to My brethren;*
> *In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."*[a]

13And again:

> *"I will put My trust in Him."*[a]

And again:

> *"Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."*[b]

14Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18For in that He Himself

Hebrews 2:17

Before Jesus' death on the Cross which paid the penalty for sin for all time, the high priest was responsible for offering a yearly sacrifice that provided forgiveness for the Israelites' sins. The blood of the sacrifice was the payment necessary for all of the sins the people had committed in the previous year.

2:12 [a]Psalm 22:22 **2:13** [a]2 Samuel 22:3; Isaiah 8:17 [b]Isaiah 8:18

has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

THE SON WAS FAITHFUL

3 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also *was faithful* in all His house. 3For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things *is* God. 5And Moses indeed *was* faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken *afterward,* 6but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.[a]

BE FAITHFUL

7Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,
8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
In the day of trial in the wilderness,
9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,
And saw My works forty years.
10 Therefore I was angry with that generation,
And said, 'They always go astray in their heart,
And they have not known My ways.'
11 So I swore in My wrath,
'They shall not enter My rest.'"[a]

12Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13but exhort one another daily, while it is called *"Today,"* lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15while it is said:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."[a]

Hebrews 3:14

Though there is no address on the letter, the Book of Hebrews was apparently written to Jewish Christians who were being persecuted by the Roman Empire for their beliefs. Here's the problem they faced. As Jews, they had been safe, since Judaism was recognized by the empire as a legitimate religion and was therefore protected under the law. When those Jews became Christians, however, they put themselves in danger. Christianity was not a recognized religion. As a result, new Christians faced harassment not only from Rome, but also from other Jews who were upset with them for leaving the Jewish faith. Apparently, some Jewish Christians were frightened enough to consider leaving their Christian faith and returning to Judaism.

FAILURE OF THE WILDERNESS WANDERERS

16For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? 17Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

THE PROMISE OF REST

4 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them,[a] not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it.* 3For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:

3:6 [a]NU-Text omits *firm to the end.* **3:11** [a]Psalm 95:7–11 **3:15** [a]Psalm 95:7, 8 **4:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *profit them, since they were not united by faith with those who heeded it.*

"So I swore in My wrath,
'They shall not enter My rest,'"[a]

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. [4]For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh *day* in this way: *"And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"*;[a] [5]and again in this *place: "They shall not enter My rest."*[a]

[6]Since therefore it remains that some *must* enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, [7]again He designates a certain day, saying in David, *"Today,"* after such a long time, as it has been said:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts."[a]

[8]For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. [9]There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. [10]For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His.

Hebrews 4:8

When Moses died, he left some pretty big sandals to fill. After all, he had led the Israelites out of Egypt and through the wilderness for almost forty years. Joshua was the man God chose to succeed Moses. As Israel's spiritual and military leader, Joshua marched the people into the land God had promised them and directed them in the wars they fought against the enemies of God. The Israelites spent years in battle with various tribes throughout their Promised Land.

THE WORD DISCOVERS OUR CONDITION

[11]Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. [12]For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. [13]And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

OUR COMPASSIONATE HIGH PRIEST

[14]Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. [15]For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are, yet* without sin. [16]Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

JESUS
Has Jesus ever sinned?
Hebrews 4:15

QUALIFICATIONS FOR HIGH PRIESTHOOD

5 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. [2]He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. [3]Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer *sacrifices* for sins. [4]And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron *was.*

A PRIEST FOREVER

[5]So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but *it was* He who said to Him:

"You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You."[a]

[6]As *He* also *says* in another *place:*

"You are a priest forever
According to the order of
Melchizedek";[a]

[7]who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications,

4:3 [a]Psalm 95:11 **4:4** [a]Genesis 2:2 **4:5** [a]Psalm 95:11 **4:7** [a]Psalm 95:7, 8 **5:5** [a]Psalm 2:7 **5:6** [a]Psalm 110:4

with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, 10called by God as High Priest *"according to the order of Melchizedek,"* 11of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY

12For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is,* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

THE PERIL OF NOT PROGRESSING

6 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3And this we will[a] do if God permits.

4For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6if they fall away,[a] to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.

7For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; 8but if it bears thorns and briers, *it is* rejected and near to being cursed, whose end *is* to be burned.

A BETTER ESTIMATE

9But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of[a] love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

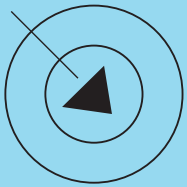
GOD'S INFALLIBLE PURPOSE IN CHRIST

13For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14saying, *"Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you."*[a] 15And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute. 17Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His

Hebrews 6:18

In ancient times, six towns in Israel were set aside as "cities of refuge." In order to understand the purpose of cities of refuge, you have to understand the law of the land in Old Testament times. "An eye for an eye" was the rule of the day. If a person killed someone else—even accidentally—legally, he himself could be killed in retaliation. That's why cities of refuge were important. If a person *accidentally* killed another person, he could run to the nearest city of refuge to escape vengeance-seeking family members of the person he killed. Once a person reached a city of refuge, safety was assured until a fair trial could be conducted. If the killing was found to be accidental, the person on trial was allowed to live in the city of refuge with full protection from those who wanted to kill him.

6:3 [a]M-Text reads *let us do.* **6:6** [a]Or *and have fallen away* **6:10** [a]NU-Text omits *labor of.* **6:14** [a]Genesis 22:17



PROMISE

God promises to tell the truth.

Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us (Heb. 6:17, 18).

Do you ever doubt God? Maybe you don't doubt that He exists, but do you suspect that He's not really going to show up when you need Him the most? Is it a challenge to have hope when you think of the obstacles you're facing?

Hebrews says that the hope of Christ is right in front of you—"the hope set before us." You are holding a record of the promises God has made to you—the Bible. God always tells the truth and He always keeps His promises. His vows have never changed and they never will. You can trust God because He never lies. You don't have to worry about Him not showing up; He said He would always be with you (Matt. 28:20).

Make up your mind to believe God and trust His Word. Until you've made that commitment, you'll constantly struggle with doubt, never sure what you believe and always wondering if God will do what He said. The truth of God's Word can replace your doubt. John 8:32 says, "The truth shall make you free." So immerse yourself in these pages. Commit to do more than just slide your eyes over the words. Really concentrate and study the Bible prayerfully. Read about how God has kept His promises. Read about the incredibly deep and powerful love He has for you. Read about His longing to know you and to be with you forever. Get these words into your heart and into your mind. Be freed from your doubt and let it be replaced with the certainty of God and of His truth.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// John 1:14; 8:32; 14:6, 17; 2 Timothy 3:15–17



counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, 18that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might[a] have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us.*

19This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the *Presence* behind the veil, 20where the forerunner has entered for us, *even* Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

THE KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

7 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," 3without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

4Now consider how great this man *was,* to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. 5And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; 6but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. 8Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he *receives them,* of whom it is witnessed that he lives. 9Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, 10for

6:18 [a]M-Text omits *might.*

MAKING IT REAL // HEBREWS 7:26

Jesus, Our High Priest Jesus, the most honored Person in heaven. He is honored because of His perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection. He is honored because He became the sacrifice that saves us forever. He is holy and innocent.

In a time when people are worshiping and honoring angels, the earth, and all kinds of spirits, it's important to remember that Jesus is honored above everything else. All the heavenly beings are praising and worshiping God, thanking Him for His Son, Jesus. Only Jesus offers salvation. Only Jesus made it possible for people to know God and His salvation. That's why He's honored above heavenly beings.

Yet, with all the honor and glory that Jesus deserves, He does not spend His time in heaven just enjoying the worship of the heavenly beings. The Bible tells us that Jesus is sitting next to God telling Him about the difficulties and weaknesses we need His help to handle (Rom. 8:34). Jesus, the King of heaven, actually prays for us! He feels our hurts and pain and knows our needs. He talks to God for us. Right now, at this very moment, Jesus is talking to God about you!

Does Jesus have a place of honor in your life? Give Him the glory He deserves. Thank Him for the unending mercy and compassion He gives you day after day. Thank Him for giving His life for you. Worship Him with your day. Honor Him with your life. (See also: John 3:31; Eph. 1:19–23; Heb. 1.)

Words to Live By

High Priest: In Old Testament times, the only way to God was to follow the rules God gave His people. But sin kept people from being able to do everything the way God commands. So, once a year, the High Priest (the spiritual leader of the people) offered a sacrifice to God—an animal was killed to signify that the sins of the people were forgiven for a period of one year. When Jesus gave His life on the cross, He became the eternal sacrifice and, through accepting His death on our behalf, we can be cleansed of our sin forever. Jesus is the eternal High Priest of His people. (See Making It Real at Heb. 10:19, 20.)

he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

NEED FOR A NEW PRIESTHOOD

11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

14 For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.[a] 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. 17 For He testifies:[a]

> *"You are a priest forever*
> *According to the order of*
> *Melchizedek."*[b]

18 For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, 19 for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

7:14 [a]NU-Text reads *priests.* **7:17** [a]NU-Text reads *it is testified.* [b]Psalm 110:4

GREATNESS OF THE NEW PRIEST

20And inasmuch as *He was* not *made priest*
without an oath 21(for they have become
priests without an oath, but He with an
oath by Him who said to Him:

> *"The LORD has sworn*
> *And will not relent,*
> *'You are a priest forever*[a]
> *According to the order of*
> *Melchizedek'"*),[b]

22by so much more Jesus has become a
surety of a better covenant.

23Also there were many priests, because
they were prevented by death from con-
tinuing. 24But He, because He continues
forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.
25Therefore He is also able to save to the
uttermost those who come to God through
Him, since He always lives to make inter-
cession for them.

26For such a High Priest was fitting for
us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, sepa-
rate from sinners, and has become higher
than the heavens; 27who does not need
daily, as those high priests, to offer up sac-
rifices, first for His own sins and then for
the people's, for this He did once for all
when He offered up Himself. 28For the law
appoints as high priests men who have
weakness, but the word of the oath, which
came after the law, *appoints* the Son who
has been perfected forever.

THE NEW PRIESTLY SERVICE

8 Now *this is* the main point of the
things we are saying: We have such
a High Priest, who is seated at the
right hand of the throne of the Majesty in
the heavens, 2a Minister of the sanctuary
and of the true tabernacle which the Lord
erected, and not man.

3For every high priest is appointed to
offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore *it
is* necessary that this One also have some-
thing to offer. 4For if He were on earth,
He would not be a priest, since there are
priests who offer the gifts according to the
law; 5who serve the copy and shadow of
the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely
instructed when he was about to make
the tabernacle. For He said, *"See that you
make all things according to the pattern
shown you on the mountain."*[a] 6But now
He has obtained a more excellent ministry,
inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better
covenant, which was established on better
promises.

A NEW COVENANT

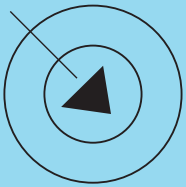
7For if that first *covenant* had been fault-
less, then no place would have been
sought for a second. 8Because finding fault
with them, He says: *"Behold, the days are
coming, says the LORD, when I will make
a new covenant with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah— 9not ac-
cording to the covenant that I made with
their fathers in the day when I took them
by the hand to lead them out of the land
of Egypt; because they did not continue
in My covenant, and I disregarded them,
says the LORD. 10For this is the covenant
that I will make with the house of Israel
after those days, says the LORD: I will put
My laws in their mind and write them on
their hearts; and I will be their God, and
they shall be My people. 11None of them
shall teach his neighbor, and none his
brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all
shall know Me, from the least of them to
the greatest of them. 12For I will be mer-
ciful to their unrighteousness, and their
sins and their lawless deeds*[a] *I will re-
member no more."*[b]

13In that He says, "*A new covenant*," He
has made the first obsolete. Now what
is becoming obsolete and growing old is
ready to vanish away.

THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY

9 Then indeed, even the first *covenant*
had ordinances of divine service
and the earthly sanctuary. 2For a
tabernacle was prepared: the first *part,* in
which *was* the lampstand, the table, and
the showbread, which is called the sanctu-
ary; 3and behind the second veil, the part of
the tabernacle which is called the Holiest
of All, 4which had the golden censer and
the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides
with gold, in which *were* the golden pot
that had the manna, Aaron's rod that bud-
ded, and the tablets of the covenant; 5and

7:21 [a]NU-Text ends the quotation here. [b]Psalm 110:4 **8:5** [a]Exodus 25:40 **8:12** [a]NU-Text omits *and their lawless deeds.* [b]Jeremiah 31:31–34



PROMISE

God promises you better things.

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises (Heb. 8:6).

Before Jesus came to Earth, God's people were bound to Him through a covenant, or a binding promise. Because of their sin, they could not directly approach their most holy God. They had to make animal sacrifices for their sins through a priest (a mediator between the people and God), so that they could worship Him.

Because of Jesus, we live under a new covenant. Thanks to His once-for-all sacrifice for our sins, we can now have a personal relationship with God. The old covenant looked forward to this new and better covenant, which includes the promise that, through the Messiah (Jesus Christ), we will belong to the Lord forever and He will belong to us as our God (Jer. 31:31–34).

The new covenant also promises forgiveness for the sins of those who trust in Christ. Not only was Jesus the sacrifice in this new covenant, He is also our new High Priest. Only through Him can we approach God the father directly. Because of Christ, we can pray and fellowship personally with the Lord. We can ask for the forgiveness of our sins. We can sense His leading and compassion in our lives because the Holy Spirit now lives inside of us.

God has promised us better things. He's given us the best gift—a personal relationship with Him—through the work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Jeremiah 31:31–34; Hebrews 7:22

above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

LIMITATIONS OF THE EARTHLY SERVICE

6 Now when these things had been thus
prepared, the priests always went into the
first part of the tabernacle, performing the
services. 7 But into the second part the high
priest *went* alone once a year, not without
blood, which he offered for himself and
for the people's sins *committed* in igno-
rance; 8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that
the way into the Holiest of All was not yet
made manifest while the first tabernacle
was still standing. 9 It *was* symbolic for the
present time in which both gifts and sac-
rifices are offered which cannot make him
who performed the service perfect in re-
gard to the conscience— 10 *concerned* only
with foods and drinks, various washings,
and fleshly ordinances imposed until the
time of reformation.

THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

11 But Christ came *as* High Priest of the
good things to come,[a] with the greater and
more perfect tabernacle not made with
hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not
with the blood of goats and calves, but
with His own blood He entered the Most
Holy Place once for all, having obtained
eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of
bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer,
sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the
purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more
shall the blood of Christ, who through
the eternal Spirit offered Himself with-
out spot to God, cleanse your conscience
from dead works to serve the living God?
15 And for this reason He is the Mediator
of the new covenant, by means of death,
for the redemption of the transgressions
under the first covenant, that those who
are called may receive the promise of the
eternal inheritance.

9:11 [a]NU-Text reads *that have come.*

THE MEDIATOR'S DEATH NECESSARY

16For where there *is* a testament, there
must also of necessity be the death of the
testator. 17For a testament *is* in force af-
ter men are dead, since it has no power
at all while the testator lives. 18Therefore
not even the first *covenant* was dedicated
without blood. 19For when Moses had
spoken every precept to all the people
according to the law, he took the blood
of calves and goats, with water, scarlet
wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the
book itself and all the people, 20saying,
*"This is the blood of the covenant which
God has commanded you."*[a] 21Then like-
wise he sprinkled with blood both the
tabernacle and all the vessels of the min-
istry. 22And according to the law almost
all things are purified with blood, and
without shedding of blood there is no
remission.

GREATNESS OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

23Therefore *it was* necessary that the cop-
ies of the things in the heavens should be
purified with these, but the heavenly things
themselves with better sacrifices than
these. 24For Christ has not entered the holy
places made with hands, *which are* copies
of the true, but into heaven itself, now to
appear in the presence of God for us; 25not
that He should offer Himself often, as the
high priest enters the Most Holy Place ev-
ery year with blood of another— 26He then
would have had to suffer often since the
foundation of the world; but now, once at
the end of the ages, He has appeared to put
away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27And
as it is appointed for men to die once, but
after this the judgment, 28so Christ was
offered once to bear the sins of many. To
those who eagerly wait for Him He will
appear a second time, apart from sin, for
salvation.

DEATH
Why should Christians not fear death?
Hebrews 9:27, 28

ANIMAL SACRIFICES INSUFFICIENT

10 For the law, having a shadow
of the good things to come,
and not the very image of the
things, can never with these same sacri-
fices, which they offer continually year by
year, make those who approach perfect.
2For then would they not have ceased to
be offered? For the worshipers, once puri-
fied, would have had no more conscious-
ness of sins. 3But in those *sacrifices there is*
a reminder of sins every year. 4For *it is* not
possible that the blood of bulls and goats
could take away sins.

CHRIST'S DEATH FULFILLS GOD'S WILL

5Therefore, when He came into the world,
He said:

*"Sacrifice and offering You did not
desire,
But a body You have prepared for Me.*
6*In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin
You had no pleasure.*
7*Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—
In the volume of the book it is written
of Me—
To do Your will, O God.'"*[a]

8Previously saying, *"Sacrifice and offering,
burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You
did not desire, nor had pleasure in them"*
(which are offered according to the law),
9then He said, *"Behold, I have come to do
Your will, O God."*[a] He takes away the first
that He may establish the second. 10By
that will we have been sanctified through
the offering of the body of Jesus Christ
once *for all.*

CHRIST'S DEATH PERFECTS THE SANCTIFIED

11And every priest stands ministering daily
and offering repeatedly the same sacri-
fices, which can never take away sins. 12But
this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice
for sins forever, sat down at the right hand
of God, 13from that time waiting till His
enemies are made His footstool. 14For by

9:20 [a]Exodus 24:8 **10:7** [a]Psalm 40:6–8
10:9 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *O God.*

MAKING IT REAL // HEBREWS 10:19, 20

In the Presence of God The place of worship the Israelites built had a special room called the Most Holy Place (or the Holiest of All, Heb. 9:8). The door of this room was covered by a thick, heavy curtain because God's presence lived in the room. Because the presence of the Lord is so awesome, the people had to be separated from it. They were sinful and sin cannot stand in the presence of God's love and holiness. Only the high priest could go through the curtain, and he could do it only once a year. At that time, the high priest sacrificed an animal for the sins of the whole nation. The blood of the sacrifice took away the people's sins for the next year (Leviticus 16).

At the moment Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in front of the Most Holy Place was torn from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51). God's presence is no longer hidden from us! It's like God had been sitting behind a locked door for years and years; and only the high priest had the key. Then Jesus came along and unlocked that door for everyone. His blood takes away the sins of everyone who trusts in Him. Now He's the High Priest.

Because of Jesus' death—because the curtain is torn—you can go into the place where God is. You don't need another person as a go-between. You don't have to go to a temple. And you don't have to make another sacrifice next year. Jesus made it possible for you to go into God's presence—personally, freely, as often as you want. (See also: 2 Cor. 3:4; Col. 1:21–23; Heb. 6:19.)

Words to Live By

Boldness: The word translated as "boldness" in Hebrews 10:19 is the Greek word *parrhesia* (par-rhay-see'-ah). It means "freedom to speak honestly and openly." It also means "to be free from fear and filled with confidence." Because of Jesus, we are always welcome in God's presence, and He wants us to share our deepest thoughts and feelings with Him.

one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

15 But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us;
for after He had said before,

16 *"This is the covenant that I will make*
with them after those days, says the LORD:
I will put My laws into their hearts, and in
their minds I will write them,"[a]
17 *then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds*
I will remember no more."[a]
18 Now where there is remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin.

Hebrews 10:19, 20

The "Holiest" in the tabernacle, the place only the high priest was allowed to enter, was separated from the rest of the tabernacle by an embroidered curtain or veil.

HOLD FAST YOUR CONFESSION

19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness
to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,
20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His
flesh, 21 and *having* a High Priest over the
house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true
heart in full assurance of faith, having our
hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience
and our bodies washed with pure water.
23 Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope
without wavering, for He who promised *is*
faithful. 24 And let us consider one another
in order to stir up love and good works,
25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves
together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another,* and so much the more
as you see the Day approaching.

