

Summarized Bible



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The Summarized Bible

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The questions at the end of each New Testament book are intended to challenge you to formalize your understanding of the message of each book. You should always verify all the comments, opinions, and teachings of these since it is YOUR responsibility to seek, know, and do the will of God.

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GENESIS

In the beginning God created:

- Heavens and the earth – formless, void, empty and dark
- Light – darkness ended now day and night
- Expanse – the cosmos - terrestrial and sidereal
- Division of water and earth, no longer formless – now dry ground and water needed for living things
- Vegetation – all kinds of edible food for animals and birds
- Expanse separated – terrestrial from sidereal. Stars, sun, moons from and earth's atmosphere.
- Living creatures – birds of the air, fish of the sea and land-dwelling animals
- Man – a being in God's image or likeness. God is love, righteous, kind merciful, peaceful – all good is from God.

Comment: At the beginning of creation there was no time. As God is eternal. Time appears to have begun when man sinned and was removed from Eden.

Comment: Darkness prevailed as light was not needed as there were no animals or plants, only God, who is light.

Comment: Heavens is plural – the celestial, the abode of God and spirit beings; the sidereal, the solar system that consists of the sun, moon, stars, and planets; and the terrestrial, the atmosphere where the fowls of the heaven have their habitation.

Adapted from bereanbiblesociety.org.

Adam

God said let US make man in OUR likeness of love, righteous, kind, merciful, peaceful, NOT our exact nature or essence. They also created a companion, woman, for the man. Adam named her Eve. God placed them in a special place on the earth, Eden, He had created for them. Adam and Eve were given three instructions; e.g.,

- a) Do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or you will die - obey Me.
- b) Till the ground in Eden - work.
- c) Be fruitful and multiply - reproduce other human beings.

Man was able to reason and discern as evidenced by God's command that they were not to eat from the fruit of the tree of good and evil and if they did they would die. The Bible does not tell us how long they lived in their righteous situation with their Creator. But at some point, Satan, a rebellious celestial being, tempted them with a lie stating "God knows if you eat of forbidden fruit of the tree, you will be as wise as God."

Following their decision to disobey they suffered the consequences of their actions including the removal from paradise, painful work for man and painful childbirth for woman. But God did not abandon them. He gave hope for redemption, restoration and reconciliation stating that an offspring of woman would crush Satan, the devil. The offspring of woman would be Jesus – the Savior, redeemer and atoning sacrifice required for forgiveness of sin.

After removal from Eden, Cain and Abel were born. As they grew, they both brought offerings to God. It is reasonable to assume they knew what God desired, either from parent instructions or action or direct from God. Abel's offering was accepted but Cain's was not. Cain's became angry with God for rejecting his offering and killed his brother. Unaccepted offering, anger, and murder are not God's image, they are of the Devil, the deceiver and liar. Cain's consequences were that his farming would not yield crops and he would be a restless wander. So, Cain went out from the presence of God. (Genesis 1 – 5)

Key Point from Adam

- Adam and Eve sinned, became mortal, suffered much pain, caused physical and spiritual death to enter the world.
- Sin has unpleasant consequences.
- Death brings time to earth. Eternity has no time barriers.
- God gave hope for forgiveness, redemption and reconciliation.
- Cain took no responsibility for his actions, but blamed God.

Noah

Noah was born 1056 years following the creation of Adam and 126 years after Adam died. Genesis states that the sons of God married the daughters of men. God was very displeased with the evil, violence and wickedness of men even their thoughts were evil, but not Noah. God gave Noah specific and exact instructions for him to construct an ark. Noah built it according to God's plan while proclaiming to those around him God's message for them to change from their evil way of life. Animals and Noah's family entered their ark of safety, God shut the only door, the only hope for the wicked to be saved. He then destroyed by flood all living who chose not to accept God's message proclaimed by Noah. Following the cleansing of the earth, Noah removed the covering, went out from the ark and built an altar and worshipped God. (Genesis 6 – 10)

Comment: "Sons of God" are the righteous whereas the daughters of men were not.

Key Points from Noah

- Noah was given specific commands regarding what he must do to save himself and his family.
- While building of the ark Noah proclaimed God's message for the evil people to change from their evil lifestyle.
- Unlike Adam, Noah obeyed thus he and his family were saved by God's grace, after he obeyed.
- Following his deliverance Noah worshipped God.

- Christ is the only door, way, for sinful man to be forgiven and saved.

God calls Abram

Abram appears to have been born less than 900 years after Noah's birth and less than 352 years following the flood. Abram's father, Terah, with Abram and Sarai left their home in Ur of the Chaldeans, the general area where the tower of Babel was located and moved to Haran. Here God told Abram to leave father's house, go to a distant land and God would make his descendants a great nation and make his name great. Abram trusted God and obeyed not knowing where God would lead. When he came to Canaan God told Abram that this land would be given to his offspring.

As a result of a famine in Canaan he went to Egypt but returned to Canaan and was greatly blessed materially. He and his nephew, Lot, separated with Abraham allowing Lot to take the most fertile land. (Genesis 12-13)

Key Point from God Calls Abram

- God called Abram to go. Abram trusted, obeyed and went.
- God promised to make him great and through him all people of the earth would be blessed. Ultimately through Christ.
- Abram was not always truthful but always trusted and obeyed God.
- Lot thinking of himself selected the best land while Abram took the least desirable, what was left.

New Testament reference to Abram

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore, from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.” (Hebrews 11:8-12)

Abram Gives Tribute to Melchizedek

Abraham had obeyed God and was now living in Canaan, the area we know as Palestine. This land was between the Mediterranean Sea and separated by desert from the valley of Shinar or Ur of the Chaldees.