10:16 [a]Jeremiah 31:33 **10:17** [a]Jeremiah 31:34



LIFE APP

Church / Hebrews 10:24, 25

Have you ever heard someone claim Christians are hypocrites? They look at our lives and see us still making wrong choices and don't understand what makes us different. They mistakenly think we simply consider ourselves better than others.

In reality, Christians aren't any better than anyone else. We still do things that displease God and hurt others. The only difference between us and non-Christians is that we know Jesus and were born into God's kingdom when we accepted Him as our Savior. We realize that, because of Him and His sacrifice on our behalf, we can receive God's forgiveness when we sin. Christians aren't perfect, we just know the One who is and we rely on Him to teach us and correct us.

When you become a Christian, you begin a process of being changed. It's as though you start out as a baby Christian and you have to be trained to know how to live your new life. Just like a baby needs to learn to walk and talk, you need to learn how to live your life in ways that please God—how to walk out your faith and speak words of life and truth to others. Babies have to learn to feed themselves; as a new Christian, you have to learn the importance of reading the Bible and feeding yourself the truth of God's Word.

Just like babies need to be cared for by someone older and wiser, Christians also need people in their lives who know more about the Lord and a life of faith. No matter how long you have been a Christian, there are people who have known the Lord longer and have learned more about how to serve Him.

The purpose of the church is to provide a place where Christians can meet together and help each other grow. It's not a gathering of perfect people; it's a meeting of forgiven people who desire to learn to live a life of love and service toward each other and the Lord.

THE JUST LIVE BY FAITH

[26]For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, [27]but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. [28]Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses. [29]Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? [30]For we know Him who said, *"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,"*[a] says the Lord.[b] And again, *"The LORD will judge His people."*[c] [31]It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

[32]But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: [33]partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; [34]for you had compassion on me[a] in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.[b] [35]Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. [36]For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

[37] *"For yet a little while,*
And He[a] *who is coming will come and*
will not tarry.
[38] *Now the*[a] *just shall live by faith;*
But if anyone draws back,
My soul has no pleasure in him."[b]

[39]But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

FAITH
What is the definition of faith?
Hebrews 11:1

BY FAITH WE UNDERSTAND

11 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. [2]For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony.

[3]By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

FAITH AT THE DAWN OF HISTORY

[4]By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

[5]By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, *"and was not found, because God had taken him"*;[a] for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. [6]But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him,* for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

[7]By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

FAITHFUL ABRAHAM

[8]By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. [9]By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; [10]for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

[11]By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child[a] when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

10:30 [a]Deuteronomy 32:35 [b]NU-Text omits *says the Lord.* [c]Deuteronomy 32:36
10:34 [a]NU-Text reads *the prisoners* instead of *me in my chains.* [b]NU-Text omits *in heaven.*
10:37 [a]Or *that which* **10:38** [a]NU-Text reads *My just one.* [b]Habakkuk 2:3, 4 **11:5** [a]Genesis 5:24
11:11 [a]NU-Text omits *she bore a child.*



PROFILE
CAIN

Every decision we make in life is an opportunity to make a positive difference or a negative one. It all depends on our attitude and willingness to obey God.

The Bible includes stories of many people who made a negative difference. There are two reasons for this: (1) we can learn from others' mistakes; and (2) we are more likely to recognize ourselves making negative differences than positive ones. Cain is one of those biblical characters who made a difference in the wrong way, but we can learn much from his disastrous choice.

Abel and Cain both chose to worship God, but they each had something different in mind. Though both their sacrifices came from their lives, the Bible indicates a significant difference in their attitudes. Abel brought the best he had, considering God worthy of only the highest form of sacrifice; Cain brought something easily attained and easily replaced. Cain's was a careless attitude that he compounded by getting angry and jealous at his younger brother. Until this point, the sin had been solely between Cain and God. God warned Cain that he was quickly approaching a point of no return. God graciously granted Cain a second chance to get it right.

Attitudes like jealousy and anger can be confronted and corrected. Murder cannot be undone. Cain chose to follow the guidance of his anger rather than to follow God. He killed his brother Abel and then offered God an arrogant denial—"Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9). Cain became a vivid example of the mess we can create when our anger runs out of control.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Everyone experiences anger. What you do with that anger will affect your life and the lives of those around you in many ways. It can make a positive difference or an extremely negative one. It's like a huge billboard in your path which warns: what you do next matters!

Anger is simply a reaction, an emotion looking for a way to express itself. Anger left unchecked can cause untold hurt and destruction. It's like anger has no ability to think, it simply reacts and, if you don't master it, it can end up mastering you.

To guard against being controlled by your own anger, you have to purposefully engage your mind—consider carefully what anger may urge you to do. Allow the Lord to guide you and channel your anger in positive ways. If you think before you act and listen to the Lord's guidance, anger can be a very powerful force for good. It can be a forceful response to wrong that can bring about positive change.

If you have a problem with anger, listen carefully to God's warning to Cain. Letting God master your anger will make a positive difference for you and others.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about Cain's sin and the lessons we can learn from his story in Genesis 4:1–17; Hebrews 11:4; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11.

Cain chose to allow his anger to rule him. But Abel chose a better way; his life still teaches and makes a difference. Yours can, too!



LIFE APP

Faith / Hebrews 11:6

To have faith in someone means to be completely confident of their reliability and trustworthiness; it is to trust them completely and without question. But faith in God is really so much more.

In Hebrews 11:1 we are told that faith is the "substance of things hoped for" and "the evidence of things not seen." This means that not only do we trust God to do as He has promised, we *know without doubt* He will always live up to His Word. True faith is more than simple belief—it is an absolute assurance that God will always do as He says no matter what we see with our eyes. Faith doesn't focus on what our eyes can see, but on what God has said.

You may tend to think that doubt is the opposite of faith, but that's not quite right. The opposite of faith is fear. When fear takes over, it causes questions in your mind and you start wondering "what if"—what if the worst happens? What then? What if God doesn't show up this time? Fear can cause you to question whether God will do what He claims. But when you truly know God, you will realize He can always be trusted to do exactly as He has promised. Fear cannot exist in the heart of someone who truly believes that God is exactly who He says and will do exactly as He says He will do.

God said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). God is worthy of your complete trust. He will be there for you no matter what happens in your life. He will be there to help you through any trouble or pain you face (Heb. 13:6). God is infinitely reliable and trustworthy. You can be absolutely certain that God will never let you down.

MIR MAKING IT REAL // HEBREWS 11:6

Faith The Bible talks a lot about having faith and about people who had faith. When you have faith, you're sure of "the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1), and you believe in what you can't see. Faith doesn't just think God will keep His promises, faith is absolutely sure He will.

Faith isn't something you can work up in your own heart. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 12:2 that Jesus is the "author and finisher" of our faith. He is the One who places faith in our hearts and teaches us how to live completely in that faith. But that doesn't mean you just sit around and wait for faith to rise up within you. Faith is like a muscle—for it to grow and become strong you must exercise it by reading the Bible and getting God's Word into your heart. Then when you need answers, you can remember what God's Word says and keep believing until you see His promise alive in your life.

Believing God will do exactly as He says is crucial. But you also have to decide to believe God's Word and not your eyes. That's how you exercise the faith you have. Over time, you will see it grow larger and stronger. Decide to operate in faith and determine not to be shaken. Life will become an exciting adventure as you watch for and expect God to bring His promises to reality. (See also: Hab. 2:4; Matt. 9:22; Mark 11:22; Luke 7:50; Rom. 4:9; 12:3; 1 Cor. 16:13; 2 Cor. 5:7; 2 Thess. 1:3; 1 Tim. 6:12; Heb. 11.)

Words to Live By

Diligently seek: The phrase in Hebrews 11:6 translated as "diligently seek" is from the Greek word *ekzeteo* (ek-say-the'-o). It doesn't just mean to look for something, or even to look long and hard for it. *Ekzeteo* means "to absolutely crave something and put all the effort and energy you have into finding it." Living a life of faith and giving it all you've got is not easy, but God Himself promises to reward you when you go all out in seeking Him. The greatest reward is having a personal relationship with the One who created all things and loves you more than you can imagine.

12 Therefore from one man, and him as
good as dead, were born *as many* as the
stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable
as the sand which is by the seashore.

THE HEAVENLY HOPE

13 These all died in faith, not having re-
ceived the promises, but having seen them
afar off were assured of them,[a] embraced
them and confessed that they were strang-
ers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those
who say such things declare plainly that
they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they
had called to mind that *country* from
which they had come out, they would have
had opportunity to return. 16 But now they
desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country.*
Therefore God is not ashamed to be called
their God, for He has prepared a city for
them.

THE FAITH OF THE PATRIARCHS

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested,
offered up Isaac, and he who had received
the promises offered up his only begotten
son, 18 of whom it was said, *"In Isaac your
seed shall be called,"*[a] 19 concluding that
God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the
dead, from which he also received him in a
figurative sense.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau
concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying,
blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and
worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff.

22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying,
made mention of the departure of the chil-
dren of Israel, and gave instructions con-
cerning his bones.

11:13 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *were assured of them.* **11:18** [a]Genesis 21:12

THE FAITH OF MOSES

23By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

24By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in[a] Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

27By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. 28By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

29By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry *land, whereas* the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.

BY FAITH THEY OVERCAME

30By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. 31By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

32And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also *of* David and Samuel and the prophets: 33who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35Women received their dead raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted,[a] were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— 38of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth.

39And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

THE RACE OF FAITH

12 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us,* and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

FAITH
Where does faith come from?
Hebrews 12:2

THE DISCIPLINE OF GOD

3For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. 5And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

> *"My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,*
> *Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;*
> 6*For whom the LORD loves He chastens,*
> *And scourges every son whom He receives."*[a]

7If[a] you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us,* and we paid *them*

11:26 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *of.*
11:37 [a]NU-Text omits *were tempted.*
12:6 [a]Proverbs 3:11, 12 **12:7** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *It is for discipline that you endure; God . . . .*

MAKING IT REAL // HEBREWS 12:11

Discipline God has given every parent the difficult task of disciplining and training their children (Proverbs 22:6). It may seem like your parents are too strict, especially when it comes to monitoring where and when you go out, or being extra cautious about the personal information you post on a social site. The truth is that the world just isn't as safe as it once was. Parents have a good reason to be concerned for your safety. They're not being jerks; they're looking out for you. Maybe you think your parents are a lot tougher on you than your friends' parents are on them. Don't be so sure. You don't really know what it's like to live in another family. And in some homes, kids have to raise themselves; it's obvious by looking at the world that many of them aren't doing a very good job.

While being disciplined and trained by your parents may be frustrating and hard at times, be thankful that you have parents who love you and want to do what God has called them to do. Believe it or not, when you look back on these years, you will thank your parents for caring so much about you. Try to learn from their correction and understand the reasons for their rules. Begin to apply the lessons your parents are teaching you. More freedom is always given to those who prove they have learned their lessons well. (See also: Prov. 3:12; 22:6; 23:13, 14; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21.)

Words to Live By

Chastening: The word translated as "chastening" in Hebrews 12:11 is the Greek word *paideuo* (pahee-dyoo'-o). It means "to train a child through education and correction." The entire process of parenting is for the sole purpose of teaching children how to live successful, productive adult lives. One day, you will make all your own choices in life. Doesn't it make sense to learn while you're still young how to make the *right* ones?

respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. 11Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

RENEW YOUR SPIRITUAL VITALITY

12Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

14Pursue peace with all *people,* and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

THE GLORIOUS COMPANY

18For you have not come to the mountain that[a] may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness[b] and tempest, 19and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard *it* begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20(For they could not endure what was commanded: *"And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned*[a] *or shot with an arrow."*[b] 21And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, *"I am exceedingly afraid* and trembling."[a])

12:18 [a]NU-Text reads *to that which.* [b]NU-Text reads *gloom.* **12:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the rest of this verse. [b]Exodus 19:12, 13
12:21 [a]Deuteronomy 9:19

22But you have come to Mount Zion and
to the city of the living God, the heavenly
Jerusalem, to an innumerable company
of angels, 23to the general assembly and
church of the firstborn *who are* registered
in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the
spirits of just men made perfect, 24to Jesus
the Mediator of the new covenant, and to
the blood of sprinkling that speaks better
things than *that of* Abel.

HEAR THE HEAVENLY VOICE

25See that you do not refuse Him who
speaks. For if they did not escape who re-
fused Him who spoke on earth, much more
shall we not escape if we turn away from
Him who *speaks* from heaven, 26whose
voice then shook the earth; but now He has
promised, saying, *"Yet once more I shake*[a]
not only the earth, but also heaven."[b] 27Now
this, *"Yet once more,"* indicates the removal
of those things that are being shaken, as of
things that are made, that the things which
cannot be shaken may remain.

28Therefore, since we are receiving a
kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us
have grace, by which we may[a] serve God
acceptably with reverence and godly fear.
29For our God *is* a consuming fire.

CONCLUDING MORAL DIRECTIONS

13 Let brotherly love continue. 2Do
not forget to entertain strang-
ers, for by so *doing* some have
unwittingly entertained angels. 3Remem-
ber the prisoners as if chained with them—
those who are mistreated—since you your-
selves are in the body also.

4Marriage *is* honorable among all, and
the bed undefiled; but fornicators and
adulterers God will judge.

SEX
When is sex honorable and pure?
Hebrews 13:4

5*Let your* conduct *be* without covetous-
ness; *be* content with such things as you
have. For He Himself has said, *"I will never
leave you nor forsake you."*[a] 6So we may
boldly say:

"The LORD is my helper;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?"[a]

HELP
Why should we be able to live without fear?
Hebrews 13:5, 6

CONCLUDING RELIGIOUS DIRECTIONS

7Remember those who rule over you, who
have spoken the word of God to you, whose
faith follow, considering the outcome of
their conduct. 8Jesus Christ *is* the same
yesterday, today, and forever. 9Do not be
carried about[a] with various and strange
doctrines. For *it is* good that the heart be
established by grace, not with foods which
have not profited those who have been oc-
cupied with them.

10We have an altar from which those
who serve the tabernacle have no right
to eat. 11For the bodies of those animals,
whose blood is brought into the sanctu-
ary by the high priest for sin, are burned
outside the camp. 12Therefore Jesus also,
that He might sanctify the people with
His own blood, suffered outside the gate.
13Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside
the camp, bearing His reproach. 14For here
we have no continuing city, but we seek
the one to come. 15Therefore by Him let
us continually offer the sacrifice of praise
to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving
thanks to His name. 16But do not forget to
do good and to share, for with such sacri-
fices God is well pleased.

17Obey those who rule over you, and
be submissive, for they watch out for your
souls, as those who must give account. Let

OBEDIENCE
Why should we obey our leaders?
Hebrews 13:17

12:26 [a]NU-Text reads *will shake.* [b]Haggai 2:6
12:28 [a]M-Text omits *may.* **13:5** [a]Deuteronomy 31:6, 8; Joshua 1:5 **13:6** [a]Psalm 118:6
13:9 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *away.*



LIFE APP

Sacrifice / Hebrews 13:15, 16

In the Old Testament, God's people made sacrifices to Him to atone for their sins or to give Him praise. A priest would make the sacrifice on behalf of a worshipper. And sacrifices were costly. They either had to be animal (stipulated by the law) or a grain offering. Whatever sacrifice they were making, the point was to bring their best. For animal sacrifices, they had to bring an animal with absolutely no flaws—the very best one they had. For grain offerings, they had to bring their firstfruits—the very best of their crops. Sacrifice meant bringing your very best to God, even though it was costly.

All of the Old Testament sacrifices foreshadow the ultimate sacrifice that would come through Christ Jesus. He gave Himself as the once-for-all sacrifice for our sins. So now, through Christ, we can have access to God, and a personal relationship with Him.

But that doesn't mean we don't have sacrifices of our own to offer God. "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:15, 16).

These spiritual sacrifices are still costly to us. It may be painful to offer a sacrifice of praise when you are going through a difficult time. When you've had your heart broken, it may be challenging to give thanks to God. When evil has been done to you, doing good may not be the easiest thing. When you barely have enough for yourself, it may seem impossible to share. Offer these sacrifices anyway, and God will be well pleased with them. When you sacrifice this way with your whole life, you will find yourself fulfilling Paul's command in Romans 12:1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

PRAYER REQUESTED

18 Pray for us; for we are confident that we
have a good conscience, in all things desir-
ing to live honorably. 19 But I especially urge
you to do this, that I may be restored to you
the sooner.

BENEDICTION, FINAL EXHORTATION, FAREWELL

20 Now may the God of peace who brought
up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great
Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood
of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you
complete in every good work to do His will,
working in you[a] what is well pleasing in
His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be*
glory forever and ever. Amen.

22 And I appeal to you, brethren, bear
with the word of exhortation, for I have
written to you in few words. 23 Know that
our brother Timothy has been set free,
with whom I shall see you if he comes
shortly.

24 Greet all those who rule over you, and
all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.

25 Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

13:21 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *us.*

James

DATE OF WRITING: MID- A.D. 40S
AUTHOR: JAMES, BROTHER OF JESUS
THEME: WE CAN HAVE A FAITH THAT WORKS
PURPOSE: AUTHENTIC FAITH PRODUCES AN AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE.

OUTLINE

1:1 .....Greetings
1:2–18 .....A Life of Faith and Wisdom
1:19–27 .....Hearing and Obeying God's Message
2:1–13 .....Don't Favor the Rich and Powerful
2:14–26 .....Faith and Works
3:1–18 .....Wisdom and Words
4:1—5:6 .....Warning Against Friendship with the World
5:7–20 .....Patience, Kindness, and Prayer

KEY VERSE:

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God (James 1:19, 20).

THEN /// The Book of James is about making the faith that you confess with your words match the way you act. James even goes so far as to say that if your actions don't match your faith, then your faith is worthless. Whew. That's a little harsh, don't you think? It's the truth, though. What good is it to God, our families, ourselves, or to a world that needs to see real Christians, if we say a lot of good stuff but actually live another way?

James is one of those where-the-rubber-meets-the-road kinds of books. It reminds us that we make ourselves accountable to God and man when we say we believe. It reminds us that, when we say we believe, we are making a promise that will change everything we do.

NOW /// Have you ever known anyone who said they wanted to be your friend, but then they didn't act like a friend? Maybe they talked about you behind your back. Maybe they found another friend and left you behind. Whatever they did, their actions didn't match their words.

The message of James is just as relevant for us today as it was for James' readers. The world is still a place where actions speak louder than words. If we say one thing and do another, people will "hear" what we *do* louder than they hear what we say. So be honest with yourself as you read James and see if there are places in your life where you need to make your actions match your words.

REALITY CHECK /// Caution! Caution! Caution!

James is famous for giving us a warning about one of the most dangerous forces known to man. It has the violent nature of a forest fire and a power greater than a wild animal. Know what it is? The force that James warns about is the human tongue. It's not that the tongue itself has so much power. It's that we use our tongues to speak. When we speak, we use words. When we use words, we hold the power to hurt or to heal, and we are stuck with the outcome. Words are difficult, almost impossible, to take back.

So when James warns us to learn to control our tongues, he's really saying that we should control our wills and our brains and our mouths and all the words that we say. This will benefit us as well as everyone around us.

GREETING TO THE TWELVE TRIBES

1 James, a bondservant of God and of
the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:

Greetings.

PROFITING FROM TRIALS

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall
into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But
let patience have *its* perfect work, that you
may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask
of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting,
for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea
driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not
that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 *he is* a double-minded
man, unstable in all his ways.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF RICH AND POOR

9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exal-
tation, 10 but the rich in his humiliation,
because as a flower of the field he will pass
away. 11 For no sooner has the sun risen
with a burning heat than it withers the
grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also
will fade away in his pursuits.

LOVING GOD UNDER TRIALS

12 Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved,
he will receive the crown of life which
the Lord has promised to those who love



PROFILE
JAMES, JESUS' LITTLE BROTHER

James must have felt that having Jesus as a big brother was a mixed blessing. Did James ever hear his mother say, "Why can't you be more like your big brother?" Now there is an intimidating comparison! James probably had some good reasons to consider his big brother unique and amazing, but the Bible tells us he had a hard time accepting his big brother as his Savior. It took a while. In fact, it took Jesus' death and resurrection to finally convince James that Jesus was much more than his brother. Paul tells us that Jesus paid His little brother a personal visit after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7). That must have been quite a reunion!