Lot had selflessly chosen the most fertile land and was gradually lured into the city of Sodom. Area kings rebelled against the king of Sodom, defeated his army, and took Lot as a prisoner. Abram took a few men and went to rescue Lot. He defeated the armies of the area kings and brought Lot back, along with his possessions and the women and children.

Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God, went out to Abram on his return home, blessed him stating, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!” (Genesis 14:19-20) Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth or tithe, freed those captured, returned their possessions to the King of Sodom and gave God the glory for the victory. (Genesis 14 **and Hebrews 7**)

Key Points from Tribute to Melchizedek

- Melchizedek, the priest of God, gave Abram God's blessing.
- Abram gave to Melchizedek one tenth [tribute] of what he had taken from the battle.
- Abram refused to retain possessions and people of Sodom.
- Abram gave God the glory for his victory.
- There were priests of God before the Covenant with Israel.

Ishmael, the Natural Son

God promised Abram that he and Sarai would have a son resulting in many nations being blessed. They were old and Sarai beyond child bearing age. She became impatient waiting on God to fulfill His promise. She and Abram agreed to help God fulfill His promise by having a son through natural reproductive means through Sarai's handmaiden Hagar. Through Abram's relationship with Hagar Ishmael was born. But God's promise was not to Hagar but to Sarai, so Ishmael was not the son of promise. Thirteen years later God spoke to Abram promising if he walked blameless, He would make a covenant with him and his offspring and make him the father of a multitude of nations. God changed his name from Abram, meaning high father, to Abraham, meaning father of multitudes, and Sarai's, meaning quarrelsome, to Sarah, meaning princess. God restated His promise that Sarah and Abraham would have a son – he would be the son of promise. (Genesis 15-17) The significance of son of promise and natural son is discussed in Galatians 1:1-7.

Comment: A covenant is a binding agreement.

Key Point from Ishmael

- God is in control. Man's attempt to be in control results in harm.
- Abraham showed he believed God and acted on that belief which was credited to him as righteousness.
- God's blessing to man can only come through the son of promise.

Covenant with Abraham

Ishmael was around 12 or 13 years old and Isaac was still just a promise. At the age of 99 and Sarah beyond the age of having children God spoke to Abraham stating "I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. ... Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you." (Genesis 17:7; 10-11)

Then God said that Sarah shall have a son. Abraham thought shall Sarah in her old age birth a child? Then he said "Oh that Ishmael might be acceptable to you" and God replied "no, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son." Thus, a promise of a son would be kept and a covenant established.

Key Point from Covenant with Abraham

- Abraham lived a life before God based on righteousness, integrity, truthful, innocent and unimpaired - so should we.

Sodom and Gomorrah

A short time following the covenant of circumcision God appeared once again to Abraham to tell him that Sarah would have a child promised long ago. God told Abraham about His wrath toward the citizens of Sodom and the surrounding cities because of their wickedness. He was going to destroy both people and their property. Now Lot lived in Sodom. Abraham pleaded with God to save the city but to no avail. However, He sent angels in human form to remove Lot and his family. The men of Sodom wanted to have sex with the men visiting the city. Sexual acts between men, homosexual, is not natural which God considers evil and wicked. If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. This is discussed in [thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/Liberated.html#EN.GM.17.05.Liberated Homosexuality.html](http://thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/Liberated.html#EN.GM.17.05.Liberated%20Homosexuality.html)

Key Point from Sodom and Gomorrah

- God detest wickedness.

Isaac, the Son of Promise

Before the birth of Isaac, Abraham moved near Gerar in the country of Abimelech. Not trusting God and fearing for his life he deceived Abimelech about Sarah being his wife which led Abimelech to take her for his wife. God intervened

"Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." He returned Sarah to Abraham who prayed to God on Abimelech behalf.

Sometime afterward, the Lord visited Sarah and she conceived and bore Isaac, the son of promise. Hagar, Sarah's handmaiden, was forced to leave. But God heard Hagar's cry and was with Ishmael.

It is through Isaac, the son of promise, not Ishmael, the son of man's nature, that another promise would be kept; e.g., all nations would be blessed. That blessing would come through Jesus of Nazareth who would offer Himself as the atoning sacrifice to save all trusting and obedient people from their sins. (Genesis 20 – 21)

Key Points from Isaac

- God is always faithful. His promises are always fulfilled.
- Deception is a lie.
- Men losses trust in God when they satisfy their fleshly desires.

Testing Abraham's Faith

No doubt Isaac was very dear to Abraham as he was Sarah's only child and the child God had promised to them. Abraham's righteousness and faithfulness did not waiver in his relationship with God. He was willing, in fact, he was stopped by God from offering his only son as a sacrifice to please the God he loved and trusted. Note the similarity with Jesus. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only and unique Son, so that everyone who trusts in him may have eternal life, instead of being utterly destroyed." (John 3:16-17)]

When our faith is being tested, do we trust God and show our love by our actions? Do we help our neighbors in their time of need? Is most of our free time spent on pleasing self? Do we blame God for getting cancer, losing a job or the death of a parent or child? (Genesis 22)

Key Point from Testing Abraham's Faith

- God knows our love of him by our actions, what we give to Him or what we withhold from Him.
- Abraham did not withhold Isaac.
- God gave Jesus to be our atoning sacrifice.
- Abraham knew God was able to bring Isaac back to life.