James had always watched Jesus. How can you ignore a famous brother? When he finally realized the identity of his brother, James's faith took a great leap forward. Everything he had heard his brother say and had seen his brother do suddenly made sense. James became a leader in the church almost overnight.

Even though it took James quite a while to realize Jesus' identity, once James was convinced, God used him in several crucial ways. James provided key wisdom in the early days of the church. He also wrote the Book of James, probably the most down-to earth, practical, how-to manual for the Christian life.

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

Fortunately, you can respond in faith to Jesus at any point in your life. You may have heard about the Lord all your life, or you may have only recently been introduced. It makes no difference when you realized exactly who He is, it only matters that you know Jesus is the Savior and He died for you.

Once you know the Lord as your Savior, you begin learning how to live your life as a Christian. The Book of James is a great resource to begin discovering how to live this new life. The lessons it teaches are practical and down-to-earth. In fact, one way to think about the Book of James is to describe it as a how-to book written for believers who really want to make a difference for Christ through their lives.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Can you even imagine what it must have been like to be Jesus' little brother and have the opportunity to see and hear all that Jesus did? You can learn a bit more about James in John 7:1–5; Acts 15:1–29; 1 Corinthians 15:7; and in his own letter, the Book of James.

James became a strong man of faith and really made a difference with his life. When you choose to believe that Jesus is exactly who He claimed and that a whole new life is available to you through him, you can make a difference in your world, too!

Him. 13Let no one say when he is tempted,
"I am tempted by God";
for God cannot be tempted by evil,
nor does He Himself tempt anyone.
14But each one is tempted
when he is drawn away by his own desires
and enticed.
15Then, when desire has conceived,
it gives birth to sin;
and sin, when it is full-grown,
brings forth death.

16Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.
17Every good gift and every perfect gift
is from above,
and comes down from the Father of lights,
with whom there is no variation
or shadow of turning.
18Of His own will He brought us forth
by the word of truth,
that we might be a kind of firstfruits
of His creatures.

QUALITIES NEEDED IN TRIALS

19So then,[a] my beloved brethren, let every
man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow
to wrath; 20for the wrath of man does not
produce the righteousness of God.

DOERS—NOT HEARERS ONLY

21Therefore lay aside all filthiness and
overflow of wickedness, and receive with
meekness the implanted word, which is
able to save your souls.

22But be doers of the word, and not hear-
ers only, deceiving yourselves. 23For if any-
one is a hearer of the word and not a doer,
he is like a man observing his natural face
in a mirror; 24for he observes himself, goes
away, and immediately forgets what kind
of man he was. 25But he who looks into the
perfect law of liberty and continues *in it,*
and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of
the work, this one will be blessed in what
he does.

BLESSING
What brings us blessing?
James 1:25

26If anyone among you[a] thinks he is re-
ligious, and does not bridle his tongue but
deceives his own heart, this one's religion
is useless. 27Pure and undefiled religion
before God and the Father is this: to visit
orphans and widows in their trouble, *and*
to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

BEWARE OF PERSONAL FAVORITISM

2 My brethren, do not hold the faith
of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of
glory, with partiality. 2For if there
should come into your assembly a man
with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there
should also come in a poor man in filthy
clothes, 3and you pay attention to the one
wearing the fine clothes and say to him,
"You sit here in a good place," and say to
the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit
here at my footstool," 4have you not shown
partiality among yourselves, and become
judges with evil thoughts?

5Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God
not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich
in faith and heirs of the kingdom which
He promised to those who love Him? 6But
you have dishonored the poor man. Do not
the rich oppress you and drag you into the
courts? 7Do they not blaspheme that noble
name by which you are called?

8If you really fulfill *the* royal law accord-
ing to the Scripture, *"You shall love your
neighbor as yourself,"*[a] you do well; 9but if
you show partiality, you commit sin, and
are convicted by the law as transgressors.
10For whoever shall keep the whole law,
and yet stumble in one *point,* he is guilty
of all. 11For He who said, *"Do not commit
adultery,"*[a] also said, *"Do not murder."*[b]
Now if you do not commit adultery, but
you do murder, you have become a trans-
gressor of the law. 12So speak and so do
as those who will be judged by the law of
liberty. 13For judgment is without mercy to
the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy
triumphs over judgment.

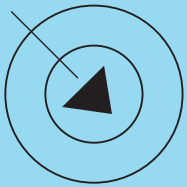
FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

14What *does it* profit, my brethren, if some-
one says he has faith but does not have
works? Can faith save him? 15If a brother or
sister is naked and destitute of daily food,
16and one of you says to them, "Depart in

James 2:21

It's said that couples who have chil-
dren later in life appreciate the par-
enting experience more than young
parents do. If that's true, Abraham
and Sarah may have been the most
appreciative parents in history. When
their son Isaac was born, Abraham
was one hundred years old and Sarah
was ninety. Years later, God tested
Abraham's appreciation—and his
faith—by asking him to kill Isaac as
a sacrifice. Even after waiting so long
for the son God had promised him,
Abraham didn't hesitate to obey. Just
when Abraham was ready to kill Isaac,
the Lord stopped him and sent a ram
to sacrifice instead.

1:19 [a]NU-Text reads *Know this* or *This you know.* **1:26** [a]NU-Text omits *among you.* **2:8** [a]Leviticus 19:18 **2:11** [a]Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18 [b]Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17



PROMISE

God promises that you will inherit His kingdom.

Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? (James 2:5).

Many people spend all of their lives attempting to build a kingdom of their own. They may spend year after year just trying to acquire more—more money, more fame, more respect, more stuff. But what will be the end of all their work? They will reach the end of their lives and other people will then take over their so-called "kingdoms." The Book of Ecclesiastes tells us this is all vanity, all meaningless (Eccl. 2:17–23). None of those kingdoms will last, and none will ever provide meaning or purpose.

There is only one kingdom that can provide those things; and if we're followers of Christ, we're already heirs to this kingdom—the eternal kingdom of God—the one that doesn't rot, or fade away, or go broke. It's the kingdom in which we find eternal life, ultimate purpose, and unconditional love. How are you spending your time, building a kingdom on earth, or seeking the kingdom of heaven?

Think for a moment. Do you know your grandmother's name? Easy? How about your great-grandmother's name? Harder, but okay. Now, what's your great-great-grandmother's name? Stumped? It's a sad truth: in about three or four generations, maybe no one will remember your name either. Oh, it'll be written down somewhere, but you'll be long gone. Your earthly kingdom won't matter anymore. What will matter is the legacy you leave of seeking God's kingdom. If you're a Christian, you'll be with Jesus, sharing in the kingdom He has for you. There, you'll matter forever.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Ecclesiastes 2:17–23; Luke 6:20; Hebrews 12:28

peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? 17Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your[a] works, and I will show you my faith by my[b] works. 19You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! 20But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?[a] 21Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, *"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."*[a] And he was called the friend of God. 24You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

25Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?

James 2:25

When the Israelites sent spies into Jericho to scope out the place, Rahab, a prostitute in Jericho, helped them get the information they needed; she even saved their lives by hiding them from the king's men. Later, when the Israelites returned to conquer Jericho, they destroyed the homes of everyone in the city—except that of Rahab and her family. Rahab had proven herself to be a friend of God's people.

2:18 [a]NU-Text omits *your.* [b]NU-Text omits *my.*
2:20 [a]NU-Text reads *useless.* **2:23** [a]Genesis 15:6



LIFE APP

Volunteering / James 2:14–20

If someone asked you the difference between Christians and other people, what would you say? Of course you would tell them about Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross; you would tell them about salvation by receiving Jesus as Savior. But what would you point to that can been seen and touched to show them your faith?

The apostle James realized faith has to be more than just words and warm, faithful feelings. Real faith changes people from the inside out and it shows up in the things they do (James 2:18). James even says that believing is not enough because even demons *believe* in God, but they don't worship Him or serve Him. If someone truly loves God, it will show up in the way they choose to live their life.

Take a look at your own life. What can you point to that will show others that you are a Christian? Going to church on Sunday and being part of a youth group are great things to do, but they don't make you a Christian and certainly don't prove to the world that you love God. It's the way you treat others and the things you do to help those in need that truly show the world that you belong to Jesus and that He is alive and well within you.

You don't need to go to a far-off land and live in a grass hut to serve God. You can serve Him right where you are. You can help friends, relatives, and neighbors in small ways everyday: helping with homework, mowing lawns, cleaning the house, or carrying groceries. You can volunteer to help with an after-school program for kids or work in a soup kitchen once a week. Just take a look around. You won't need to look very far to find someone who could use your help. Then volunteer to serve and find out why James said, "By works faith was made perfect" (James 2:22).



WORLD APP

Hunger / James 2:15, 16

We are blessed to live in a country where we can walk down the aisles of any large grocery store and choose what foods we'd like to buy. For people in many other countries, the thought of that simple walk down a grocery store aisle is nothing but dream—something hardly even imaginable.

But even in America, there are people who go to sleep hungry at night and wake up hungry in the morning. World hunger is a problem that has existed for thousands of years and seems determined to exist for many years more.

In the face of global poverty and starvation, it's easy to want to help but not know where to start. Here are some suggestions. First of all, you can pray for those who are hungry and ask God how He might use you to help people who are in need. Then take some advice from the Book of James: "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?" (James 2:15, 16).

We should pray for those in need and also speak words of encouragement to them. But those words of encouragement will fall on deaf ears if we don't also do what we can to help them. It may be as simple as going with your church to a homeless shelter and serving food. You may start a food drive at your church or school for those who are hungry. You can support a ministry that builds wells or teaches farming techniques in a foreign country.

Hunger isn't going away on its own. But if we all work together, serving Christ and serving others, we can make a difference one hungry person at a time.

MAKING IT REAL // JAMES 3:17, 18

Wisdom God has promised to give wisdom to those who ask (James 1:5). But, what is wisdom? We hear a lot about elderly people being wise. But is wisdom something you learn by living a lot of years? We hear a lot about wise decisions or unwise behavior. Should we understand wisdom to be an action or a choice?

The Bible says that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10). That doesn't mean we are afraid of God, it means we understand that He is all-powerful, knows everything (is omniscient), and is always right. When we are completely convinced that God is in total control, we know we can always trust Him to make everything work out right. That's where wisdom starts.

Sometimes we can be confused and think wisdom and knowledge are the same thing. But real wisdom isn't just knowing something; it's understanding how to put your knowledge into action. Think of it this way: a person may know smoking cigarettes is dangerous to their health, but they smoke them anyway. Wisdom is acting on the knowledge that cigarettes ruin your health, and NOT smoking.

God doesn't just teach us truth and leave us on our own. He gives us the wisdom to know how to put truth into practice in our lives. (See also: Prov. 4:5–9; Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 12:8; Col. 2:3.)

Words to Live By

Yield: The word translated in James 3:17 as "yield" is the Greek word *eupeithes* (yoo-pi-thace'). It means "being open to discussion, not opinionated and stubborn." When God teaches us through His Word or other people (like parents), we should be willing to listen and accept what they tell us. If you are wise, you will realize you don't know everything about life and others know more than you. Wisdom is knowing when to pay attention and act on what you hear.

26For as the body without the spirit is
dead, so faith without works is dead also.

THE UNTAMABLE TONGUE

3 My brethren, let not many of you
become teachers, knowing that we
shall receive a stricter judgment.
2For we all stumble in many things. If
anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a
perfect man, able also to bridle the whole
body. 3Indeed,[a] we put bits in horses'
mouths that they may obey us, and we
turn their whole body. 4Look also at ships:
although they are so large and are driven
by fierce winds, they are turned by a very
small rudder wherever the pilot desires.
5Even so the tongue is a little member and
boasts great things.

See how great a forest a little fire kindles!
6And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity.
The tongue is so set among our members
that it defiles the whole body, and sets on
fire the course of nature; and it is set on
fire by hell. 7For every kind of beast and
bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is
tamed and has been tamed by mankind.
8But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an
unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9With it

James 3:6

You've heard of "hell on earth"? The Hinnom Valley, a deep ravine located south of Jerusalem, was the real thing. The Greek word translated "hell" literally means "Hinnom Valley." The ravine was actually an ancient garbage dump. All kinds of waste material and dead animals were taken to Hinnom Valley to be burned. Eventually, the place came to be used as a symbol of judgment and sorrow.

3:3 [a]NU-Text reads *Now if.*

we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. 11Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? 12Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.[a]

HEAVENLY VERSUS DEMONIC WISDOM

13Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. 14But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. 16For where envy and self-seeking *exist,* confusion and every evil thing *are* there. 17But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

PRIDE PROMOTES STRIFE

4 Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members? 2You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet[a] you do not have because you do not ask. 3You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. 4Adulterers and[a] adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

6But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

> *"God resists the proud,*
> *But gives grace to the humble."*[a]

HUMILITY CURES WORLDLINESS

7Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. 9Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. 10Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

HUMILITY
When can we be close to God?
James 4:8–10

DO NOT JUDGE A BROTHER

11Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12There is one Lawgiver,[a] who is able to save and to destroy. Who[b] are you to judge another?[c]

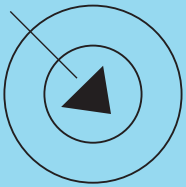
DO NOT BOAST ABOUT TOMORROW

13Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will[a] go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; 14whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. 15Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." 16But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

SIN
Is sin always an action?
James 4:17

17Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it,* to him it is sin.

3:12 [a]NU-Text reads *Neither can a salty spring produce fresh water.* **4:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Yet.* **4:4** [a]NU-Text omits *Adulterers and.* **4:6** [a]Proverbs 3:34 **4:12** [a]NU-Text adds *and Judge.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *But* who. [c]NU-Text reads *a neighbor.* **4:13** [a]M-Text reads *let us.*



PROMISE

God promises to honor humble people.

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up (James 4:6, 10).

God is looking for young men and women who are genuinely humble. He doesn't want a fake humility that outwardly says, "I'm really a nothing," but is conceited and arrogant on the inside. Some people think that humility means really believing that you are a nothing, with no potential to be or do anything. But that is not accurate, either. *True humility is knowing and recognizing who God is and who you are.* God says that, through Christ, you can do all things (Phil. 4:13). He rejoices and sings because of you (Zeph. 3:17). You are not a nothing, because He created you!

Being humble does not mean acting like a doormat. It means that you know for certain that you are strong through Jesus Christ. It means that you are secure enough to serve others and not care what people think. You're strong enough to be seen with people who aren't popular. You're secure enough to really care about someone who often gets left out—and you show it.

Pride and arrogance have no place with God. Jesus measures strength not by how cool you act but by your humility. Read John 13:3–17. You'll see a great picture of Jesus' humility. Working on humility in your life will help you be more like Him. And that's what it's all about.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 149:4; Proverbs 3:34; Daniel 10:12; Matthew 23:12; John 13:3–17; Philippians 2:8

RICH OPPRESSORS WILL BE JUDGED

5 Come now, *you* rich, weep and
howl for your miseries that are
coming upon *you!* 2Your riches are
corrupted, and your garments are moth-
eaten. 3Your gold and silver are corroded,
and their corrosion will be a witness
against you and will eat your flesh like fire.
You have heaped up treasure in the last
days. 4Indeed the wages of the laborers
who mowed your fields, which you kept
back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the
reapers have reached the ears of the Lord
of Sabaoth.[a] 5You have lived on the earth
in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened
your hearts as[a] in a day of slaughter. 6You
have condemned, you have murdered the
just; he does not resist you.

James 5:2

Moths are mentioned several times in the Bible as symbols of destruction and the foolishness of putting one's hope in material things. Here's how the little critters are able to do so much damage. Female moths often lay their eggs in clothing. When the eggs hatch, the newborn larvae eat the fibers of the material. Because the larvae chew quietly, the owner of the clothing may not know that damage is being done until it's too late.

BE PATIENT AND PERSEVERING

7Therefore be patient, brethren, until the
coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer
waits for the precious fruit of the earth,
waiting patiently for it until it receives the
early and latter rain. 8You also be patient.
Establish your hearts, for the coming of the
Lord is at hand.

9Do not grumble against one another,
brethren, lest you be condemned.[a] Behold,

5:4 [a]Literally, in Hebrew, *Hosts* **5:5** [a]NU-Text omits *as.* **5:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *judged.*

the Judge is standing at the door! [10]My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. [11]Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by* the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

[12]But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and *your* "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.[a]

MEETING SPECIFIC NEEDS

[13]Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. [14]Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. [15]And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. [16]Confess *your* trespasses[a] to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. [17]Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. [18]And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

BRING BACK THE ERRING ONE

[19]Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, [20]let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul[a] from death and cover a multitude of sins.

5:12 [a]M-Text reads *hypocrisy.* **5:16** [a]NU-Text reads *Therefore confess your sins.*
5:20 [a]NU-Text reads *his soul.*

1 Peter

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 64
AUTHOR: THE APOSTLE PETER
THEME: HOW CHRISTIANS CAN FACE AND ENDURE SUFFERING
PURPOSE: WE CAN TRIUMPH OVER SUFFERING AS WE FOLLOW JESUS.

OUTLINE

1:1, 2.....Greetings and Prayer
1:3–12.....God's Mercy and Living Hope
1:13—2:17.....Living as God's Holy Priesthood
2:18–25.....The Example of Christ's Suffering
3:1—4:19.....Being a Christian and Suffering
5:1–11.....Advice for Church Leaders
5:12–14.....Final Greetings

KEY VERSE:

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy (4:12, 13).

THEN /// The letters Peter wrote to the early church were like survival manuals. These young churches faced danger every day—Nero was actually throwing Christians into pits of hungry lions. To admit belief in Jesus was a dangerous thing. So Peter wrote these letters to help people survive both physically and spiritually.

In Peter's first letter, he wrote to the Christians who were being persecuted by people outside of the church. These Christians faced torture and death because of what they believed. Peter wrote to help them gain some perspective in the midst of the struggle to survive. He encouraged their faith even if it endangered their lives. He knew that if their faith stayed strong, they might be in physical danger but their souls would be safe.

In Peter's second letter, he warned the Christians to watch out for traitors *inside* the church. These persecutors took the form of false teachers who taught doctrines that would weaken faith rather than build it up. Peter knew that, for these Christians, even though their bodies weren't in physical danger, their souls were in a risky position.

NOW /// History has taught us that persecution does not deter Christianity. In fact, Christianity has often grown in countries that threatened death to people who declared faith in God. Why do you think that is true?

Part of the reason is because real faith is true, no matter what. If God is God and if He is active in your life, then that is true, no matter how much people might harass you or intimidate you. Whatever form the persecution takes, whether physical or spiritual, knowing that God is truly your God is enough to see you through each and every trial and challenge. These aren't just pretty words; they speak a powerful truth experienced in real life by real Christians for thousands of years. And truth does not change—it is just as true today as it was thousands of years ago and as it will be in the future.

REALITY CHECK /// Peter warned against false teachers inside the church. The question is, at what point do you stop saying people have different opinions and start saying they are teaching heresy (wrong beliefs about Jesus and His kingdom)?

Just about everyone you ask will give you a different answer for that question. We care about our faith, and we work hard to understand it. When someone disagrees with us, it's sometimes hard to feel okay about it. That doesn't mean that every difference of opinion should result in a disagreement or that if someone does not agree with us, they are guilty of heresy.

Real heresy happens when the identity or character of God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), or God the Holy Spirit is questioned or attacked. If someone tells you Jesus is not *really* God in the flesh, then you have encountered heresy. When you find yourself listening to wrong teachings, you don't have to get angry or shout them down. But it is your duty to stand up for the truth. Stand strong, have courage to speak truth, but always make sure you do it with love and grace.

GREETING TO THE ELECT PILGRIMS

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

A HEAVENLY INHERITANCE

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6In this you greatly rejoice, though
now for a little while, if need be, you have
been grieved by various trials, 7that the
genuineness of your faith, *being* much
more precious than gold that perishes,
though it is tested by fire, may be found
to praise, honor, and glory at the revela-
tion of Jesus Christ, 8whom having not
seen[a] you love. Though now you do not
see *Him,* yet believing, you rejoice with
joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9receiv-
ing the end of your faith—the salvation of
your souls.

1 Peter 1:7

Gold is rarely found by itself. Usually it's mined with many other rocks and substances. So how did ancient miners separate the valuable from the worthless? They put everything into a large container and then set the container over a very hot flame. As the rocks heated, the impurities melted and separated from the gold. As the substance cooled, the impurities formed a crust on top that could be scraped off. The purifying process resulted in pure and costly gold.

10Of this salvation the prophets have
inquired and searched carefully, who
prophesied of the grace *that would come*
to you, 11searching what, or what man-
ner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was
in them was indicating when He testi-
fied beforehand the sufferings of Christ
and the glories that would follow. 12To
them it was revealed that, not to them-
selves, but to us[a] they were ministering
the things which now have been reported
to you through those who have preached
the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent
from heaven—things which angels desire
to look into.

LIVING BEFORE GOD OUR FATHER

13Therefore gird up the loins of your mind,
be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the
grace that is to be brought to you at the
revelation of Jesus Christ; 14as obedient
children, not conforming yourselves to the
former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; 15but as
He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy
in all *your* conduct, 16because it is written,
"Be holy, for I am holy."[a]

SALVATION
How was our salvation obtained?
1 Peter 1:18, 19

17And if you call on the Father, who
without partiality judges according to each
one's work, conduct yourselves through-
out the time of your stay *here* in fear;
18knowing that you were not redeemed
with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold,
from your aimless conduct *received* by
tradition from your fathers, 19but with the
precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb with-
out blemish and without spot. 20He indeed
was foreordained before the foundation of
the world, but was manifest in these last
times for you 21who through Him believe
in God, who raised Him from the dead and
gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope
are in God.

THE ENDURING WORD

22Since you have purified your souls in
obeying the truth through the Spirit[a] in
sincere love of the brethren, love one an-
other fervently with a pure heart, 23having
been born again, not of corruptible seed
but incorruptible, through the word of God
which lives and abides forever,[a] 24because

"All flesh is as grass,
And all the glory of man[a] *as the flower*
of the grass.
The grass withers,
And its flower falls away,
25*But the word of the* LORD *endures*
forever."[a]

Now this is the word which by the gospel
was preached to you.

2 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all
deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil
speaking, 2as newborn babes, desire

1:8 [a]M-Text reads *known.* **1:12** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *you.* **1:16** [a]Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7 **1:22** [a]NU-Text omits *through the Spirit.* **1:23** [a]NU-Text omits *forever.* **1:24** [a]NU-Text reads *all its glory.* **1:25** [a]Isaiah 40:6–8

the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,[a] 3if indeed you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

THE CHOSEN STONE AND HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE

4Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, 5you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

> *"Behold, I lay in Zion*
> *A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,*
> *And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."*[a]

7Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient,[a]

> *"The stone which the builders rejected*
> *Has become the chief cornerstone,"*[b]

8and

> *"A stone of stumbling*
> *And a rock of offense."*[a]

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

9But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

LIVING BEFORE THE WORLD

11Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

SUBMISSION TO GOVERNMENT

13Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good. 15For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— 16as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17Honor all *people.* Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

JESUS
What was Jesus' example to us of how to rightly endure injustice?
1 Peter 2:21–23

SUBMISSION TO MASTERS

18Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. 21For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us,[a] leaving us[b] an example, that you should follow His steps:

> 22 *"Who committed no sin,*
> *Nor was deceit found in His mouth";*[a]

23who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; 24who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. 25For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer[a] of your souls.

2:2 [a]NU-Text adds *up to salvation.* **2:6** [a]Isaiah 28:16 **2:7** [a]NU-Text reads *to those who disbelieve.* [b]Psalm 118:22 **2:8** [a]Isaiah 8:14 **2:21** [a]NU-Text reads *you.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *you.* **2:22** [a]Isaiah 53:9 **2:25** [a]Greek *Episkopos*

MAKING IT REAL // 1 PETER 2:11

Homeward Bound Sometimes you can feel like a pilgrim or even an alien on this earth (or in your world) because you love Jesus. In 1 Peter 2:11, Peter calls Christians "sojourners and pilgrims." And that's just what we are; we are people who are here for a time, but we are only passing through on our way to a better place. We learn in Ephesians 4 that we are no longer like the rest of the world; we live here, but we are totally different because we have a new, eternal life in Christ.

Do you pray before your meals in public? If you do, then you know that almost no one else does. Do you tell your friends "no thanks" when they invite you to an out-of-control party? Maybe you don't even get invited anymore because they know it's not your scene. Have you been dumped by someone because you chose not to have sex before marriage? You made the right choice, but it may have made you feel like an alien.

Peter says that a part of being Christlike is continually holding yourself back from the "fleshly lusts"—the sinful pulls of the world. When you hold back or stand apart, then you've become the sojourner or pilgrim. You may feel like no one understands; it may even seem the world considers you really weird. But you have a home in heaven that is so far beyond the beauty and comfort of this world. You'll never feel like a stranger there. You'll be known and loved and respected for exactly who you are—no insults, no impossible expectations, no giggles and whispers behind your back. You'll be totally accepted forever in the eternal home prepared for you in heaven. (See also: 1 Cor. 2:12; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:13.)

Words to Live By

Abstain: The word translated as "abstain" in 1 Peter 2:11 is the Greek word *apechomai* (ap-ekh'-om-ahee). This word means "to keep oneself away from something; to decide to stay away." It is a verb, so action is required. You can't just decide to live as God wants, you have to be willing and able to tell yourself "No!" and then stay away when you're tempted to live like the sinful world around you.

SUBMISSION TO HUSBANDS

3 Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. 3Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— 4rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

A WORD TO HUSBANDS

7Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

CALLED TO BLESSING

8Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous;[a] 9not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10For

"He who would love life
And see good days,

3:8 [a]NU-Text reads *humble.*



LIFE APP

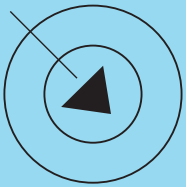
Current Events / 1 Peter 2:15–17

Sometimes, watching the evening news can seem like viewing an R-rated movie. Murder, rape, catastrophic natural disasters, private lives made public, greedy people destroying the lives of others—any horrible thing you can dream up may end up being reported as fact on tomorrow's Internet news page.

As Christians in this sin-sick world, we can be tempted to just hide away from such disgusting and frightening events. But that's not what God wants from His people. Jesus called us the "light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). We are to live our lives in such a way that others will see the reality of God and His love at work in us. We should be so different in the way we think and treat others that everyone will wonder what makes us so unique and unlike them.

This world is where we live. We have no choice but to be here, but our presence should make a difference. We should be examples to the world of what it means to live godly lives. Everyone should be able to learn more about our faith and our God by watching us interact with our world. When disaster strikes, we should be among the first to volunteer our time or help provide funds for those in need. When those around us have been victimized by crime, we should be ready and willing to reach out to them in love and compassion. Christians should always be examples of loyal, obedient citizens and follow all rules set by government unless they conflict with the commands of God.

Christians are to be the hands and feet of Jesus and express His love to the world. The Bible says we are His body on earth (1 Cor. 12:27). As His representatives, we must live our lives as He lived His—loving and honoring all people.



PROMISE

God promises to listen to you.

"For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil" (1 Pet. 3:12).

Maybe you've picked up your Bible today hoping it'll make a little sense out of what you're going through, or give you a reason to believe God cares what happens to you.

Maybe you've tried praying, but really wonder if it does any good. You may feel like prayer is just launching words into dead air and hoping they'll somehow make a difference; it may seem like your prayers bounce off the ceiling and fall back to the ground. Maybe you sometimes question why you should talk to God when it feels like no one's listening?

The people originally reading Peter's letter may have asked this same question. They were facing persecution on every side because of their faith. Seeing their family and friends being tortured and even killed, while living under the constant threat of the same punishment, may have made them wonder if their prayers were really being heard. In his letter, Peter is assuring them that they are not alone in their trials. It was an extremely dark time, but their faith was shining bright—and God saw every moment. He heard their prayers and was with them through every tribulation.

Your world may seem dark and silent; you may not feel like your prayers are being heard. But God is with you. He *is* watching. And listening. And waiting. And working. And one day, you may wonder why you ever thought He wasn't.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Psalm 5:3; John 11:42



Let him refrain his tongue from evil,
And his lips from speaking deceit.
11 *Let him turn away from evil and do good;*
Let him seek peace and pursue it.
12 *For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,*
And His ears are open to their prayers;
But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."[a]

SUFFERING FOR RIGHT AND WRONG

13 And who *is* he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, *you are* blessed. *"And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."*[a] 15 But sanctify the Lord God[a] in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

CHRIST'S SUFFERING AND OURS

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us[a] to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited[a] in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the

3:12 [a]Psalm 34:12–16 **3:14** [a]Isaiah 8:12 **3:15** [a]NU-Text reads *Christ as Lord.* **3:18** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *you.* **3:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *when the longsuffering of God waited patiently.*

flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us[a] in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime[a] in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you.* 5They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

1 Peter 4:9

Hospitality was a way of life in biblical times. Throughout the Bible, God's people are commanded to show kindness to visitors. In the early days of Christianity, people were constantly traveling from town to town to share the message about Jesus and to encourage fellow believers. The apostles and preachers of that time depended on the kindness of strangers for food, housing, and even protection from angry mobs who didn't want them teaching about Jesus.

SERVING FOR GOD'S GLORY

7But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 8And above all things have fervent love for one another, for *"love will cover a multitude of sins."*[a] 9*Be* hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

SUFFERING FOR GOD'S GLORY

12Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you,* for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.[a] On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.[a]

17For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18Now

> *"If the righteous one is scarcely saved,*
> *Where will the ungodly and the sinner*
> *appear?"*[a]

19Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

SHEPHERD THE FLOCK

5 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly,[a] not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4and when the

4:1 [a]NU-Text omits *for us.* **4:3** [a]NU-Text reads *time.* **4:8** [a]Proverbs 10:12 **4:14** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **4:16** [a]NU-Text reads *name.* **4:18** [a]Proverbs 11:31
5:2 [a]NU-Text adds *according to God.*

Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

SUBMIT TO GOD, RESIST THE DEVIL

5Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

> *"God resists the proud,*
> *But gives grace to the humble."*[a]

6Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

SATAN
What is Satan's desire for those who love the Lord?
1 Peter 5:8

8Be sober, be vigilant; because[a] your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 10But may[a] the God of all grace, who called us[b] to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you.* 11To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

FAREWELL AND PEACE

12By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.

13She who is in Babylon, elect together with *you,* greets you; and *so does* Mark my son. 14Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

5:5 [a]Proverbs 3:34 **5:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *because.* **5:10** [a]NU-Text reads *But the God of all grace . . . will perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *you.*

2 Peter

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 65
AUTHOR: THE APOSTLE PETER
THEME: HOW CHRISTIANS CAN REMAIN TRUE TO BIBLICAL FAITH
PURPOSE: WE DARE NOT SET OUR HEARTS ON WORLDLY THINGS.

OUTLINE

1:1, 2.....Greetings and Prayer
1:3–15.....How the Lord's Followers Should Live
1:16–21.....The Glory of Christ
2:1–22.....False Prophets and Teachers
3:1–18.....The Lord's Return Is Certain

KEY VERSE:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20, 21).

MAKING IT REAL // 2 PETER 1:5–8

Morality First Peter 1:5–8 tells you how to grow in your walk of faith. When you practice the qualities listed in these verses, you're developing character. You develop character one step at a time, one day at a time, one decision at a time. It's like building a house by putting one brick on top of another.

A lot of Christians are running themselves ragged doing things *for* God, but they may not be doing anything in their walk *with* God. They may not be growing into the mature person of faith they are meant to be. They just keep doing what they've always done—going to church, reading a devotion, praying before meals.

Peter challenges us to add some things to our faith—things that develop godly character. Having God's salvation through Jesus is great; but God doesn't just want you saved, He wants you to grow from a baby into a strong, joyful, mature Christian. Part of growing up in the Lord is finding ways to express your faith. You can do that with virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. You won't master these overnight, but you can commit to working on them. Character will develop in you and your faith will grow. You'll have substance and credibility in your life. You'll begin to look more and more like Jesus. (See also: Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 4:15, 16; 2 Pet. 1:2; 3:18.)

Words to Live By

Virtue: The word translated as "virtue" in 2 Peter 1:5 is the Greek word *arete* (ar-et-ay). It means "moral excellence." The world's morality changes constantly; one day it is illegal to kill an unborn child and the next day abortion is considered a legal right. But true moral behavior is determined by God; with God, right is always right, and wrong is always wrong. The only way to live a truly virtuous (moral) life is to follow the truths of God's Word. We should allow no one but God to tell us what is right and good and holy. He's the only One who truly knows.

GREETING THE FAITHFUL

1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and
apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have obtained like
precious faith with us by the righteousness
of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you
in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our
Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us
all things that *pertain* to life and godliness,
through the knowledge of Him who called
us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been
given to us exceedingly great and precious
promises, that through these you may be
partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world
through lust.

FRUITFUL GROWTH IN THE FAITH

5 But also for this very reason, giving all
diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue
knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to
self-control perseverance, to perseverance
godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness,
and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these
things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge
of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks
these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed
from his old sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for
if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to
you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

PETER'S APPROACHING DEATH

12 For this reason I will not be negligent to
remind you always of these things, though
you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as



LIFE APP

Self-Control / 2 Peter 1:6

Have you ever known anyone who was controlled by their emotions? Maybe you were never sure which version of that person you would see each day. A person ruled by emotions may be bouncing off the walls with excitement and happiness one day and be filled with depression and barely speaking to you the next. People like this make choices based on how they feel at the moment, regardless of the consequences. Emotion-ruled people never seem stable because they are ruled by whatever emotion strikes them and emotions are not dependable. That person has absolutely no self-control.

According to Peter, being ruled by emotions is not a way to improve your faith or grow in Christ. Instead, one of the key ingredients to a strong, healthy faith is self-control. When you have self-control you master your emotions rather than letting them control you. And perseverance will naturally follow self-control; because when you have self-control, you are less likely to give in to discouragement or other feelings that would encourage you to give up. That's not to say that you will never feel discouragement. It just means the discouragement you feel does not define you or determine your actions. Instead, you feel the discouragement but have enough self-control to choose to walk through it. You decide to believe that God is with you and will give you the strength you need, even when your emotions make you feel otherwise.

Self-control is also used in the Bible to speak about controlling your sexual desires (1 Cor. 7:9). While it is extremely important to control our sexual desires and guard our purity, that's not the only area of life where we need to exercise self-control. We shouldn't allow our emotions to lead any of our decisions. Building self-control will help us grow more like Christ, have more stable lives, and be the best witnesses possible for the gospel.

I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you,* 14knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

THE TRUSTWORTHY PROPHETIC WORD

16For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 18And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

19And so we have the prophetic word confirmed,[a] which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,[a] 21for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God[a] spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

DESTRUCTIVE DOCTRINES

2 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. 2And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does[a] not slumber.

DEMONS
What are demons?
2 Peter 2:4

DOOM OF FALSE TEACHERS

4For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of* eight *people,* a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7and delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)— 9*then* the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, 10and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. *They are* presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, 11whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

DEPRAVITY OF FALSE TEACHERS

12But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, 13*and* will receive the wages of unrighteousness, *as* those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. *They are* spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, 14having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, *and are* accursed children. 15They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

17These are wells without water, clouds[a] carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.[b]

1:19 [a]Or *We also have the more sure prophetic word.* **1:20** [a]Or *origin* **1:21** [a]NU-Text reads *but men spoke from God.* **2:3** [a]M-Text reads *will not.* **2:17** [a]NU-Text reads *and mists.* [b]NU-Text omits *forever.*

2 Peter 2:17

You can't imagine how important water was to the people of the ancient Near East. Their entire economy depended on successful crops, which, in turn, depended on sufficient rainfall. During the summer months, rain was virtually nonexistent. People had to rely on well water to nourish their crops. Drought wasn't the only problem ancient farmers faced in the summer, though. Windstorms that produced violent and destructive whirlwinds were also an occupational hazard.

DECEPTIONS OF FALSE TEACHERS

18For when they speak great swelling *words*
of emptiness, they allure through the lusts
of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who
have actually escaped[a] from those who live
in error. 19While they promise them liberty,
they themselves are slaves of corruption;
for by whom a person is overcome, by him
also he is brought into bondage. 20For if, af-
ter they have escaped the pollutions of the
world through the knowledge of the Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again en-
tangled in them and overcome, the latter
end is worse for them than the beginning.
21For it would have been better for them
not to have known the way of righteous-
ness, than having known *it,* to turn from
the holy commandment delivered to them.
22But it has happened to them according to
the true proverb: *"A dog returns to his own
vomit,"*[a] and, "a sow, having washed, to her
wallowing in the mire."

GOD'S PROMISE IS NOT SLACK

3 Beloved, I now write to you this
second epistle (in *both of* which I
stir up your pure minds by way of
reminder), 2that you may be mindful of
the words which were spoken before by
the holy prophets, and of the command-
ment of us,[a] the apostles of the Lord and
Savior, 3knowing this first: that scoffers will
come in the last days, walking according to
their own lusts, 4and saying, "Where is the
promise of His coming? For since the fa-
thers fell asleep, all things continue as *they
were* from the beginning of creation." 5For
this they willfully forget: that by the word
of God the heavens were of old, and the
earth standing out of water and in the wa-
ter, 6by which the world *that* then existed
perished, being flooded with water. 7But
the heavens and the earth *which* are now
preserved by the same word, are reserved
for fire until the day of judgment and perdi-
tion of ungodly men.

8But, beloved, do not forget this one
thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a
thousand years, and a thousand years as
one day. 9The Lord is not slack concerning
His promise, as some count slackness, but
is longsuffering toward us,[a] not willing that
any should perish but that all should come
to repentance.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

10But the day of the Lord will come as a
thief in the night, in which the heavens
will pass away with a great noise, and the
elements will melt with fervent heat; both
the earth and the works that are in it will
be burned up.[a] 11Therefore, since all these
things will be dissolved, what manner *of
persons* ought you to be in holy conduct
and godliness, 12looking for and hastening
the coming of the day of God, because of
which the heavens will be dissolved, be-
ing on fire, and the elements will melt with
fervent heat? 13Nevertheless we, according
to His promise, look for new heavens and
a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

JESUS

How can we be prepared for Jesus' return?

2 Peter 3:14–18

BE STEADFAST

14Therefore, beloved, looking forward to
these things, be diligent to be found by
Him in peace, without spot and blameless;
15and consider *that* the longsuffering of

2:18 [a]NU-Text reads *are barely escaping.*
2:22 [a]Proverbs 26:11 **3:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *commandment of the apostles of your Lord and Savior* or *commandment of your apostles of the Lord and Savior.* **3:9** [a]NU-Text reads *you.*
3:10 [a]NU-Text reads *laid bare* (literally *found*).



LIFE APP

Maturity / 2 Peter 3:18

"Why can't you be more mature?" "When are you going to grow up and mature?" "Please act a little more maturely." "Mature" is a word you've most likely heard in some form or fashion; probably more often as you've gotten older. But what does mature mean? Do you have to be serious and uptight all the time if you want to be mature? Do you have to keep your animated laughter or goofy sense of humor to yourself as you mature? Or could it be that maturity doesn't mean suppressing a natural part of your personality?

Real maturity is shaping all aspects of your personality into their full, God-given potential. God designed you just as you are, with your particular set of skills and traits. So when you mature, you become more and more the complete and amazing person you were created to be. With maturity comes understanding and discernment and discipline.

As you get older and life happens—the good and the bad—it's possible that confusion or bitterness may try to take root in your heart. But as you grow in understanding of the Lord and in closeness to Him, you can combat the confusion or bitterness with trust and faith. That's why it's so important to stay connected to God through reading His Word and praying—being in constant conversation with Him.