Abraham's Final Days

In his time Abraham desired to selected a wife for Isaac – in some countries this is still the practice. So, Abraham sent his servant to the land of the Chaldeans where Abraham lived before God called him. He did not want Isaac to have a wife from among the idol worshipers in Canaan. Here Abraham's trusted servant at God's direction selected Rebekah, the daughter of his nephew, Bethuel (the son of Abraham's brother Nahor) to be Isaac's wife. (Genesis 24 - 25:18)

Key Points from Abrahams Final Days

- Isaac marries one who believes in God and not some idol worshipper.
- Relationships, including marriage, will help or hurt our relationship with God on our journey to eternity.

Isaac's Life and Jacob's Deception

Abraham died at the age of 175 and was buried in Canaan. Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons. They each showed favoritism with Isaac favoring Esau as he was an outdoorsman while Rebekah favored Jacob. Favoritism always causes

strife. Esau appeared to have an attitude of satisfying his present desires with no regard of their consequences or the future. Jacob at the direction of his mother, Rebekah, conspired to get the firstborn's double portion birthright and blessing from Isaac. They were able to deceive Isaac because he was blind. Jacob fled to Rebekah's family fearing for his life. On the way God said to Jacob "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Later Jacob's future father-in-law deceived him. Sin always has consequences even though God forgives those who put their trust in Him and obey because of their love for Him. (Genesis 25:20 – 28)

Key Point from Jacob's Deception

- God told Abraham and repeated to Jacob that He would make his descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and give them Canaan, their "Land of Promised."
- Through Jacob's offspring (Jesus) all nations on earth will be blessed because Abraham obeyed me.

Jacob Arrives in the East Country

Jacob had deceived Isaac, taken advantage and angered his brother Esau, so he fled to his mother's home which was back in the land of the Chaldeans. Upon arriving he inquired of Laban, his mother's brother, the son of Nahor, the brother of Abraham. At the watering well he saw Rachel, a shepherdess and Laban's daughter. Jacob agreed to work for Laban for 7 years for Rachel to become his wife. After 7 years Laban deceived Jacob and gave Leah to him as a wife. Jacob then agreed to work another 7 years for Rachel. During his stay with Laban God prospered him greatly. (Genesis 29 – 30)

Key Point from Jacob Arrives in the East Country

- Rebekah and Jacob deceived Isaac and now Jacob is being deceived. Oh, the consequences of sin.

Jacob Flees Laban

Jacob's four wives who bore several children to him while they lived with Laban. At least 14 years had passed. Laban began to have less regard for Jacob and Laban's sons had become jealous of Jacob's prosperity. The time had come for Jacob to return home where Isaac lived and where Abraham was buried. So, Jacob with his family and livestock left without telling Laban. When Laban became aware of Jacob's departure, he pursued them. On his way God warned Laban not to do anything against Jacob. Laban and Jacob met, made an agreement not to do harm to each other. Laban then return home.

As Jacob approached the land where Esau dwelled, he was fearful of what Esau might do because of his earlier deception in obtaining Esau's blessing from Isaac. Jacob repented of his past evil, gave thanks for the prosperity God had provided and pleaded to be delivered from Esau. When Esau saw Jacob, he ran and embraced him. (Genesis 31 -33)

Key Points from Jacob Flees Laban

- Jacob with the help of his mother deceived his father in getting the blessing of the firstborn son. Sin has consequences.
- Repentance and giving thanks to God for His blessings, pleased God.

Jacob Returns to Bethel

Jacob has returned home and made things right with Esau. He then returned to the place where God appeared to him when he fled for his life. At God's instructions he went to Bethel, where God previously gave him the same promise He gave to Abraham and Isaac. Jacob draws closer to God by requiring all idols be removed. At Bethel he built an altar and

worshipped God. Here God appeared again changed his name from Jacob, meaning supplanted, to Israel, and said “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.” (Genesis 35:11-13)

Key Point Jacob Returns to Bethel

- One’s actions shows if one has repented (changed).
- By turning to God, removing false gods, giving thanks and worshipping God clearly indicates Jacob had truly changed - repented.
- Thanks, praise and worship pleases God and brings joy.

Jacob's Trouble

After Jacob returned to Canaan and he made peace with Esau, their father Isaac died. Jacob, now Israel, had 12 sons and a daughter. Dinah, the daughter, was rape by a Hivite in the land of Canaan. Rebekah died giving birth to Benjamin. Israel showed favoritism toward Joseph because he was Rachel’s firstborn son, for whom he labored 14 years. This causes much jealousy among his other sons. Now Joseph had unusual dreams which he related to his brothers and father. These dreams indicated they would all bow down to him. This changes jealousy into hatred which was displayed when his brothers sold him into slavery to a caravan of Ishmaelites going to Egypt. They slaughter a goat dipped into Joseph’s cloak in its blood, took it to their father deceiving him into believing Joseph had been killed by some wild animal. (Genesis 36:16 – 38)

Key Point from Jacob's Trouble

- The consequences of the sins of favoritism, anger, hatred, and deception and causes pain. God used a terrible situation to His glory and to the saving of Jacob and his family and ultimately salvation by the life and atoning sacrifice of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.

Joseph, The Slave

Joseph’s jealous brothers sold him to a caravan of Ishmaelites. Upon arrival in Egypt, he was sold to one of Pharaoh’s officials. He performed his duties as a trusting servant in such a way that his owner gave him greater responsibilities. Because he did not yield to the temptations of Potiphar’s wife, he was imprisoned. Even in prison he found favor with the keeper of the prison. In all his adversities he continued to trust and serve God. While there, he befriended Pharaoh’s cup bearer, who much later recall what Joseph had done for him. (Genesis 39 - 41:40)

Key Points from Joseph, The Slave

- In the most difficult times God’s servants are always to be godly.
- God tests the faith of those who love Him.
- Times of adversity one can blame God and turn away from Him.
- Prosperity can encourage one to put their trust in themselves.
- Always refrain from sinning even in harsh and unfair times.