Peter advises us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). With every experience you have in life, you will have the opportunity to grow in positive ways or have your maturity colored by negative events. You will see pride, envy, gossip, and greed played out right before your very eyes. But you don't have to let those harmful ways influence you. As Peter said, you can grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ rather than picking up the hateful habits of the world. As you follow Christ faithfully, you will become more like Him as you also become the mature and amazing person He created you to be.

our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.

17You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.

1 John

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 90
AUTHOR: THE APOSTLE JOHN
THEME: JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD; THOSE WHO FOLLOW HIM MUST LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY
PURPOSE: WE MUST LIVE IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, OBEY HIS WORD, AND LOVE HIS CHILDREN.

OUTLINE

1:1–4 .....The Word of Life
1:5—2:6 .....God Is Light and Christ Is Our Example
2:7–17 .....The Old/New Commandment
2:18—3:10.....The Enemies of Christ and God's Children
3:11—4:21.....God's Love and Our Love
5:1–21 .....Jesus Overcomes the World

KEY VERSE:

That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3).

THEN /// You know how sometimes you struggle to learn something, like a math problem or a foreign language? Then, something will "click" and you'll "get it"? It often takes getting one big concept and then we are on our way to a whole new level of understanding. For the disciple John (who once was called a "Son of Thunder"), that eye-opening concept was love.

Many believe that, in his Gospel, John defined himself by the fact that Jesus loved him. It's no surprise that when he wrote to the church, the body of Christ, he most often wrote about love. We can't really categorize John's letters as "love letters" because when we think of a "love letter" we think of a mushy kind of thing. John's letters weren't mushy. In fact, they were so strong that parts of them have become some of the most famous verses in the Bible.

In John's first letter he explores the doctrine of love. He basically expands on John 3:16 (possibly *the* most famous verse in the Bible). In his second letter he encourages the church. In his third letter he encourages a friend. John understood that when Christ came He showed us a whole new way to love God and to love each other. Understanding this kind of love turned John's life inside out. It can do the same for us.

NOW /// The lesson John teaches is something we really should know anyway. If someone says they love you but they treat you like dirt, you don't really believe they love you, do you? What if they say they love you, but they constantly do things to hurt or betray you? Do you really believe they love you?

John teaches us that we show our love for God by our obedience to Him. If we say we love God but we treat Him like He doesn't matter or constantly do things that upset Him, do we really love Him? That's why obedience matters in our love toward God.

In a world where we are bombarded by messages and images of selfishness and revenge, John's letters are a startling contrast. The strong, true love and encouragement we learn from John aren't the easy way to live in our world, but they are the right and the best way.

REALITY CHECK /// John doesn't just tell us to love people. He tells us why we should. He doesn't tell us to love people because they are always lovable. They aren't. He doesn't tell us to love people because they love us. Sometimes they don't. What he tells us to do is to love people because God loved us. He even tells us to love people *the way* God loves us. The message God sent through John is simple: obeying God means loving people—they go hand in hand.

WHAT WAS HEARD, SEEN, AND TOUCHED

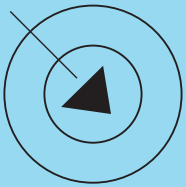
That which was from the beginning,
which we have heard, which we have
seen with our eyes, which we have
looked upon, and our hands have handled,
concerning the Word of life— 2the life was
manifested, and we have seen, and bear
witness, and declare to you that eternal
life which was with the Father and was
manifested to us— 3that which we have
seen and heard we declare to you, that you
also may have fellowship with us; and truly
our fellowship *is* with the Father and with
His Son Jesus Christ. 4And these things we
write to you that your[a] joy may be full.

FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM AND ONE ANOTHER

5This is the message which we have heard
from Him and declare to you, that God is
light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6If we
say that we have fellowship with Him, and
walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice

SIN
Is there anyone who never sins?
1 John 1:8

1:4 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *our.*



PROMISE

God promises to be your advocate.

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1).

There's a certain sick feeling that comes after you've done something you shouldn't have done. Maybe its dread or anger or guilt or shame or all of the above—and more—rolled into one big downer of depressing disgust.

All you want to do is hide from God, to wait until the feeling passes, to go listen to some music or watch some TV and let your mind just go to mush. That's too bad, because Jesus is just waiting for you to call for help. He's waiting to pick you up with one nail-scarred hand and hold the other one out before His Father—to show that the price has been paid, the debt has been canceled, and the way of forgiveness has been paved with cleansing blood.

That's what an Advocate does. He's our Counsel for the defense. Call to Him. He's ready and waiting right now.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Romans 8:34; Hebrews 4:16; 7:25

the truth. 7But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

2 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

THE TEST OF KNOWING HIM

3Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

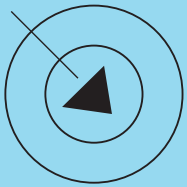
7Brethren,[a] I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.[b] 8Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

9He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. 10He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

THEIR SPIRITUAL STATE

12I write to you, little children,
Because your sins are forgiven you
for His name's sake.
13I write to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
Because you have overcome the wicked one.
I write to you, little children,
Because you have known the Father.
14I have written to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning.

2:7 [a]NU-Text reads *Beloved.* [b]NU-Text omits *from the beginning.*



PROMISE

God promises that you will have eternal life.

And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life (1 John 2:25).

This is one of the most awesome promises in all of Scripture: Jesus Christ has promised us eternal life. Could anyone else keep that promise besides the Lord God Himself? Would you believe anyone else if they promised you the same thing? The magnificent truth is that no one else, living or dead, can offer you eternal life. Some other religions claim multiple lives or reincarnation for their followers, but where are their resurrected ones? There are none.

The resurrection of Christ is proof that He holds the power over death. The resurrection is the basis of our faith and the proof that this promise is real. Only Jesus Christ gives eternal life. Your faith in Him will be rewarded. The reward is all the fellowship, love, and joy of the kingdom of heaven. Commit your heart and life to Christ. Decide that you're going to stick with Him—no matter what. Don't miss out on the best that God has for you. He'll change your life, your heart, your circumstances; but best of all, He'll change *you* forever.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// John 3:16; Titus 1:2; 1 John 5:20

I have written to you, young men,
Because you are strong, and the
word of God abides in you,
And you have overcome the wicked
one.

DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD

15 Do not love the world or the things in the
world. If anyone loves the world, the love
of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that *is*
in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust
of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of
the Father but is of the world. 17 And the
world is passing away, and the lust of it; but
he who does the will of God abides forever.

DECEPTIONS OF THE LAST HOUR

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as
you have heard that the[a] Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come,
by which we know that it is the last hour.
19 They went out from us, but they were not
of us; for if they had been of us, they would
have continued with us; but *they went out*
that they might be made manifest, that
none of them were of us.

20 But you have an anointing from the
Holy One, and you know all things.[a] 21 I
have not written to you because you do not
know the truth, but because you know it,
and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar but he who denies that
Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who
denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever
denies the Son does not have the Father
either; he who acknowledges the Son has
the Father also.

LET TRUTH ABIDE IN YOU

24 Therefore let that abide in you which
you heard from the beginning. If what you
heard from the beginning abides in you,
you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that He has
promised us—eternal life.

26 These things I have written to you
concerning those who *try to* deceive you.
27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do
not need that anyone teach you; but as the
same anointing teaches you concerning
all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and
just as it has taught you, you will[a] abide in
Him.

2:18 [a]NU-Text omits *the.* **2:20** [a]NU-Text reads *you all know.* **2:27** [a]NU-Text reads *you abide.*

THE CHILDREN OF GOD

28And now, little children, abide in Him, that when[a] He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 29If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God![a] Therefore the world does not know us,[b] because it did not know Him. 2Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

SIN AND THE CHILD OF GOD

4Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. 5And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. 6Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

SATAN
With whom did sin begin?
1 John 3:7, 8

7Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. 8He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

THE IMPERATIVE OF LOVE

10In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother. 11For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, 12not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

13Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. 14We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love *his* brother[a] abides in death. 15Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

THE OUTWORKING OF LOVE

16By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. 17But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

18My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 19And by this we know[a] that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. 20For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. 21Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. 22And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. 23And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us[a] commandment.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR

24Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3and every spirit that does not confess that[a] Jesus Christ has come

2:28 [a]NU-Text reads *if.* **3:1** [a]NU-Text adds *And we are.* [b]M-Text reads *you.* **3:14** [a]NU-Text omits *his brother.* **3:19** [a]NU-Text reads *we shall know.* **3:23** [a]M-Text omits *us.* **4:3** [a]NU-Text omits *that* and *Christ has come in the flesh.*

MIR MAKING IT REAL // 1 JOHN 4:8

Love Without Limits If you say you love your friend, but spread rumors behind her back, then everyone else knows that you didn't really love her. Love is loyal. A friend may claim to always have your back, but when your life falls apart around you, they find better things to do than walk through the hard times with you. Love doesn't run when the going gets hard. Anyone can claim to love you, but if it doesn't show up in the way they treat you, then it really isn't love.

God is love. God doesn't just give love or have love; He *is* love. Love is a part of Him as surely as your thoughts are a part of you. When you have God, you have love because He *is* love. His love will flow through you as you grow in Him. You will love others freely. You will forgive with grace. You'll be kind and gentle and merciful.

So go for it—love the world as God loves you. There is nothing to lose and everything to gain. Relax and let Him love *you*. Others will trust in Christ and come to know Him because they have seen His love through you. (See also: 1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 2:4–7; 1 John 4:7.)

Words to Live By

Know: The word translated as "know" in 1 John 4:8 is the Greek word *ginosko* (ghin-oce'-ko). It means "to know completely or have a full understanding." It signifies a strong relationship. Scripture tells us we can know God because Jesus and the Holy Spirit reveal Him to us (Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22).

in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 5 They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them. 6 We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

KNOWING GOD THROUGH LOVE

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

SEEING GOD THROUGH LOVE

12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

LOVE
What destroys fear?
1 John 4:18

THE CONSUMMATION OF LOVE

17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear



LIFE APP

Love / 1 John 4:10, 11

All we need is love . . . that's what the world keeps telling us. But that word, *love*, can be so confusing! It means everything from the way we feel about our parents to the way we feel about our favorite food. Movies tell us it's a warm and fuzzy feeling that can end as quickly as it began. We hear songs about how love hurts, how it makes the world go round, and how it can build bridges. We can read definitions of love, but is it a feeling? Is it something that just strikes us out of the blue—something out of our control?

It's unfortunate but true that love is something our world seems to keep looking for, but rarely finding. Relationships begin and end with lightning speed because love seems to appear and disappear without warning. Somehow we know this is just not right. But how do we change the sad facts? What exactly is love anyway?

To understand love, it's important to go to the source and get the real definition. The Bible tells us that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). So to get a handle on what love is, we have to see what God has to say about it. He says love is patient, kind, and gentle; it is not conceited, rude, or selfish. And He also says, "Love never fails" (1 Cor. 13:8). Obviously, what we call love in this crazy, self-centered world is not at all what God has in mind.

If you want to see what real love is, take a look at God's love for you. Even when you didn't know God, let alone love Him, He sent His Son to die for you. You never earned God's love and you never can. God loves you because He chooses to—He made a conscious choice to love you. He doesn't just have a warm, fuzzy feeling toward you that could end tomorrow. God decided to love you and will never change His mind.

So, what is love? It is the choice to express God's caring and compassion through your own life. It's choosing to put the wants and needs of another ahead of your own. Love is giving your best even if you get nothing in return.

MAKING IT REAL // 1 JOHN 4:19–21

Family Obviously, 1 John 4:19–21 isn't just talking about siblings; it's talking about all Christians and those who will become Christians. But to understand these verses better, let's take a look at the people you live with.

Most of you have brothers and sisters; they can really test your ability to love. They know you so well. They know what makes you cringe and what makes you cry. They can understand you (sometimes) better than anyone else. They can irritate you to no end, but God says that if you love Him you *have* to love them. He says that if you don't, you're a liar. If you don't love the people you can see (the ones who share your bathroom, eat the last of your favorite snacks, and go through your things), then God says you can't possibly love Him, the One you haven't seen. Getting along with your brothers and sisters means you'll get lots of practice at forgiveness. The best thing that could happen is that you'll become really good friends with the people God put right in your home. He can do anything. So love your family and watch as God does a miracle right in your own house! And you can take what you learn from loving your earthy family and treat your brothers and sisters in Christ with the same love. (See also: Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:1–3; 1 Pet. 4:8; 2 John 5, 6.)

Words to Live By

Hates: The word translated as "hates" in 1 John 4:20 is the Greek word *miseo* (mis-eh'-o). It means "to detest or consider of no importance." *Miseo* is a hateful feeling toward someone; it is not caring about them or their wants or needs. If the love of God lives within you, you cannot detest others, because God is love and He tells us that we must love others (Matt. 25:31–46).

involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19We love Him[a] because He first loved us.

LOVE

What must be present in someone who claims to love God?

1 John 4:20, 21

OBEDIENCE BY FAITH

20If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can[a] he love God whom he has not seen? 21And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

5 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. 2By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His

1 John 5:1

Christ is not Jesus' last name. It's from the Greek translation of the Hebrew word for "Messiah" or "Anointed One." In Old Testament times, kings, priests, and prophets were all anointed, which means they had olive oil poured on their heads to show that they were specially chosen by God. The Jews of Jesus' day believed that the Messiah would become their king and free them from the control of the Roman Empire. Jesus, however, came as a spiritual leader who freed the world from the effects of sin.

4:19 [a]NU-Text omits *Him.* **4:20** [a]NU-Text reads *he cannot.*

LIFE APP

Gaming / 1 John 5:21

Gaming is fun. You can enter a whole, new world and do things you may never do in real life. In this virtual gaming world, you can walk into the life of an unbelievably strong soldier, an unrealistically fast driver, a fictional character, or a mythological creature. You can even play games online, with people from all over the world, testing your skills and reflexes against the best gamers everywhere.

Gaming in and of itself isn't good or bad. It's an activity that can be fun and challenging; it can even help you develop your skills in many areas, such as decision making and hand-eye coordination. But there is also a hidden danger in gaming. It can be addictive. One game can lead to another, which leads to another and, before you know it, you've spent hours playing one game. This may happen once and not be a big deal. But when it begins to happen continually, gaming can start to become an idol in your life, something that takes away the focus and worship that should go only to God.

When gaming begins to become an addiction, everything in your life will revolve around playing the game; all that will matter is being home so you can play that game. You won't have time to read your Bible; you may barely remember to whisper a sleepy prayer before you nod off; you won't be able to make it to church or youth group; and you won't have the time or the desire to get out and try to make a difference in the real world.

The Bible repeatedly warns us about idolatry. First John 5:21 says, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." John wasn't talking to a Sunday school class. "Little children" included everyone in the church. We would be wise to take John's advice and apply it to gaming. When gaming becomes an addiction, it threatens to become an idol in your life. If that happens, confess it to God and ask Him to free you from the hold of gaming. Then you can, once again, realize the true freedom that comes from serving and worshipping Him in the real world.

commandments. 3For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. 4For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our[a] faith. 5Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S WITNESS

6This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. 8And there are three that bear witness on earth:[a] the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

9If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which[a] He has testified of His Son. 10He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. 11And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life,[a] and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.

CONFIDENCE AND COMPASSION IN PRAYER

14Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

16If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *which does* not *lead* to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is sin *leading* to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. 17All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading* to death.

KNOWING THE TRUE—REJECTING THE FALSE

18We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself,[a] and the wicked one does not touch him.

19We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one.

20And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

21Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

5:4 [a]M-Text reads *your.* **5:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit the words from *in heaven* (verse 7) through *on earth* (verse 8). Only four or five very late manuscripts contain these words in Greek. **5:9** [a]NU-Text reads *God, that.* **5:13** [a]NU-Text omits the rest of this verse. **5:18** [a]NU-Text reads *him.*

2 John

THEME: BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHERS
PURPOSE: TRUTH IS BASED ON THE FACT THAT JESUS WAS BOTH HUMAN AND DIVINE.

OUTLINE

1–3.....Greetings and Prayer
4–11 .....Walk in Truth and Love
12, 13.....Final Greetings

GREETING THE ELECT LADY

The Elder,

To the elect lady and her children, whom
I love in truth, and not only I, but also all
those who have known the truth, 2because
of the truth which abides in us and will be
with us forever:

3Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with
you[a] from God the Father and from the
Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in
truth and love.

WALK IN CHRIST'S COMMANDMENTS

4I rejoiced greatly that I have found *some*
of your children walking in truth, as we
received commandment from the Father.
5And now I plead with you, lady, not as
though I wrote a new commandment to
you, but that which we have had from
the beginning: that we love one another.
6This is love, that we walk according to His
commandments. This is the command-
ment, that as you have heard from the
beginning, you should walk in it.

2 John 7

The deceivers that John warned about may have been gnostics, a group of false teachers who plagued the early Christian church. The gnostics believed that all physical matter was evil, so they refused to accept the fact that Jesus was God in human form.

BEWARE OF ANTICHRIST DECEIVERS

7For many deceivers have gone out into the
world who do not confess Jesus Christ *as*
coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and
an antichrist. 8Look to yourselves, that we[a]

3 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *us.* **8** [a]NU-Text reads *you.*



PROFILE
JOHN THE APOSTLE

John was probably the youngest of Jesus' original twelve disciples. He was just a fisherman one day and was called by Jesus to become a fisher of men the next. He walked with and watched Jesus for three years. John was the only one of the disciples who stood at the cross as Jesus died. He was among the first to see the risen Christ. We owe him for five New Testament books: John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation. And John outlived all the other apostles.

God chose John to write about the greatest theme of all: God's love. John tells us God *is* love. He knew God's love firsthand. And the goal of John's writing was to convince readers about Jesus and help them to experience, through Him, God's love. He said, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1).

The love he experienced in Jesus Christ transformed John. It made such a difference in his life that he made a difference in countless others. Think for a moment about how many lives have been changed by these simple words of Jesus first penned by John: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

+ MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

If John could speak to you right now, he would undoubtedly ask if you have ever personalized that verse you just read. Have you ever realized how far God's love went in sending Jesus? Have you believed that gift was for you? Have you accepted forgiveness and eternal life from Him? If you have, the biggest possible difference has begun in your life. It will last beyond time.

Make sure you offer that difference-making message to others.

? WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read about John and the Jesus he loved in the Gospel of John as well as in the other Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and in the other books John wrote.

The apostle John knew Jesus as a personal friend and Savior. Because he knew Jesus so well, he was able to tell others about Him and the new life available through Him. John's love of Jesus has made a life-changing difference in countless lives. If you know Jesus and have experienced salvation in Him, your life can make a difference, too!

do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we[b] may receive a full reward.

9 Whoever transgresses[a] and does not
abide in the doctrine of Christ does not
have God. He who abides in the doctrine of
Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If
anyone comes to you and does not bring
this doctrine, do not receive him into your
house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets
him shares in his evil deeds.

JOHN'S FAREWELL GREETING

12 Having many things to write to you, I did
not wish *to do so* with paper and ink; but I
hope to come to you and speak face to face,
that our joy may be full.

13 The children of your elect sister greet
you. Amen.

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8 [b]NU-Text reads *you.* **9** [a]NU-Text reads *goes ahead.*

3 John

THEME: PRACTICE HOSPITALITY TOWARD GENUINE CHRISTIAN TEACHERS
PURPOSE: TOTAL DEVOTION TO THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL IS THE KEY TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

OUTLINE

1–4.....Greetings to Gaius
5–12 .....The Importance of Working Together
13, 14.....Final Greetings

GREETING TO GAIUS

The Elder,

To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth:

> ***3 John 6***
> The church John describes in this verse is not the same kind of church you're used to. Church buildings as we know them today—places set aside specifically for Christian worship and Bible study—were not common until the third century. Before then, people met together in their homes to study Scripture and pray. Traveling teachers and missionaries moved from city to city, relying on the kindness of local Christians for food, housing, and other necessities. When you see the word *church* in the Bible, it's referring to a group of Christ's followers in a certain area.

[2]Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. [3]For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. [4]I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.[a]

GAIUS COMMENDED FOR GENEROSITY

[5]Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and[a] for strangers, [6]who have borne witness of your love before the church. *If* you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, [7]because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. [8]We therefore ought to receive[a] such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.

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4 [a]NU-Text reads *the truth.* **5** [a]NU-Text adds *especially.* **8** [a]NU-Text reads *support.*

DIOTREPHES AND DEMETRIUS

9I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. 10Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.

11Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but[a] he who does evil has not seen God.

12Demetrius has a *good* testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.

FAREWELL GREETING

13I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; 14but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face.

Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

---

11 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *but.*

Jude

DATE OF WRITING: EARLY A.D. 60S
AUTHOR: JUDE
THEME: BELIEVERS SHOULD STAND STRONG IN THEIR FAITH
PURPOSE: INSULATE YOURSELVES FROM FALSE TEACHING BY GROWING IN THE FAITH.

OUTLINE

1, 2 .....Greetings
3–23 .....Defending the Faith Against False Teachers
24, 25.....Final Prayer

KEY VERSE:

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

THEN ///

Have you ever read a "letter to the editor" in the newspaper? Sometimes regular, everyday people (not reporters) will write letters to the newspaper. They usually do this when they feel strongly about an issue and they want everyone to know how they feel. The Book of Jude is like one of those letters.

Jude was a man with a mission. Even though Christianity hadn't been around a long time (and maybe *because* of that), there were lots of people twisting and turning the truth of the gospel to mean something totally different. Some were saying that Christianity was too simple, that there must be more to the gospel than Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Others were saying that Christianity was too hard, that with God's grace we don't really have to worry at all anymore about obeying God's commands. Neither of these groups got it—both were *really* wrong. There were so many false stories circulating it was difficult to know who was telling the truth. Jude had no patience for confusion and lying. He wrote his letter to the church to put an end to those deceptions and to remind everyone that what we do matters to God.

NOW ///

Just like Jude's readers, we will encounter false teachers as we continue to grow in our faith. Even though Jude gives us vivid images of the false teachers his readers had encountered, their characters and specific errors are not the focus of his book. The focus of this book is the believers' faith in God, which allows them to recognize false teachers and refuse their false beliefs.

Jude does not call us, as believers, to go on hunts to find and confront people who teach wrong things. Rather, he acknowledges the reality and the threat of the false teachers, as well as the fact that they are under the condemnation of God. He encourages us to protect ourselves from them, know the truth, stand strong in our faith, and grow daily in grace.

REALITY CHECK ///

Even if you're not facing any false teaching right now, you will at some point. Many people today learn just enough Bible verses to twist the meanings for their own purposes. Modern false teachers may also use slick words and other manipulations to take advantage of the honest spiritual hunger of someone else by confusing them with clever theories.

How can you prepare to stand against these false teachings when you encounter them? Jude has some great suggestions. "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20, 21).

Focus on your faith in Jesus; keep praying, keep loving God and others, read God's Word, and keep the truth of your salvation continually on your mind. If your relationship with God is strong, you will be much more able to recognize false teaching and stand strongly against it.

GREETING TO THE CALLED

Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,

To those who are called, sanctified[a] by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:

2 Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God[a] and our Lord Jesus Christ.

OLD AND NEW APOSTATES

5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the

1 [a]NU-Text reads *beloved.* **4** [a]NU-Text omits *God.*

people out of the land of Egypt, afterward
destroyed those who did not believe. 6And
the angels who did not keep their proper
domain, but left their own abode, He has
reserved in everlasting chains under dark-
ness for the judgment of the great day;
7as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities
around them in a similar manner to these,
having given themselves over to sexual im-
morality and gone after strange flesh, are
set forth as an example, suffering the ven-
geance of eternal fire.

8Likewise also these dreamers defile the
flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dig-
nitaries. 9Yet Michael the archangel, in con-
tending with the devil, when he disputed
about the body of Moses, dared not bring
against him a reviling accusation, but said,
"The Lord rebuke you!" 10But these speak
evil of whatever they do not know; and
whatever they know naturally, like brute
beasts, in these things they corrupt them-
selves. 11Woe to them! For they have gone
in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the
error of Balaam for profit, and perished in
the rebellion of Korah.

Jude 11

What did a person have to do to make this biblical "Hall of Shame"? Cain chose to worship God in his own way, rather than follow the Lord's instructions. When his brother, Abel, received God's approval for his worship, Cain got jealous and killed Abel. Balaam had tried to curse Israel, God's chosen people. Korah led a rebellion against Moses, God's chosen leader of the Israelites.

APOSTATES DEPRAVED AND DOOMED

12These are spots in your love feasts, while
they feast with you without fear, serving
only themselves. *They are* clouds without
water, carried about[a] by the winds; late
autumn trees without fruit, twice dead,
pulled up by the roots; 13raging waves
of the sea, foaming up their own shame;
wandering stars for whom is reserved the
blackness of darkness forever.

14Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam,
prophesied about these men also, saying,
"Behold, the Lord comes with ten thou-
sands of His saints, 15to execute judgment
on all, to convict all who are ungodly
among them of all their ungodly deeds
which they have committed in an ungodly
way, and of all the harsh things which un-
godly sinners have spoken against Him."

APOSTATES PREDICTED

16These are grumblers, complainers, walk-
ing according to their own lusts; and they
mouth great swelling *words,* flattering
people to gain advantage. 17But you, be-
loved, remember the words which were
spoken before by the apostles of our Lord
Jesus Christ: 18how they told you that there
would be mockers in the last time who
would walk according to their own un-
godly lusts. 19These are sensual persons,
who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

MAINTAIN YOUR LIFE WITH GOD

20But you, beloved, building yourselves up
on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy
Spirit, 21keep yourselves in the love of God,
looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus
Christ unto eternal life.

22And on some have compassion, mak-
ing a distinction;[a] 23but others save with
fear, pulling *them* out of the fire,[a] hating
even the garment defiled by the flesh.

GLORY TO GOD

24Now to Him who is able to keep you[a]
from stumbling,
And to present *you* faultless
Before the presence of His glory with
exceeding joy,
25To God our Savior,[a]
Who alone is wise,[b]
Be glory and majesty,
Dominion and power,[c]
Both now and forever.
Amen.

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12 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *along.*
22 [a]NU-Text reads *who are doubting* (or *making distinctions*). **23** [a]NU-Text adds *and on some have mercy with fear* and omits *with fear* in first clause. **24** [a]M-Text reads *them.* **25** [a]NU-Text reads *To the only God our Savior.* [b]NU-Text omits *Who . . . is wise* and adds *Through Jesus Christ our Lord.* [c]NU-Text adds *Before all time.*

Revelation

DATE OF WRITING: A.D. 96
AUTHOR: THE APOSTLE JOHN
THEME: THE LORD OUR GOD THE ALMIGHTY REIGNS
PURPOSE: GOD WILL SURELY JUDGE SIN AND PROVIDE HEAVEN FOR BELIEVERS.

OUTLINE

1:1–7 .....A Prophecy from John
1:8–20 .....A Vision of the Living Lord
2:1—3:22 .....Letters to the Seven Churches
4:1–11 .....A Vision of Worship in Heaven
5:1—6:17 .....A Scroll with Seven Seals
7:1–17 .....Worship in Front of God's Throne
8:1—11:19.....Seven Trumpets
12:1—13:18 .....A Dragon and Two Beasts
14:1—15:8.....Visions of God's Judgment
16:1–21.....Seven Bowls of God's Anger
17:1—20:10 .....God's Enemies Are Defeated
20:11–15 .....The Final Judgment
21:1–8.....A New Heaven and a New Earth
21:9—22:5.....The New Jerusalem
22:6–21.....Christ Will Soon Return

KEY VERSE:

"Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this" (Revelation 1:19).

THEN ///

If we could see the Book of Revelation instead of read it, it would be a special effects extravaganza. Revelation is a book by John, the disciple, recording a vision he was given of the end of the world. He describes heavenly things in earthly terms. Sometimes it gets pretty bizarre trying to imagine what a whole other dimension of life will look like.

Some of the images in Revelation are a mystery to this day. We won't recognize them until we see them for ourselves in the New Heaven and New Earth. But we do recognize enough of Revelation's message to know this: for now, Satan and human evil have some leeway in this world. There will come a day, though, when God will say, "Enough," and we all will be judged according to our faith and our works.

Revelation also teaches us that in the end, those who have their faith in Christ's righteousness will be invited into God's presence forever and Satan will be banished from the kingdom. It's a real and true happily-ever-after kind of story. Though the thought of the end of the world can be a frightening one, Revelation is actually a book of encouragement. No matter what catastrophes or challenges we face today, we know how the whole thing ends: God wins!

NOW ///

There are details in this true story that can seem a little confusing. For instance, the Bible teaches us that, at some point during the last years of the earth, Christ will return and we will be caught up with Him into the heavens. Most people call this the "rapture" even though most Bibles don't use that word. We don't know exactly how the rapture will happen. Will our clothes be left in a pile on the floor? Will our bodies disappear? Will it be so quick that no one will notice? There is so much we don't know and even the things we do know lead us to more questions. We have to remember, though, that the details aren't the most important things, because God will take care of us. When it all happens, it will seem just right to us because God will be handling things.

REALITY CHECK ///

These days, we hear so much about the end of the world that you may be asking yourself, "Should I try to guess when Jesus will return?"

You should be anticipating Christ's return. That means you should live your life so that you are ready to face Him at any moment. But the Bible clearly tells us that there is no way to figure out when Jesus will come back to earth. We may enjoy paying close attention to the prophecies of the Bible and the news headlines to see if we can spot when a biblical prophecy is fulfilled. That's okay as long as we realize that some new information may come along that will force us to rethink the prophecy's meaning and fulfillment. So we should anticipate Christ's return with joy and expectation, but not with fear or obsession. Jesus said no one but God knows when the world as we know it will end, but we don't need to be concerned because Jesus also said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

INTRODUCTION AND BENEDICTION

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which
God gave Him to show His servants—
things which must shortly take place.
And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to
His servant John, 2who bore witness to the
word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus
Christ, to all things that he saw. 3Blessed
is he who reads and those who hear the
words of this prophecy, and keep those
things which are written in it; for the time
is near.

GREETING THE SEVEN CHURCHES

4John, to the seven churches which are in
Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who
is and who was and who is to come, and
from the seven Spirits who are before His
throne, 5and from Jesus Christ, the faithful
witness, the firstborn from the dead, and
the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him who loved us and washed[a] us
from our sins in His own blood, 6and has
made us kings[a] and priests to His God and
Father, to Him *be* glory and dominion for-
ever and ever. Amen.

7Behold, He is coming with clouds, and
every eye will see Him, even they who
pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth
will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

8"I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Be-
ginning and *the* End,"[a] says the Lord,[b] "who
is and who was and who is to come, the
Almighty."

VISION OF THE SON OF MAN

9I, John, both[a] your brother and compan-
ion in the tribulation and kingdom and
patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island
that is called Patmos for the word of God
and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10I
was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and
I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a
trumpet, 11saying, "I am the Alpha and the
Omega, the First and the Last," and,[a] "What
you see, write in a book and send *it* to the
seven churches which are in Asia:[b] to Ephe-
sus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to
Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

12Then I turned to see the voice that
spoke with me. And having turned I saw
seven golden lampstands, 13and in the
midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the
Son of Man, clothed with a garment down
to the feet and girded about the chest with
a golden band. 14His head and hair *were*
white like wool, as white as snow, and His
eyes like a flame of fire; 15His feet *were* like
fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His
voice as the sound of many waters; 16He
had in His right hand seven stars, out of
His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword,
and His countenance *was* like the sun shin-
ing in its strength. 17And when I saw Him, I
fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right
hand on me, saying to me,[a] "Do not be
afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18I *am* He
who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am
alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the
keys of Hades and of Death. 19Write[a] the
things which you have seen, and the things
which are, and the things which will take
place after this. 20The mystery of the seven
stars which you saw in My right hand, and
the seven golden lampstands: The seven
stars are the angels of the seven churches,

Revelation 1:9

The Roman emperor Domitian wasn't exactly what you would call a friend of Christianity. As far as he was concerned, Christianity was an illegal religion; and those who practiced it were asking for persecution. Tradition has it, the apostle John was sentenced to live on the island of Patmos for eighteen months because he refused to stop preaching about Jesus. Don't assume that island life on Patmos was easy, either. People sentenced to the small, rocky island (about thirty-five miles off the coast of what is now Turkey) were forced to work in mines and quarries.

1:5 [a]NU-Text reads *loves us and freed;* M-Text reads *loves us and washed.* **1:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *a kingdom.* **1:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *the Beginning and the End.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text add *God.* **1:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *both.* **1:11** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *I am* through third *and.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *which are in Asia.* **1:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.* **1:19** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Therefore, write.*

MAKING IT REAL // REVELATION 2:3, 4

Faithfulness You may know people who are much like the ones Jesus spoke to in Revelation 2:3, 4. They go to church all the time, wear Christian T-shirts, and scream "Jesus!" really loud at concerts. But somehow, their wholehearted love for Jesus has grown a bit dull. Their lives have become *about* Him, but are not lived with Him at the center.

The Lord wants you to be known as a person who loves Him. He'd rather you be known as a gentle, humble lover of God than as the most eloquent preacher on earth—someone who knows all the right words, but doesn't love Jesus more than anything else.

Many things will tempt you to love them more than you love Jesus, but don't give in. Hold on tight to your love for Him. Other people should recognize at least one thing about you—that you have a passionate, fervent, fiery love for God that will not quit. It really makes no difference if they know all the great things you've done for God. You want them to know that you love Him, that you're connected to Him, that He is number one in your life.

If you've gotten caught up in doing a bunch of stuff in the name of the Lord, slam on the brakes. Run into His presence. Pray and worship Him. Start listening to Him and hearing His voice. Let Him fill your heart again with love for God and man. (See also: Deut. 6:4–6, 14, 15; Josh. 23:11; Matt. 22:36, 37.)

Words to Live By

Patience: The word translated as "patience" in Revelation 2:3 is the Greek word *hupomone* (hoop-om-on-ay'). It means "cheerful or hopeful endurance." When life is hard, we don't have to be filled with worry or get depressed. We can just hang on (persevere and have patience) because we know Jesus is on our side. We can be sure that sooner or later all things will "work together for good" on our behalf because we love the Lord (Rom. 8:28).

Revelation 2:1

Any list of the major cities of the ancient world would have to include Ephesus. This bustling seaport city boasted a population of two hundred fifty thousand, a thriving business community, and an active religious culture—not to mention one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The temple dedicated to the Roman goddess, Diana, was truly an architectural marvel. It also symbolized the pagan worship that went on in the city. The apostle Paul had started a church in Ephesus, and the apostle John had worked in the city for almost thirty years before being shipped off to Patmos.

and the seven lampstands which you saw[a] are the seven churches.

THE LOVELESS CHURCH

2 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,

'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: [2]"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; [3]and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. [4]Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left

1:20 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *which you saw.*

your first love. 5Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. 6But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."'

Revelation 2:8

Would you believe some citizens of the Roman Empire thought so much of their emperor that they actually worshiped him? Smyrna, a large harbor city about forty miles north of Ephesus, was the home of a temple built to honor the emperor Tiberius. The city became a center of emperor worship. Christians who chose not to join the pagan worship were severely persecuted. Today the city, which is located in Turkey, is known as Izmir.

THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

8"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write,

'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 9"I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and *I know* the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan. 10Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."'

THE COMPROMISING CHURCH

12"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13"I know your works,

Revelation 2:12

Pergamos was the capital of Asia—not the continent of Asia, but the Roman province of the same name. The city, located about fifty miles north of Smyrna, was known for its cultural and scientific communities. Pergamos boasted a library of about two hundred thousand volumes and a famous medical center. The city also offered a wide variety of pagan worship opportunities. In addition to its three temples dedicated to the Roman emperors, Pergamos was home to temples for the pagan goddess, Athena, and the god, Zeus.

and where you dwell, where Satan's throne *is*. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.[a] 16Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

17"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*."'

THE CORRUPT CHURCH

18"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,

'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: 19"I know your works, love, service, faith,[a] and your patience; and *as* for your works, the last *are* more than the first.

2:15 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *likewise* for *which thing I hate*. **2:19** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *faith, service*.

Revelation 2:18

Purple was the color of choice for the citizens of Thyatira. The city, located about twenty miles southeast of Pergamos, was famous for the purple dye and cloth that was produced there. Because of Thyatira's focus on business and manufacturing, a number of trade unions were located there.

20 Nevertheless I have a few things against
you, because you allow[a] that woman[b] Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach
and seduce[c] My servants to commit sexual
immorality and eat things sacrificed to
idols. 21 And I gave her time to repent of her
sexual immorality, and she did not repent.[a]
22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and
those who commit adultery with her into
great tribulation, unless they repent of
their[a] deeds. 23 I will kill her children with
death, and all the churches shall know
that I am He who searches the minds and
hearts. And I will give to each one of you
according to your works.

24 "Now to you I say, and[a] to the rest
in Thyatira, as many as do not have this
doctrine, who have not known the depths
of Satan, as they say, I will[b] put on you no
other burden. 25 But hold fast what you
have till I come. 26 And he who overcomes,
and keeps My works until the end, to him I
will give power over the nations—

27 *'He shall rule them with a rod of iron;*
They shall be dashed to pieces like the
potter's vessels'[a]—

as I also have received from My Father;
28 and I will give him the morning star.

29 "He who has an ear, let him hear what
the Spirit says to the churches."'

THE DEAD CHURCH

3 "And to the angel of the church in
Sardis write,

'These things says He who has
the seven Spirits of God and the seven
stars: "I know your works, that you have a
name that you are alive, but you are dead.
2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things
which remain, that are ready to die, for I
have not found your works perfect before
God.[a] 3 Remember therefore how you have
received and heard; hold fast and repent.
Therefore if you will not watch, I will come
upon you as a thief, and you will not know
what hour I will come upon you. 4 You[a] have
a few names even in Sardis who have not
defiled their garments; and they shall walk
with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He
who overcomes shall be clothed in white
garments, and I will not blot out his name
from the Book of Life; but I will confess his
name before My Father and before His angels.

Revelation 3:1

Sardis was what you might call a recovering city. Located about fifty miles east of Smyrna, the city of Sardis was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 17. The Roman emperor Tiberius helped rebuild the city. The citizens were so grateful they built temples in his honor and made Sardis one of the centers for emperor worship in the Near East.

6 "He who has an ear, let him hear what
the Spirit says to the churches."'

THE FAITHFUL CHURCH

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

'These things says He who is holy, He
who is true, *"He who has the key of David,*
He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts
and no one opens":[a] 8 "I know your works.
See, I have set before you an open door,
and no one can shut it;[a] for you have a little
strength, have kept My word, and have not
denied My name. 9 Indeed I will make *those*

2:20 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *I have against you that you tolerate.* [b]M-Text reads *your* wife Jezebel. [c]NU-Text and M-Text read *and teaches and seduces.* **2:21** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her sexual immorality.* **2:22** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *her.* **2:24** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *and.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *will.* **2:27** [a]Psalm 2:9 **3:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *My God.* **3:4** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Nevertheless you have a few names in Sardis.* **3:7** [a]Isaiah 22:22 **3:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *which no one can shut.*

Revelation 3:7

Philadelphia—no, not that Philadelphia—was located about seventy-five miles east of Ephesus. Like Sardis, Philadelphia was damaged by an earthquake in A.D. 17. Today, the city is known as Allahshehr, "the city of God." The ruins of many ancient Christian churches have been found there.

of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11Behold,[a] I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him* My new name.

13"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'

Revelation 3:14

If purple was Thyatira's color, black was Laodicea's color. Located on the banks of the Lycus River, about fifty miles southeast of Philadelphia, Laodicea was known for selling clothing made of the black wool produced by the sheep of the region. The city survived until the Middle Ages, when it was destroyed by Muslims during the Crusades.

THE LUKEWARM CHURCH

14"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans[a] write,

'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,[a] I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

22"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'"

THE THRONE ROOM OF HEAVEN

4 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

GOD
What does God look like?
Revelation 4:3–5

2Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne. 3And He who sat there was[a] like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. 4Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns[a] of gold on their heads. 5And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunder-

3:11 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Behold.*
3:14 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *in Laodicea.*
3:16 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *hot nor cold.*
4:3 [a]M-Text omits *And He who sat there was* (which makes the description in verse 3 modify the throne rather than God). **4:4** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *robes, with crowns.*

ings, and voices.[a] Seven lamps of fire *were* burning before the throne, which are the[b] seven Spirits of God.