Joseph, The Ruler

Suffering the consequences of living righteously, Joseph was sent to prison. While in prison he was abandon by those he helped but not by God. Living as God’s faithful servant, he allowed God to use him in His plan to bring redemption to all mankind if they would trust and obey HIM. Pharaoh’s cup bearer finally remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about Joseph interpreting his dreams when he was in prison. Pharaoh called Joseph from prison to interpret his dream. Joseph told Pharaoh he could not interpret but God could.

Pharaoh believed God’s interpretation through Joseph and put Joseph in charge of preparing for the disaster of a famine. Joseph was now second in command of all Egypt and prepared for the famine.

Famine reached Joseph's family in Canaan. Upon hearing that food was in Egypt, Jacob sent his sons there to purchase food on two occasions. Joseph did not take vengeance on his brothers instead he recognized God's hand working in him for good. (Genesis 41:41 – 44)

Key Point from Joseph, The Ruler

- Joseph allowed God to use him for His purposes even through there was much pain and hardship.
- God is always faithful but man is not always able to understand.
- An eternal life with God in Heaven is always worth any pain or any heartache here on earth.

Jacob Goes to Egypt

Joseph's brothers were sent to Egypt in search of food because of a famine. In fear of their lives because they were being accused of stealing from the second most powerful of Egypt, they bowed down to him, paying homage, Joseph's dream he had as a youth had foretold. Judah acknowledges his guilt of selling him into slavery. Then Joseph reveals himself to his brothers how their treacherous act was used by God to save them and Jacob. Joseph sends for Jacob and all his family and possessions. Upon arrival Joseph and Jacob are reunited. Pharaoh gave Jacob the choice land of Goshen. Jacob may have intended to remain until the famine over, but his descendants remained in Egypt for 400 years. (Genesis 45-47)

Key Points from Jacob Goes to Egypt

- God used the sons of Jacob to accomplish His will.
- Joseph recognized God's hand in his life by stating, "He sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance."

Jacob and Joseph Die in Egypt

After 17 years in Egypt, Jacob dies. Joseph and his brothers' mourn during the 40 days required to embalm. Then Jacob was taken back to Canaan and buried alongside Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rachel and Leah, his first wife and mother of Judah. "Joseph went up to bury his father. With him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, as well as all the household of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's household. Only their children, their flocks, and their herds were left in the land of Goshen. There went up with him both chariots and horsemen. It was a very great company." (Genesis 50)

Much later "Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.' Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, 'God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.'" Joseph died in Egypt, was embalmed, not buried but put in a coffin to be taken back to Canaan when God delivered them from Egypt. (Genesis 50)

Key Points from Jacob and Joseph Die in Egypt

- From a slave to the second most powerful person in Egypt, righteous Joseph still allowed God to use him to fulfill His plans.
- Judah who had suggested selling Joseph into slavery now offers himself as a slave to keep Jacob from suffering. People can change.
- It is interesting that Jesus of Nazareth is from the tribe of Judah.

EXODUS

Moses - the Egyptian

God promised to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations through Isaac, His son of promise. Some four hundred years have passed, since Jacob, son of Isaac, went to Egypt due to a famine. His family has grown into the millions but living in slavery. During this time Egypt was taken over by a new dynasty who were new nothing about Egypt's past and never heard of Joseph. Pharaoh ordered every son born to the Hebrews was to be cast into the Nile. Moses's mother hid him until he was found by Pharaoh's daughter. For forty years he was trained in the ways of the Egyptian royalty. For fear of the wrath of Pharaoh, he fled Egypt after killing an Egyptian for mistreating a Hebrew slave. For the next forty years he herded sheep for Reuel, a priest of Midian, also referred to as Jethro. Then God called Moses to go to Egypt to deliver Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's descendent from bondage. (Exodus 1 – 2)

Key Point from Moses - the Egyptian

- God is faithful. He saw the Israelites condition and remembered his promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- God chose Moses to deliver His people out of their bondage of slavery.
- Centuries later God sent Jesus of Nazareth to deliver His people out of their bondage of sin.

Moses - Called by God

After killing the Egyptian Moses fled Egypt and lived in Median for forty years tending sheep. The Children of Israel had become great in number so much so that the new Pharaoh was fearful they might align themselves with another ruler. "Therefore, they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel." (Exodus 1:11-13)

One day when Moses was keeping the flock of sheep God spoke to him saying "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." ... "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey." ... "Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." (Ex 3:6; 7-8;10) Moses felt inadequate but reluctantly went after God showed him the power of His miracles to convince the Egyptians and Israelites that God was in control. (Exodus 3 - 4:17)

Key Points from Moses - Called by God

- God told Moses to GO but Moses said send someone else which angered God. Do we anger God by not doing His will which He has given to us in inspired word, the Bible?
- The Children of Israel multiplied greatly while being persecuted. So did the 1st century Christians.

Moses, The Deliverer

Moses had spent 40 years in Egypt being trained in all the ways of the Egyptians and another 40 years as a shepherd being trained by God to lead His people from Egypt to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The next forty years he led God's Children out of physical bondage.

First with Aaron he went to Pharaoh, perhaps his adopted mother's father or her brother, requesting him to allow the Israelites go to the wilderness to hold a feast and worship God. Pharaoh refused saying "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover, I will not let Israel go." (Exodus 5:2) Moreover, "You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. (Exodus 5:7-8)

The people grumbled saying "you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us." (Exodus 5:21) This will not be the last time they grumble and complain.