Revelation 4:7

This isn't the first time these four bizarre creatures are mentioned in the Bible. The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel saw a very similar vision. Notice that each of the four looks like one of the most powerful creatures on earth—a man, a lion, a bull, and an eagle. Think about it. Human beings rule over every creature on earth. The lion is the king of the jungle. Bulls are the strongest tame animals. Eagles are the fastest, strongest birds.

6 Before the throne *there was*[a] a sea of
glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the
throne, and around the throne, *were* four
living creatures full of eyes in front and in
back. 7 The first living creature *was* like a
lion, the second living creature like a calf,
the third living creature had a face like a
man, and the fourth living creature *was*
like a flying eagle. 8 *The* four living crea-
tures, each having six wings, were full of
eyes around and within. And they do not
rest day or night, saying:

"Holy, holy, holy,[a]
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!"

9 Whenever the living creatures give
glory and honor and thanks to Him who
sits on the throne, who lives forever and
ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down be-
fore Him who sits on the throne and wor-
ship Him who lives forever and ever, and
cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

11 "You are worthy, O Lord,[a]
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist[b] and were
created."

THE LAMB TAKES THE SCROLL

5 And I saw in the right *hand* of Him
who sat on the throne a scroll writ-
ten inside and on the back, sealed
with seven seals. 2 Then I saw a strong an-
gel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is
worthy to open the scroll and to loose its
seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on the
earth or under the earth was able to open
the scroll, or to look at it.

4 So I wept much, because no one was
found worthy to open and read[a] the scroll,
or to look at it. 5 But one of the elders said
to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of
the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has
prevailed to open the scroll and to loose[a]
its seven seals."

6 And I looked, and behold,[a] in the midst
of the throne and of the four living crea-
tures, and in the midst of the elders, stood
a Lamb as though it had been slain, having
seven horns and seven eyes, which are the
seven Spirits of God sent out into all the
earth. 7 Then He came and took the scroll
out of the right hand of Him who sat on the
throne.

WORTHY IS THE LAMB

8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the
four living creatures and the twenty-four
elders fell down before the Lamb, each
having a harp, and golden bowls full of in-
cense, which are the prayers of the saints.
9 And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your
blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and
people and nation,
10 And have made us[a] kings[b] and priests
to our God;
And we[c] shall reign on the earth."

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of
many angels around the throne, the living

4:5 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *voices, and thunderings.* [b]M-Text omits *the.* **4:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *something like.* **4:8** [a]M-Text has *holy* nine times. **4:11** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *our Lord and God.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *existed.* **5:4** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *and read.* **5:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to loose.* **5:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *I saw in the midst . . . a Lamb standing.* **5:10** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *them.* [b]NU-Text reads *a kingdom.* [c]NU-Text and M-Text read *they.*

creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12saying with a loud voice:

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

13And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

"Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"[a]

14Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four[a] elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.[b]

FIRST SEAL: THE CONQUEROR

6 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals;[a] and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

SECOND SEAL: CONFLICT ON EARTH

3When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see."[a] 4Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

THIRD SEAL: SCARCITY ON EARTH

5When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart[a] of wheat for a denarius,[b] and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

> ***Revelation 6:6***
> Because bread was served at almost every Jewish meal, wheat was considered a necessity of life. Usually only slaves and poor people ate barley, which was normally used as feed for livestock.

FOURTH SEAL: WIDESPREAD DEATH ON EARTH

7When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

FIFTH SEAL: THE CRY OF THE MARTYRS

9When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were*, was completed.

SIXTH SEAL: COSMIC DISTURBANCES

12I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold,[a] there was a great earthquake;

5:13 [a]M-Text adds *Amen.* **5:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *twenty-four.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Him who lives forever and ever.* **6:1** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *seven seals.* **6:3** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *and see.* **6:6** [a]Greek *choinix;* that is, approximately one quart [b]This was approximately one day's wage for a worker. **6:12** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *behold.*

and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon[b] became like blood. 13And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders,[a] the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

THE SEALED OF ISRAEL

7 After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. 2Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." 4And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed:

5of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand *were* sealed;[a]
of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand *were* sealed;
6of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand *were* sealed;
7of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand *were* sealed;
8of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand *were* sealed.

A MULTITUDE FROM THE GREAT TRIBULATION

9After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12saying:

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
Be to our God forever and ever.
Amen."

13Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"

14And I said to him, "Sir,[a] you know."

So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. 16They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters.[a] And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

6:12 [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *the whole moon.* **6:15** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the commanders, the rich men.* **7:5** [a]In NU-Text and M-Text *were sealed* is stated only in verses 5a and 8c; the words are understood in the remainder of the passage. **7:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *My lord.* **7:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *to fountains of the waters of life.*

HEAVEN
What will it be like in heaven?
Revelation 7:15–17

SEVENTH SEAL: PRELUDE TO THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

8 When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. 3Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. 5Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

6So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

FIRST TRUMPET: VEGETATION STRUCK

7The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth.[a] And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

SECOND TRUMPET: THE SEAS STRUCK

8Then the second angel sounded: And *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

THIRD TRUMPET: THE WATERS STRUCK

10Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

FOURTH TRUMPET: THE HEAVENS STRUCK

12Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

13And I looked, and I heard an angel[a] flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Revelation 9:3

At first glance, the locust seems like a pretty unlikely creature of destruction. It looks like a large grasshopper with two sets of wings and a brown-colored body two to three inches long. Nothing to be worried about, right? Wrong. Locusts travel in swarms large enough to blot out the sun in the sky! An average-size swarm of locusts, numbering in the millions, can strip a field completely bare—down to its last leaf—within minutes.

FIFTH TRUMPET: THE LOCUSTS FROM THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

9 Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit. 2And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5And they were not given *authority* to kill them, but to torment

8:7 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *and a third of the earth was burned up.* **8:13** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *eagle.*

them *for* five months. Their torment *was* like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. 6In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

7The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces *were* like the faces of men. 8They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' *teeth.* 9And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings *was* like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. 10They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power *was* to hurt men five months. 11And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew *is* Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

12One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

SIXTH TRUMPET: THE ANGELS FROM THE EUPHRATES

13Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. 16Now the number of the army of the horsemen *was* two hundred million; I heard the number of them. 17And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses *were* like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. 18By these three *plagues* a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. 19For their power[a] is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails *are* like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

20But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries[a] or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

THE MIGHTY ANGEL WITH THE LITTLE BOOK

10 I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow *was* on his head, his face *was* like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. 2He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and *his* left *foot* on the land, 3and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices,[a] I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me,[b] "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them."

5The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand[a] to heaven 6and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer, 7but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

JOHN EATS THE LITTLE BOOK

8Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth."

9So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book."

And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth."

10Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. 11And he[a] said to me, "You must prophesy again

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9:19 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the power of the horses.* **9:21** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *drugs.* **10:4** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *sounded.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.* **10:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *right hand.* **10:11** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *they.*

about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."

THE TWO WITNESSES

11 Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood,[a] saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. 2But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot *for* forty-two months. 3And I will give *power* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

> ***Revelation 11:3***
> People in ancient times wore sackcloth only in times of great sorrow or distress. If you've ever felt sackcloth, you know why they didn't wear it more often. The cloth was a dark, scratchy material made of goat's hair. The tradition of wearing dark clothing to funerals came from the custom of wearing sackcloth in times of sorrow.

4These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God[a] of the earth. 5And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

THE WITNESSES KILLED

7When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. 8And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our[a] Lord was crucified. 9Then *those* from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow[a] their dead bodies to be put into graves. 10And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

THE WITNESSES RESURRECTED

11Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. 12And they[a] heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. 13In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

SEVENTH TRUMPET: THE KINGDOM PROCLAIMED

15Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms[a] of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" 16And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17saying:

"We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
The One who is and who was and who is to come,[a]
Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.
18The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,
And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,
And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,

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11:1 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *And the angel stood.* **11:4** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *Lord.* **11:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *their.* **11:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *nations see . . . and will not allow.* **11:12** [a]M-Text reads *I.* **11:15** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *kingdom . . . has become.* **11:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *and who is to come.*

And those who fear Your name, small
and great,
And should destroy those who destroy
the earth."

19Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant[a] was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

THE WOMAN, THE CHILD, AND THE DRAGON

12 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. 2Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

3And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. 5She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. 6Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

SATAN THROWN OUT OF HEAVEN

7And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them[a] in heaven any longer. 9So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. 11And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. 12Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

THE WOMAN PERSECUTED

13Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*. 14But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. 15So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. 16But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.[a]

THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

13 Then I[a] stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns,[b] and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. 2Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. 3And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. 4So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

5And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue[a] for forty-two

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11:19 [a]M-Text reads *the covenant of the Lord.* **12:8** [a]M-Text reads *him.* **12:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *Christ.* **13:1** [a]NU-Text reads *he.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *ten horns and seven heads.* **13:5** [a]M-Text reads *make war.*

months. 6Then he opened his mouth in
blasphemy against God, to blaspheme
His name, His tabernacle, and those who
dwell in heaven. 7It was granted to him to
make war with the saints and to overcome
them. And authority was given him over
every tribe,[a] tongue, and nation. 8All who
dwell on the earth will worship him, whose
names have not been written in the Book
of Life of the Lamb slain from the founda-
tion of the world.

9If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10He
who leads into captivity shall go into cap-
tivity; he who kills with the sword must be
killed with the sword. Here is the patience
and the faith of the saints.

THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

11Then I saw another beast coming up out
of the earth, and he had two horns like a
lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12And he
exercises all the authority of the first beast
in his presence, and causes the earth and
those who dwell in it to worship the first
beast, whose deadly wound was healed.
13He performs great signs, so that he even
makes fire come down from heaven on
the earth in the sight of men. 14And he
deceives those[a] who dwell on the earth by
those signs which he was granted to do in
the sight of the beast, telling those who
dwell on the earth to make an image to
the beast who was wounded by the sword
and lived. 15He was granted *power* to give
breath to the image of the beast, that the
image of the beast should both speak and
cause as many as would not worship the
image of the beast to be killed. 16He causes
all, both small and great, rich and poor, free
and slave, to receive a mark on their right
hand or on their foreheads, 17and that no
one may buy or sell except one who has
the mark or[a] the name of the beast, or the
number of his name.

18Here is wisdom. Let him who has un-
derstanding calculate the number of the
beast, for it is the number of a man: His
number *is* 666.

THE LAMB AND THE 144,000

14 Then I looked, and behold, a[a]
Lamb standing on Mount Zion,
and with Him one hundred *and*
forty-four thousand, having[b] His Father's
name written on their foreheads. 2And I
heard a voice from heaven, like the voice
of many waters, and like the voice of loud
thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists
playing their harps. 3They sang as it were
a new song before the throne, before the
four living creatures, and the elders; and no
one could learn that song except the hun-
dred *and* forty-four thousand who were
redeemed from the earth. 4These are the
ones who were not defiled with women,
for they are virgins. These are the ones who
follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These
were redeemed[a] from *among* men, *being*
firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. 5And in
their mouth was found no deceit,[a] for they
are without fault before the throne of God.[b]

THE PROCLAMATIONS OF THREE ANGELS

6Then I saw another angel flying in the
midst of heaven, having the everlasting
gospel to preach to those who dwell on the
earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and
people— 7saying with a loud voice, "Fear
God and give glory to Him, for the hour of
His judgment has come; and worship Him
who made heaven and earth, the sea and
springs of water."

8And another angel followed, saying,
"Babylon[a] is fallen, is fallen, that great city,
because she has made all nations drink of
the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

> ***Revelation 14:10***
> Brimstone is another name for sulfur, a fast-burning, disgusting-smelling rock. Ancient armies sometimes used burning sulfur as ammunition in their catapults, launching it over city walls to set fire to the buildings inside.

13:7 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *and people.* **13:14** [a]M-Text reads *my own people.* **13:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *or.* **14:1** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text add *His name and.* **14:4** [a]M-Text adds *by Jesus.* **14:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *falsehood.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *before the throne of God.* **14:8** [a]NU-Text reads *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, which has made;* M-Text reads *Babylon the great is fallen. She has made.*

9Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

12Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those[a] who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

13Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me,[a] "Write: 'Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'"

"Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

REAPING THE EARTH'S HARVEST

14Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. 15And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You[a] to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

REAPING THE GRAPES OF WRATH

17Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." 19So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

PRELUDE TO THE BOWL JUDGMENTS

15 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

2And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark[a] *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. 3They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

"Great and marvelous *are* Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true *are* Your ways,
O King of the saints![a]
4Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and
glorify Your name?
For *You* alone *are* holy.
For all nations shall come and worship
before You,
For Your judgments have been
manifested."

5After these things I looked, and behold,[a] the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. 6And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. 7Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. 8The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls[a] of the wrath of God on the earth."

14:12 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *here are those.* **14:13** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.* **14:15** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *for You.* **15:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *over his mark.* **15:3** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *nations.* **15:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *behold.* **16:1** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *seven bowls.*

FIRST BOWL: LOATHSOME SORES

2So the first went and poured out his bowl
upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome
sore came upon the men who had the
mark of the beast and those who wor-
shiped his image.

SECOND BOWL: THE SEA TURNS TO BLOOD

3Then the second angel poured out his
bowl on the sea, and it became blood as
of a dead *man;* and every living creature in
the sea died.

THIRD BOWL: THE WATERS TURN TO BLOOD

4Then the third angel poured out his bowl
on the rivers and springs of water, and they
became blood. 5And I heard the angel of
the waters saying:

"You are righteous, O Lord,[a]
The One who is and who was and who
is to be,[b]
Because You have judged these things.
6For they have shed the blood of saints
and prophets,
And You have given them blood to
drink.
For[a] it is their just due."

7And I heard another from[a] the altar say-
ing, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and
righteous *are* Your judgments."

FOURTH BOWL: MEN ARE SCORCHED

8Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl
on the sun, and power was given to him
to scorch men with fire. 9And men were
scorched with great heat, and they blas-
phemed the name of God who has power
over these plagues; and they did not repent
and give Him glory.

FIFTH BOWL: DARKNESS AND PAIN

10Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl
on the throne of the beast, and his king-
dom became full of darkness; and they
gnawed their tongues because of the pain.
11They blasphemed the God of heaven be-
cause of their pains and their sores, and did
not repent of their deeds.

SIXTH BOWL: EUPHRATES DRIED UP

12Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl
on the great river Euphrates, and its water
was dried up, so that the way of the kings
from the east might be prepared. 13And I
saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming*
out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the
mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth
of the false prophet. 14For they are spirits
of demons, performing signs, *which* go out
to the kings of the earth and[a] of the whole
world, to gather them to the battle of that
great day of God Almighty.

15"Behold, I am coming as a thief.
Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his
garments, lest he walk naked and they see
his shame."

Revelation 16:16

The word *Armageddon* means "hill of Megiddo." In Old Testament times, Megiddo, which was located in the Carmel Mountain range, was a popular spot for military battles.

16And they gathered them together to
the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.[a]

SEVENTH BOWL: THE EARTH UTTERLY SHAKEN

17Then the seventh angel poured out his
bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out
of the temple of heaven, from the throne,
saying, "It is done!" 18And there were noises
and thunderings and lightnings; and there
was a great earthquake, such a mighty and
great earthquake as had not occurred since
men were on the earth. 19Now the great
city was divided into three parts, and the
cities of the nations fell. And great Bab-
ylon was remembered before God, to give
her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of
His wrath. 20Then every island fled away,
and the mountains were not found. 21And
great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each*

16:5 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *O Lord.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *who was, the Holy One.* **16:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *For.* **16:7** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *another from.* **16:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of the earth and.* **16:16** [a]M-Text reads *Megiddo.*

hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

THE SCARLET WOMAN AND THE SCARLET BEAST

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me,[a] "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

3So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.[a] 5And on her forehead a name *was* written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS
OF THE EARTH.

6I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

THE MEANING OF THE WOMAN AND THE BEAST

7But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. 8The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.[a]

9"Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. 10There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. 11The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

12"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. 14These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful."

15Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. 16And the ten horns which you saw on[a] the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. 17For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. 18And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

THE FALL OF BABYLON THE GREAT

18 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2And he cried mightily[a] with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

4And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest

17:1 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.* **17:4** [a]M-Text reads *the filthiness of the fornication of the earth.* **17:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *and shall be present.* **17:16** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *saw, and the beast.* **18:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *mightily.*

you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5For her sins have reached[a] to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 6Render to her just as she rendered to you,[a] and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. 7In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit *as* queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' 8Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong *is* the Lord God who judges[a] her.

THE WORLD MOURNS BABYLON'S FALL

9"The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, 10standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

11"And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: 12merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; 13and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. 14The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you,[a] and you shall find them no more at all. 15The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What *is* like this great city?'

19"'They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.'

20"'Rejoice over her, O heaven, and *you* holy apostles[a] and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

FINALITY OF BABYLON'S FALL

21Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw *it* into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. 22The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. 23The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. 24And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

HEAVEN EXULTS OVER BABYLON

19 After these things I heard[a] a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord[b] our God! 2For true and righteous *are* His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants *shed* by her." 3Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" 4And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who

18:5 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *have been heaped up.* **18:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to you.* **18:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *has judged.* **18:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *been lost to you.* **18:20** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *saints and apostles.* **19:1** [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *something like.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text omit *the Lord.*

MAKING IT REAL // REVELATION 19:16

King of Kings and Lord of Lords If you haven't read it yet, read Revelation 19. Wow! When Jesus returns at the end of time, He won't be the tiny, helpless baby He was when He was born into this world. He'll be more awesome that words could possibly describe.

Can you imagine seeing Jesus? Can you imagine really, finally coming face-to-face with the One you've been in love with all your life? What would you think when you saw His robe and read the words "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS"? A lot of Christians have been tossing around that description of Jesus for ages. But do you really get what that title means?

There are kings and lords all over the earth—have been for hundreds of years. You've heard about them in the Bible and in history class. Kings and lords are known primarily for their power, their wealth, their military might, and their positions as rulers over groups of people. Jesus Christ puts them all to shame. Earthly kings may have some power, but Christ's power can raise the dead. Earthly lords may have wealth, but God created all that is—everything belongs to Him. No earthly army can equal the army that Jesus is raising up to defeat the evil forces of Satan. And Jesus doesn't just rule over a nation, He rules the universe and beyond.

Philippians 2:10 says that "every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth" at just the mention of Jesus' name. He is the King of all the kings who have ever ruled and the Lord of every lord. Go ahead. Enthrone Him in your heart. You'll never find a more loving, merciful, gracious King. (See also: 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14.)

Words to Live By

Lord: The word translated as "Lord" in Revelation 19:16 is the Greek word *kurios* (koo'-ree-os). It means "the one with supreme authority—an authority greater than any other." When Jesus returns, everyone will realize just how mighty He is. Those who know Him will be filled with joy when He appears. Those who don't will be filled with fear as they look upon the mightiest of the mighty and the most powerful of all—Jesus Christ, the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords.

sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"
5Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both[a] small and great!"

6And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the[a] Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed

Revelation 19:8

Linen, which was hand-woven from the fibers of the hemp plant, was considered to be the highest quality fabric in the ancient world. For the most part, only people of great wealth or power wore linen. Priests and those who served in the temple were the exception. They, too, wore linen. Throughout the Bible, white linen symbolizes purity.

19:5 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *both.*
19:6 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *our.*

are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." 10And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See *that you do* not *do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

CHRIST ON A WHITE HORSE

11Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had[a] a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,[a] followed Him on white horses. 15Now out of His mouth goes a sharp[a] sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.

THE BEAST AND HIS ARMIES DEFEATED

17Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,[a] 18that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people,* free[a] and slave, both small and great."