Key Point from Moses, The Deliverer

- God desires for His people to worship Him and not to constantly complain.

The Plagues

Moses begins to deliver God's message to Pharaoh who God allowed to come to power to display His power. Initially no one is impressed. Then Pharaoh's magicians and others began to waiver but not Pharaoh. Each time he rejected God's plea through Moses, it became easier for to reject God again – he hardened is own heart. With each new plague of destruction increases so much so that "Pharaoh's servants said to him, 'How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?'" (Exodus 9:32)

Finally, Pharaoh has had enough when he said, "Get away from me; take care never to see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die." Moses said, "As you say! I will not see your face again." (Exodus 10:28-29) Moses begins to prepare the Israelites for their departure from Egyptian slavery. (Exodus 7 – 11)

Key Points from The Plagues

- "The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." Do we know God as the loving savior or just know about God? Does God know us?
- Constant denying God's plea hardens the heart making it easier to reject again until it becomes too late.

Crossing Over

The first-born of the Egyptians died, Pharaoh told Moses to take the Israelites and get out! The Passover had been celebrated and the Israelites having left Egypt faced the Red Sea. God went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army in pursuit. With the Red Sea in front and Pharaoh's army behind, fear filled the hearts of the Israelites. Moses urged them to "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." (Exodus 14:13-14) "Then ... the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left." (Exodus 14:21-22)

Pharaoh's army pursued the Israelites into the midst of the sea and the Lord threw the Egyptian forces into a panic as the sea returned to its normal course covering the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. (Exodus 14:23-29)

Key Point from Crossing Over

- The Israelites were delivered from the bondage of physical slavery and to eventually their earthly land of promise.
- If those in Christ stand firm in their faith, they will be delivered from eternal slavery to Heaven their promised land with God.
- Fear and lack of trust in God results in bad decisions.

Feeding and Caring for a New Nation

FREE at last! They traveled three days in the wilderness and began to grumbled for lack of water and food. God provided good water and food from heaven called manna which continued for forty years. Again, they complained and grumbled about water. In fact, they appeared not to recall all God did and is doing for them.

With such a multitude of people, constant conflicts among them need to be resolved which Moses was overwhelmed as he attempted to do by himself. At Jethro recommendation Moses appoint men of increasing larger sections of people to help and the people ceased being weary. (Exodus 15 – 17)

Key Point from Feeding and Caring for a New Nation

- God is always faithful and just and displeased with our grumbling.

Mt. Sinai

Three months had passed since the Israelites departed Egypt and crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. God had brought them out of slavery, destroy the Egyptian army, give food and water, even after their much grumbling. Now they are encamped in the wilderness before Mt. Sinai.

The Lord said to Moses “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples. ... All the people answered together and said, ‘All that the Lord has spoken we will do.’” (Exodus 19:3-5; 8)

They consecrated themselves to meet God. God directed Moses to set limits lest they die. “There was thunder and lightning and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled as the people stood before the mountain. God called Moses to come to the top of the mountain. Here God delivered to Moses the Ten Commandments.

1. "You shall have no other gods before me.
2. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
3. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
5. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.
6. "You shall not murder.
7. "You shall not commit adultery.
8. "You shall not steal.
9. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." (Exodus 20:3-17)

Key Point from Mt. Sinai

- If you obey God fully and keep His covenant, then you will be God’s Holy people. This applies today just as it did then.

Rules for the New Nation to Live by

The Ten commandments had been given to the Israelites. Now laws, rules and regulations to govern the new nation who were slaves a short time ago.

Worshiping God:

1. Make no idols
2. Make altar of earth or stone to sacrifice burnt offerings

Dealing with people:

1. Hebrew slave
2. Sell daughter
3. Strife by fighting
4. Stealing
5. Cursing parents

Justice

1. Seduction
2. Sorceress
3. Sex with animals
4. Lending money
5. Respect of God and rulers

Key Point from Rules for the New Nation to Live by

- God's people must deal righteously in justice and mercy with others based upon a clear understanding of laws, rules and regulations.

Covenant and Tabernacle

Moses told the people the Word of the Lord and all its rules. He wrote then down, built an altar, offered burnt and peace offerings to God, sprinkled blood on the altar and on the people stating "then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.' And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.'" (Exodus 24:7-8)

God said "Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give - a freewill offering." (Exodus 25:2) From these freely given items God gave Moses detailed instruction to build a tabernacle which would include within as a place He could dwell with them:

1. Ark covered by the Mercy seat to hold His testimony
2. Table of for bread
3. Golden lampstand
4. Bronze altar

Key Points from Covenant and Tabernacle

- God entered into a covenant with them which Moses read to them, stored it safely in the ark where God's presence dwelled. They responded – "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey."
- Those in the covenant came in contact with the blood of the sacrifice.
- Christ has made a New Covenant with all who put their trust in and obey Him by coming in contact with the blood through baptism allowing God to put them into Christ's Kingdom. We must not turn back but remain faithful, do His will, diligently study His word storing it in our heart, then He will give eternal life.

Worship and Priest Items

God continue to provide instruction on worship, appearance of and actions by priest while fulfilling their duties. Colorful garments showed people who were God's priest. Other items were for them to perform their duties;

1. Breastplate of judgment
2. Ephod
3. Robe
4. Checkered coat
5. Turban
6. Sash

Specific formulas were given for making anointing oil and incense. They were not to be used as personal items on the body. “Anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them so they may serve me as priests. Say to the Israelites, ‘This is to be my sacred anointing oil for the generations to come. Do not pour it on men's bodies and do not make any oil with the same formula. It is sacred, and you are to consider it sacred. Whoever makes perfume like it and whoever puts it on anyone other than a priest must be cut off from his people.’” (Exodus 30:30-33)

Their day of sacrifice and worship established - “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites, you must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy. Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people.’” (Exodus 31:12-15)

Key Point from Worship and Priest Items

- To come before God, one must be consecrated and be clothed in the clothing required of God. For the Christian they must be put in the Christ Body by God and clothed in righteousness.

Idol Worship and Consequences

The people heard God call Moses up into the mountain, they were fearful and afraid of God while in His in their presence but soon forgot Him. False sacrifices and worship practices were established which brought them terrible consequences because of their failure to follow God's covenant with them.

How soon they forgot!! While Moses was on the mount, they built a golden image and worshipped it as the god who delivered them from Egyptian slavery. Moses was very displeased and said “You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” God told Moses “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for Me to punish, I will punish them for their sin.” And God sent a plague on the people because of the calf they had made. (Exodus 32:30; 33-35)

They leave the wilderness of Sanai to go to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob led by the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night.

Key Point from Idol Worship and Consequences

- Whoever sinned against God then and now without forgiveness will be blotted out of the Book of Life.
- Forgiveness is in Christ to all who obey and live according to His will.

LEVITICUS

Sacrifices and Offerings

These slaves freed from Egyptian bondage were still in southern Arabia near Mt Sinai being instructed in God's ways, learning to depend upon Him while being organized into a nation. During this time specific instructions were given regarding sacrifices and offerings as their worship to God. There were burnt offerings, sacrifice of animals for sins and peace offerings of thanksgiving and praise.

The instructions were very specific and involved active participation by the one making the offering; e.g.:

- a) his animal sacrifice was to be without blemish,
- b) he brings it to entrance of meeting,
- c) he lays his hands on the head on the offering for it to be accepted as an atonement offering and
- d) he kills it.

Aaron's sons are to; a) throw blood on sides of altar, b) flay the offering, c) place it on the altar and d) arrange wood for the fire. There are also specific offerings and sacrifices for atonement of unintentional sins of the priests, congregation as the whole and the common man. Other acts, failure to act, or failure to promote justice by not testifying, requires specific sacrifices for atonement.

Any deviation from what was specified was not acceptable. However, the one making the offering had a choice as to the animal selected; e.g., livestock, sheep, goat or bird. But it was to be without blemish, not weak or sickly. (Leviticus 1 – 7)

Key Points from Sacrifices and Offerings

- Offerings to God under the Covenant made by God through Moses were personal for the offeror and his family.
- He actively participated in his worship until the priest completed the offering.
- When Christ came and offered His body without the stain of sin, He also gave specific instructions. Man is to offer himself to God to have stain of sin removed by burial into Christ's cleansing blood – immersion also referred to as baptism - and resurrected by God from their burial and then placed into Christ Body. (Romans 6)

Old Covenant Priest

After giving specific instructions for sacrifices and offering, God gives instruction about priests' purification, their garments, the ephod, breastplate, Urim, Thummim and turban. The formula for making incense was given by Moses for burning on the altar of incense. Coals from fire of the altar were put into censers with incense and then taken inside the veil before God's presence.

"Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire [fire not from the altar of incense] before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord." (Leviticus 10:1-2) God had specified.

In the Covenant given by God through Moses priests served by offering sacrifices for atonement for His people. In the Covenant given by Christ, He offered himself as the sacrifice and His people are priest to serve Him. (Leviticus 10:8-10)

Key Points from Old Covenant Priest

- Sin has consequences and man is in need of forgiveness.
- Under the Law of Moses sin offering and burnt offering sacrifices were animals brought by the people, place their hands on it, kill it and give to the priest.
- Under the covenant brought by The Son of God, Christ was and is the only atoning sacrifice, sin offering, for the people.

Health, Cleanliness and Purification

The attention of the Children of Israel is now directed to living together as God's children. Again, God gives specific instructions about food they can or cannot eat, cleansing after child birth, treating of people with diseases, especially leprosy. These regulations were to keep a new nation of people healthy while learning to be free from taskmasters and foreign rulers.

Since Noah knew about clean and unclean animals (Gen 7:1-10), this distinction was part of an ancient tradition that antedated the Mosaic Law. Whether a creature was "clean" or "unclean" had nothing to do with the quality of the beast; it all depended on what God said about the animal. When He gave these laws, no doubt the Lord had the health of His people in mind (Deuteronomy 7:15; Exodus 15:26), but the main purpose of the dietary code was to remind the Israelites that they belonged to God and were obligated to keep themselves separated from everything that would defile them. "Be

holy, for I am holy." (The Bible Exposition Commentary) In Christ's new covenant the clean people have had their sins washed away by the blood of Christ. The unclean are people still stained with sin.

Key Points from Health, Cleanliness and Purification

- Rules for sacrifices, purifications and healthy living are specified.
- To many of the Israelites these rules may have been unreasonable. But they were God's commanded and not following them resulted in being put outside the camp - ceasing to be included as His people.
- Today many people consider commands given by Christ unreasonable. But they are Christ commands and by not following them one is left out of the eternal presence of God.

Day of Atonement

Requirements were given for the annual Day of Atonement. Failure to comply resulted in death. These commands were strict to impress holiness before God. They included the cleansing, a ceremonial washing, the ritual attire of the priest before entering the place of God's presence, the Most Holy Place with His Mercy Seat. God must be highly respected, honored and praised by man's actions.

Annually specific offerings and sacrifices were made for the priest and for the people. One significant offering was not a blood sacrifice, the priest laid his hands on a goat transferring the sins of the people to the goat which was taken far outside the camp and released carrying their sins into the wilderness. (Leviticus 16) Sins were not forgiven but transferred – delayed until Christ offered the perfect sacrifice, His own body to God.