19And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

SATAN BOUND 1,000 YEARS

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

THE SAINTS REIGN WITH CHRIST 1,000 YEARS

4And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a[a] thousand years. 5But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. 6Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

SATANIC REBELLION CRUSHED

7Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. 9They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved

19:12 [a]M-Text adds *names written, and.* **19:14** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *pure white linen.* **19:15** [a]M-Text adds *two-edged.* **19:17** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the great supper of God.* **19:18** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *both free.* **20:4** [a]M-Text reads *the.*

city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. 10The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where[a] the beast and the false prophet *are.* And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

11Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God,[a] and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book* of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.[a] 15And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

ALL THINGS MADE NEW

21 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2Then I, John,[a] saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. 4And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

HEAVEN
Will there be sadness in heaven?
Revelation 21:4

5Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me,[a] "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

Revelation 21:6

Alpha and Omega represent the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The Greeks learned to use the alphabet from the Phoenicians, a group of sea traders who lived in what is now Lebanon. In turn, the Greeks passed on their alphabet knowledge to the Romans.

6And He said to me, "It is done![a] I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7He who overcomes shall inherit all things,[a] and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 8But the cowardly, unbelieving,[a] abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

THE NEW JERUSALEM

9Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me[a] and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."[b] 10And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy[a] Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11having the glory of God. Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

20:10 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *also.*
20:12 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the throne.*
20:14 [a]NU-Text and M-Text add *the lake of fire.* **21:2** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *John.* **21:5** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.*
21:6 [a]M-Text omits *It is done.* **21:7** [a]M-Text reads *overcomes, I shall give him these things.*
21:8 [a]M-Text adds *and sinners.* **21:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *to me.* [b]M-Text reads *I will show you the woman, the Lamb's bride.*
21:10 [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *the great* and read *the holy city, Jerusalem.*

13three gates on the east, three gates on the
north, three gates on the south, and three
gates on the west.
14Now the wall of the city had twelve
foundations, and on them were the names[a]
of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15And
he who talked with me had a gold reed to
measure the city, its gates, and its wall.
16The city is laid out as a square; its length
is as great as its breadth. And he measured
the city with the reed: twelve thousand fur-
longs. Its length, breadth, and height are
equal. 17Then he measured its wall: one
hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according* to
the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.
18The construction of its wall was *of* jasper;
and the city *was* pure gold, like clear glass.
19The foundations of the wall of the city *were*
adorned with all kinds of precious stones:
the first foundation *was* jasper, the second
sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth
emerald, 20the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sar-
dius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl,
the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the
eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.
21The twelve gates *were* twelve pearls: each
individual gate was of one pearl. And the
street of the city *was* pure gold, like trans-
parent glass.

THE GLORY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

22But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord
God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
23The city had no need of the sun or of the
moon to shine in it,[a] for the glory[b] of God
illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. 24And
the nations of those who are saved[a] shall
walk in its light, and the kings of the earth
bring their glory and honor into it.[b] 25Its
gates shall not be shut at all by day (there
shall be no night there). 26And they shall
bring the glory and the honor of the na-
tions into it.[a] 27But there shall by no means
enter it anything that defiles, or causes[a] an
abomination or a lie, but only those who
are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

THE RIVER OF LIFE

22 And he showed me a pure[a] river
of water of life, clear as crystal,
proceeding from the throne of
God and of the Lamb. 2In the middle of its
street, and on either side of the river, *was*
the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits,
each *tree* yielding its fruit every month.
The leaves of the tree *were* for the heal-
ing of the nations. 3And there shall be no
more curse, but the throne of God and of
the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants
shall serve Him. 4They shall see His face,
and His name *shall be* on their foreheads.
5There shall be no night there: They need
no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord
God gives them light. And they shall reign
forever and ever.

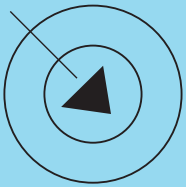
THE TIME IS NEAR

6Then he said to me, "These words *are*
faithful and true." And the Lord God of the
holy[a] prophets sent His angel to show His
servants the things which must shortly
take place.
7"Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed
is he who keeps the words of the prophecy
of this book."
8Now I, John, saw and heard[a] these
things. And when I heard and saw, I fell
down to worship before the feet of the an-
gel who showed me these things.
9Then he said to me, "See *that you do*
not *do that.* For[a] I am your fellow servant,
and of your brethren the prophets, and of
those who keep the words of this book.
Worship God." 10And he said to me, "Do
not seal the words of the prophecy of this
book, for the time is at hand. 11He who is
unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is
filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is right-
eous, let him be righteous[a] still; he who is
holy, let him be holy still."

JESUS TESTIFIES TO THE CHURCHES

12"And behold, I am coming quickly, and
My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one
according to his work. 13I am the Alpha and

21:14 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *twelve names.* **21:23** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *in it.* [b]M-Text reads *the very glory.* **21:24** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *of those who are saved.* [b]M-Text reads *the glory and honor of the nations to Him.* **21:26** [a]M-Text adds *that they may enter in.* **21:27** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *anything profane, nor one who causes.* **22:1** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *pure.* **22:6** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *spirits of the prophets.* **22:8** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *am the one who heard and saw.* **22:9** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *For.* **22:11** [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *do right.*



PROMISE

God promises to come soon.

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (Rev. 22:20).

God chose to end His Book with a thought that thrills some people and terrifies others. The end of the story is this: Jesus is coming back. And He could come back at any time. Christians should be the ones who are thrilled by this knowledge. It gives us so much hope! It gives us courage to live in the challenging days we're facing right now. It gives us powerful motivation to be serious about answering God's call for our lives.

You want to be ready. You want to have your life right with God when the last trumpet sounds. You can't know the exact moment when He will arrive; you just know it could be very soon.

Make your prayer the words of Revelation 22:20, "Even so, come Lord Jesus!" Do your part to be ready—be excited about His return. Get your heart tender and right before Him. Share the news with those who don't know. It'll be the most awesome, most glorious moment the world has ever seen.

SEE FOR YOURSELF// Hebrews 10:37; James 5:8; Revelation 1:7; 22:12

the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last."[a]

14Blessed *are* those who do His commandments,[a] that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15But[a] outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

16"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

17And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

A WARNING

18For[a] I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add[b] to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away[a] his part from the Book[b] of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

I AM COMING QUICKLY

20He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly."

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

21The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all.[a] Amen.

22:13 [a]NU-Text and M-Text read *the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.* **22:14** [a]NU-Text reads *wash their robes.* **22:15** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *But.* **22:18** [a]NU-Text and M-Text omit *For.* [b]M-Text reads *may God add.* **22:19** [a]M-Text reads *may God take away.* [b]NU-Text and M-Text read *tree of life.* **22:21** [a]NU-Text reads *with all;* M-Text reads *with all the saints.*

Reading Plans

Okay, so you think that reading the Bible is a good idea—but where should you start? The Bible is a BIG book—make that a *library*—of sixty-six books. Should you just start on page 1 and read every page? Sure you could; that's a great way. But there are other ways, too. You might pick a book of the Bible and read it (many people like to start with the Gospel of John). But if you're looking for other options, here are a few ideas for you.

❑ 30 Days with Jesus

Ever ask yourself, *I wonder what Jesus would do?* Here's how you can find out. Take a month and read the story of Jesus.

❑ 60 Days with Paul

You've probably heard of the apostle Paul. He's the guy who wrote most of the New Testament. After you read Jesus' story, this is a good place to learn what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

❑ 90–Day Overview of the Bible

This plan takes you through the major events of the Bible without your reading the entire book.

❑ 365 Days Through the Whole Bible

Ready for the biggest challenge of all? Why not read through the entire Bible in a year? This plan will take you through every verse of the Bible in one year.

No matter how you decide to read, stick with it. It's normal to skip a day here and there. Don't get discouraged. Just pick up where you left off and read this amazing Book.

30 DAYS WITH JESUS

1. John 1:1–51
2. Luke 2:1–52
3. Mark 1:1–11
4. Luke 4:1–11
5. John 3:1–36
6. Luke 5:1–39
7. John 4:1–54
8. Luke 6:1–49
9. Luke 7:1–50
10. Luke 8:1–56
11. Mark 8:1–38
12. Luke 10:1–42
13. Matthew 5:1–48
14. Matthew 6:1–34
15. Matthew 7:1–29
16. Luke 14:1–35
17. Luke 15:1–32
18. Luke 16:1–31
19. John 8:1–59
20. Luke 17:1–37
21. Luke 18:1–43
22. John 9:1–41
23. Luke 19:1–48
24. Luke 20:1–47
25. John 10:1–42
26. John 11:1–47
27. Mark 13:1–37
28. Luke 22:1–71
29. Matthew 27:1–66
30. Luke 24:1–53

60 DAYS WITH PAUL

1. Romans 1:16–32
2. Romans 2:1–16
3. Romans 3:21–31
4. Romans 4:1–25
5. Romans 5:12–21
6. Romans 6:1–32
7. Romans 7:1–25
8. Romans 8:18–39
9. Romans 10:1–21
10. Romans 12:1–21
11. Romans 13:1–14
12. Romans 14:1—15:6
13. 1 Corinthians 1:10–31
14. 1 Corinthians 2:1–16
15. 1 Corinthians 3:1–23
16. 1 Corinthians 7:1–24
17. 1 Corinthians 7:25–40
18. 1 Corinthians 9:19—10:13
19. 1 Corinthians 12:1–31
20. 1 Corinthians 13:1–13
21. 1 Corinthians 15:1–28
22. 2 Corinthians 1:3–14
23. 2 Corinthians 1:15—2:11
24. 2 Corinthians 4:1–18
25. 2 Corinthians 5:1—6:2
26. 2 Corinthians 6:14—7:1
27. 2 Corinthians 8:1–15
28. Galatians 2:11–21
29. Galatians 3:19—4:7
30. Galatians 5:1–26
31. Galatians 6:1–10
32. Ephesians 1:3–14
33. Ephesians 1:15—2:10
34. Ephesians 5:1–21
35. Ephesians 5:22—6:9
36. Ephesians 6:10–20
37. Philippians 1:3–26
38. Philippians 1:27—2:18
39. Philippians 3:1–16
40. Philippians 3:17—4:9
41. Philippians 4:10–23
42. Colossians 1:15–23
43. Colossians 2:6–23
44. Colossians 3:1–17
45. Colossians 3:18—4:6
46. 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10
47. 1 Thessalonians 4:1–18
48. 1 Thessalonians 5:1–28
49. 2 Thessalonians 2:1–17
50. 2 Thessalonians 3:1–15
51. 1 Timothy 2:1–15
52. 1 Timothy 3:1–16
53. 1 Timothy 4:1–16
54. 1 Timothy 5:1–22
55. 1 Timothy 6:3–21
56. 2 Timothy 1:3–18
57. 2 Timothy 2:1—3:9
58. 2 Timothy 4:1–8
59. Titus 1:1–16
60. Titus 2:1—3:11

90-DAY OVERVIEW

1. Genesis 1:1—2:3
2. Genesis 3:1—3:24
3. Genesis 6:9—7:24
4. Genesis 8:1—9:17
5. Genesis 17:1–22
6. Genesis 22:1–18
7. Genesis 25:19–34
8. Genesis 27:1—28:9
9. Genesis 37:1–36
10. Genesis 41:1–57
11. Genesis 45:1–28
12. Exodus 1:8—2:15
13. Exodus 3:1—4:17
14. Exodus 5:1—6:13
15. Exodus 12:1–42
16. Exodus 13:17—14:31
17. Exodus 20:1–21
18. Numbers 13:1–33
19. Joshua 2:1–24
20. Joshua 6:1–27
21. Judges 16:4–31
22. 1 Samuel 1:1–28
23. 1 Samuel 3:1–21
24. 1 Samuel 10:1–27
25. 1 Samuel 16:1–13
26. 1 Samuel 17:1–58
27. 1 Samuel 24:1–22
28. 2 Samuel 11:1—12:25
29. 1 Kings 3:1–28
30. 1 Kings 17:8–24
31. 1 Kings 18:1–46
32. 2 Kings 2:1–18
33. 2 Kings 4:8–37
34. 2 Chronicles 35:20—36:23
35. Esther 2:1–13
36. Esther 6:1—8:8
37. Job 1:1—2:13; 42:1–17
38. Psalm 23
39. Psalm 51
40. Psalm 100
41. Psalm 121
42. Psalm 145
43. Proverbs 4:1–27
44. Ecclesiastes 11:9—12:14
45. Isaiah 53:1–12
46. Daniel 1:1–21
47. Daniel 3:1–30
48. Daniel 6:1–28
49. Jonah 1:1—4:11
50. Matthew 1:18—2:23
51. Matthew 5:1–16; 6:1—7:12
52. Matthew 14:13–46
53. Matthew 21:1–17
54. Matthew 26:47–75
55. Matthew 27:15–66
56. Matthew 28:1–20
57. Mark 1:1–20
58. Mark 4:1–20
59. Luke 1:26–56; 2:1–20
60. Luke 10:25–42; 14:25–35
61. Luke 15:1–32
62. Luke 22:1–23
63. Luke 24:13–53
64. John 1:1–18
65. John 3:1–21
66. John 4:1–42
67. John 8:1–11
68. John 11:1–44
69. John 14:1–31
70. Acts 1:1–11
71. Acts 2:1–47
72. Acts 8:26–40
73. Acts 9:1–31
74. Acts 11:1–18
75. Acts 16:11–40
76. Romans 3:1–31
77. Romans 8:1–39
78. Romans 12:1–21
79. 1 Corinthians 13:1–13
80. 1 Corinthians 15:1–58
81. Ephesians 2:1–22; 6:10–20
82. Philippians 3:1—4:9
83. Colossians 3:1—4:1
84. 1 Thessalonians 4:1–18
85. Hebrews 11:1–40
86. James 1:1–27
87. James 3:1–18
88. 1 Peter 1:3–25
89. 1 John 1:1—2:17
90. Revelation 21:1—22:21

365 DAYS THROUGH THE WHOLE BIBLE

Date	Reference
❑ January 1	Genesis 1:1—3:24
❑ January 2	Genesis 4:1—5:32
❑ January 3	Genesis 6:1—8:22
❑ January 4	Genesis 9:1—11:32
❑ January 5	Genesis 12:1—14:24
❑ January 6	Genesis 15:1—17:27
❑ January 7	Genesis 18:1—20:18
❑ January 8	Genesis 21:1—23:20
❑ January 9	Genesis 24:1—28:9
❑ January 10	Genesis 28:10—30:43
❑ January 11	Genesis 31:1—36:43
❑ January 12	Genesis 37:1—41:57
❑ January 13	Genesis 42:1—45:28
❑ January 14	Genesis 46:1—50:26
❑ January 15	Exodus 1:1—4:31
❑ January 16	Exodus 5:1—7:13
❑ January 17	Exodus 7:14—12:30
❑ January 18	Exodus 12:31—18:27
❑ January 19	Exodus 19:1—24:18
❑ January 20	Exodus 25:1—31:18
❑ January 21	Exodus 32:1—34:35
❑ January 22	Exodus 35:1—40:38
❑ January 23	Leviticus 1:1—7:38
❑ January 24	Leviticus 8:1—10:20
❑ January 25	Leviticus 11:1—17:16
❑ January 26	Leviticus 18:1—22:33
❑ January 27	Leviticus 23:1—25:55
❑ January 28	Leviticus 26:1—27:34
❑ January 29	Numbers 1:1—4:49
❑ January 30	Numbers 5:1—10:10
❑ January 31	Numbers 10:11—14:45
❑ February 1	Numbers 15:1—21:35
❑ February 2	Numbers 22:1—25:18
❑ February 3	Numbers 26:1—31:54
❑ February 4	Numbers 32:1—34:29
❑ February 5	Numbers 35:1—36:13
❑ February 6	Deuteronomy 1:1—5:33
❑ February 7	Deuteronomy 6:1—11:32
❑ February 8	Deuteronomy 12:1—16:17
❑ February 9	Deuteronomy 16:18—20:20
❑ February 10	Deuteronomy 21:1—26:19
❑ February 11	Deuteronomy 27:1—30:20
❑ February 12	Deuteronomy 31:1—34:12
❑ February 13	Joshua 1:1—5:12
❑ February 14	Joshua 5:13—8:35
❑ February 15	Joshua 9:1—12:24
❑ February 16	Joshua 13:1—19:51
❑ February 17	Joshua 20:1—24:33
❑ February 18	Judges 1:1—3:6
❑ February 19	Judges 3:7—8:35
❑ February 20	Judges 9:1—12:15
❑ February 21	Judges 13:1—16:31
❑ February 22	Judges 17:1—21:25
❑ February 23	Ruth 1:1—4:22
❑ February 24	1 Samuel 1:1—3:21
❑ February 25	1 Samuel 4:1—7:17
❑ February 26	1 Samuel 8:1—12:25
❑ February 27	1 Samuel 13:1—15:35
❑ February 28	1 Samuel 16:1—17:58
❑ March 1	1 Samuel 18:1—20:42
❑ March 2	1 Samuel 21:1—26:25
❑ March 3	1 Samuel 27:1—31:13
❑ March 4	2 Samuel 1:1—4:12
❑ March 5	2 Samuel 5:1—7:29
❑ March 6	2 Samuel 8:1—10:19
❑ March 7	2 Samuel 11:1—12:31
❑ March 8	2 Samuel 13:1—14:33
❑ March 9	2 Samuel 15:1—20:26
❑ March 10	2 Samuel 21:1—24:25
❑ March 11	1 Kings 1:1—4:34
❑ March 12	1 Kings 5:1—8:66
❑ March 13	1 Kings 9:1—11:43
❑ March 14	1 Kings 12:1—16:34
❑ March 15	1 Kings 17:1—19:21
❑ March 16	1 Kings 20:1—22:53
❑ March 17	2 Kings 1:1—8:15
❑ March 18	2 Kings 8:16—10:36
❑ March 19	2 Kings 11:1—13:25

Date	Reference
❑ March 20	2 Kings 14:1—17:41
❑ March 21	2 Kings 18:1—21:26
❑ March 22	2 Kings 22:1—25:30
❑ March 23	1 Chronicles 1:1—9:44
❑ March 24	1 Chronicles 10:1—12:40
❑ March 25	1 Chronicles 13:1—17:27
❑ March 26	1 Chronicles 18:1—21:30
❑ March 27	1 Chronicles 22:1—27:34
❑ March 28	1 Chronicles 28:1—29:30
❑ March 29	2 Chronicles 1:1—5:1
❑ March 30	2 Chronicles 5:2—9:31
❑ March 31	2 Chronicles 10:1—14:1
❑ April 1	2 Chronicles 14:2—16:14
❑ April 2	2 Chronicles 17:1—21:3
❑ April 3	2 Chronicles 21:4—24:27
❑ April 4	2 Chronicles 25:1—28:27
❑ April 5	2 Chronicles 29:1—32:33
❑ April 6	2 Chronicles 33:1—35:27
❑ April 7	2 Chronicles 36:1–23
❑ April 8	Ezra 1:1—2:70
❑ April 9	Ezra 3:1—6:22
❑ April 10	Ezra 7:1—8:36
❑ April 11	Ezra 9:1—10:44
❑ April 12	Nehemiah 1:1—2:10
❑ April 13	Nehemiah 2:11—3:32
❑ April 14	Nehemiah 4:1—7:73
❑ April 15	Nehemiah 8:1—10:39
❑ April 16	Nehemiah 11:1—13:31
❑ April 17	Esther 1:1—2:23
❑ April 18	Esther 3:1—4:17
❑ April 19	Esther 5:1—10:3
❑ April 20	Job 1:1—2:13
❑ April 21	Job 3:1—14:22
❑ April 22	Job 15:1—21:34
❑ April 23	Job 22:1—31:40
❑ April 24	Job 32:1—37:24
❑ April 25	Job 38:1—41:34
❑ April 26	Job 42:1–17
❑ April 27	Psalms 1:1—4:8
❑ April 28	Psalms 5:1—8:9
❑ April 29	Psalms 9:1—12:8
❑ April 30	Psalms 13:1—16:11

Date	Reference
❑ May 1	Psalms 17:1—20:9
❑ May 2	Psalms 21:1—24:10
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We can count on God's love . . . 1211
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We can count on God's power . . . 1211
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Pray for your enemies . . . 1231, 1353
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