Key Points from Day of Atonement

- Their sins were not forgiven but Placed on a goat to be carried away.
- Once a year the High Priest was to make an atoning sacrifice for his and the sins of the people and enter in the Most Holy Place in the presence of God with the blood of the atoning sacrifice.
- Forgiveness would occur much later by the perfect sacrifice the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ. He took. His blood sacrifice cleansed those faithful under the Old Covenant and will cleanse everyone who hears his message of reconciliation, understands it, puts his trust in Him and obeys.

NUMBERS

The descendants of Jacob had been in Egypt for four hundred years. They became slaves to a new Pharaoh dynasty. At God's direction Moses led them from Egypt through the Red Sea to Sanai. They

- a. Were protected from the Egyptian army who were pursuing them.
- b. Crossed the Red Sea on dry land with all their animals.
- c. Witnessed Pharaoh and his army destroyed in the sea.
- d. Came to Mt Sanai shuttered at God's appearance and voice.
- e. Received from Moses God's Commandments, rules and regulations.

For about one year they camped near Mt. Sanai. God began to organize and prepare them to go to land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So, "The Lord spoke to Moses in the Tent of Meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. He said: 'Take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families, listing every man by name, one by one. You and Aaron are to number by their divisions all the men in Israel twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army. One man from each tribe, each the head of his family, is to help you.'" (Num 1:1-4)

Moses, Aaron and the twelve leaders of Israel, each one representing his family counted all the Israelite men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in Israel's army were counted according to their families. The total number was 603,550 excluding the tribe of Levi. ... The Levites were to be in charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony and over all its furnishings and everything belonging to it. (Num 1:44-47, 50)

Comment: Assuming the men counted were married averaging 3.5 children per family, then there were over 3, 000,000 Israelites camped at Mt. Sanai.

The Lord said to Moses, "Bring the tribe of Levi and present them to Aaron the priest to assist him. They are to perform duties for him and for the whole community at the Tent of Meeting by doing the work of the tabernacle." (Num 3:5-7)

Comment: God specified the duties and functions the priest were to perform. Now those in Christ are priest with functions to perform.

The Lord said to Moses, "Command the Israelites to send away from the camp anyone who has an infectious skin disease or a discharge of any kind, or who is ceremonially unclean because of a dead body. Send away male and female alike; send them outside the camp so they will not defile their camp, where I dwell among them." (Num 5:1-3)

Comment: God knows the importance of quarantining for communicable and infectious diseases in the physical life and the importance of quarantining sin among those in Christ's Body.

When a man or woman wrongs another in any way or is unfaithful to the Lord, that person is guilty and must confess the sin he has committed. He must make full restitution for his wrong, add one fifth to it and give it all to the person he has wronged. (Num 5:6-7)

Comment: "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." (Matt 18:15)

"The Lord said to Moses 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of separation to the Lord as a Nazirite, he must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or from other fermented drink. He must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. As long as he is a Nazirite, he must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins.'" (Num 6:1-4)

Comment: The Nazirite vow requires one to consecrate himself or herself by self-imposed discipline for the purpose of some special service. (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia)

When Moses finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed it, consecrated it and all its furnishings. He also anointed and consecrated the altar and all its utensils. Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of families who were the tribal leaders in charge of those who were counted, made offerings. (Num 7:1-3) For twelve days, one leader each day brought his offering for the dedication of the altar. So, the tabernacle was dedicated. (Num 7:11)

"The Lord spoke to Moses in the Desert of Sinai in the first month of the second year after they came out of Egypt. He said, 'Have the Israelites celebrate the Passover at the appointed time. ... they did so in the Desert of Sinai at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. The Israelites did everything just as the Lord had commanded Moses.'" (Num 9:1-2; 5)

"Some came to Moses and Aaron that same day and said to Moses, 'We have become unclean because of a dead body, but why should we be kept from presenting the Lord's offering with the other Israelites at the appointed time?' Moses answered them, 'Wait until I find out what the Lord commands concerning you.'" (Num 9:6-8)

Comment: Many problems would be avoided if we waited until we knew what God says.

The Cloud covering the Tent of the Testimony

"On the day the tabernacle, the Tent of the Testimony, was set up, the cloud covered it. From evening till morning, the cloud above the tabernacle looked like fire. That is how it continued to be; the cloud covered it, and at night it looked like fire. Whenever the cloud lifted from above the Tent, the Israelites set out; wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped." (Num 9:15-18)

“On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. Then the Israelites set out from the Desert of Sinai and traveled from place to place until the cloud came to rest in the Desert of Paran.” (Num 10:11-12)

“Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. When the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the Lord and the fire died down.” (Num 11:1-2)

Moses’s Complaint

“The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing. ... Moses heard the people of every family wailing, each at the entrance to his tent. The Lord became exceedingly angry, and Moses was troubled. Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their forefathers? Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now — if I have found favor in your eyes — and do not let me face my own ruin.” (Num 11:4; 11-15)

Comment: Even the very righteous become stressed by constant quarreling and complaining. Their faith is being tested by Satan.

God Organizes Leadership

“The Lord said to Moses: ‘Bring me seventy of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.’” (Num 11:16-17)

“Now the Lord will give you meat, and you will eat it. You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, ten or twenty days, but for a whole month — until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it — because you have rejected the Lord.” (Num 11:18-20)

Family Jealously

“Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of the Cushite he married. ‘Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?’ they asked. ‘Hasn’t he also spoken through us?’ ... The anger of the Lord burned against them, and he left them. When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, there stood Miriam — leprous. Confine her outside the camp for seven days; after that she can be brought back. So, Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on till she was brought back.” (Num 12:1-2; 9-10; 14-15)

Exploring the Promised Land

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.’ ... Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees on it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land. ... At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land. They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. The people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large.” (Num 13:1-2; 17-20; 25-28)

“Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, ‘We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.’ But the men who had gone up with him said, ‘We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.’ And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak

come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.” (Num 13:30-33)

More Quarreling and Complaining

“All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, ‘If only we had died in Egypt!’ ... Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.” But the whole assembly talked about stoning them.” (Num 14:2; 6-10)

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them? I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they.’” (Num 14:11-12)

“Moses pleaded with God not to destroy them. ‘In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time, they left Egypt until now.’ The Lord replied, ‘I have forgiven them, as you asked. Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the Lord fills the whole earth, not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times — not one of them will ever see the land I promised.’” (Num 14:19-23)

“How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me?” ... “All your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.” ... “The men who brought up a bad report of the land— died by plague before the Lord.” (Num 14:27; 29-31; 37-38)

Offering Sacrifices

“If a stranger is sojourning with you, or anyone is living permanently among you, and he wishes to offer a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the Lord, he shall do as you do. For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before the Lord. One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you.” (Num 15:14-16)

But if you sin unintentionally without the knowledge of the congregation, all the congregation shall offer one bull from the herd for a burnt offering, they shall be forgiven, because it was a mistake. “But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the Lord, and that person must be cut off from his people. Because he has despised the Lord's word and broken his commands, that person must surely be cut off; his guilt remains on him.” (Num 15:22, 24-25; 30-31)

Comment: Sin without regard to God’s love and commands was not tolerated under the Old Covenant nor is it to be tolerated in the New Covenant. Paul said turn over to Satan and do not associate with an un-repentant brother intentionally sinning. (1 Corinthians 5) “Cut off from his people” and “turn over to Satan” removes sin from the congregation of God’s people.

A Revolt Against Moses

Korah, Dathan and Abiram along with 250 community leaders came as a group to oppose Moses. They were to come before the Lord for Him to choose His leader. Dathan and Abiram refused staying at their tents. God then opened the ground as their grave consumed them and all their possessions including family. Then fire from the Lord consumed the 250 followers.

“The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ‘You have killed the Lord's people,’ they said. But when the assembly gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron and turned toward the Tent of Meeting, suddenly the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord appeared. Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and the Lord said to Moses, ‘Get away from this assembly so I can put an end to them at once.’ And they

fell facedown. Then Moses said to Aaron, ‘Take your censer and put incense in it, along with fire from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them. Wrath has come out from the Lord; the plague has started.’ So, Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them. He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped. But 14,700 people died from the plague, in addition to those who had died because of Korah. Then Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, for the plague had stopped.” (Num 16:41-50)

Aaron Staff Blooms and God assigns Responsibilities

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Speak to the Israelites and get twelve staffs from them, one from the leader of each of their ancestral tribes. Write the name of each man on his staff. On the staff of Levi write Aaron's name, for there must be one staff for the head of each ancestral tribe. Place them in the Tent of Meeting in front of the Testimony, where I meet with you. The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites.’ ... “The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Testimony and saw that Aaron's staff, which represented the house of Levi, had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds. Then Moses brought out all the staffs from the Lord's presence to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each man took his own staff. The Lord said to Moses, "Put back Aaron's staff in front of the Testimony, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. This will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die.” (Num 17:1-5; 8-10)

Comment: God chose Aaron as His Priest under the Old Covenant. Christ is the High Priest in the New Covenant.

God assigns responsibilities of the Levites in regard to the Tent of Meeting. The Lord said to Aaron, “You, your sons and your father's family are to bear the responsibility for offenses against the sanctuary, and you and your sons alone are to bear the responsibility for offenses against the priesthood. Bring your fellow Levites from your ancestral tribe to join you and assist you when you and your sons minister before the Tent of the Testimony. They are to be responsible to you and are to perform all the duties of the Tent, but they must not go near the furnishings of the sanctuary or the altar, or both they and you will die. They are to join you and be responsible for the care of the Tent of Meeting - all the work at the Tent - and no one else may come near where you are.” (Num 18:1-4)

Aaron and Moses Sinned

“The whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried. Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. They quarreled with Moses The Lord said to Moses. ... ‘Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water.’ ... Moses said to them, ‘Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?’ Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.’” (Num 20:1-3; 7-8; 10-12)

Approaching the Promised Land

“Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying: ‘This is what your brother Israel says: You know about all the hardships that have come upon us. ... Please let us pass through your country. We will not go through any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the king's highway and not turn to the right or to the left until we have passed through your territory.’ But Edom answered: ‘You may not pass through here.’ ... Then Edom came out against them with a large and powerful army. Since Edom refused to let them go through their territory, Israel turned away from them. ... The whole Israelite community set out from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor.” (Num 20:14, 18, 21, 22)

Aaron Dies and God Appoints Eleazar

“At Mount Hor, near the border of Edom, the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ‘Aaron will be gathered to his people. He will not enter the land I give the Israelites, because both of you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah. Get Aaron and his son Eleazar and take them up Mount Hor. Remove Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar,

for Aaron will be gathered to his people; he will die there.’ Moses did as the Lord commanded: They went up Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community. Moses removed Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar. And Aaron died there on top of the mountain.” (Num 20:23-28)

The Conquest of the Promised Land Begins

“The Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev (south), attacked the Israelites and captured some of them. Then Israel made this vow to the Lord: ‘If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy their cities.’ The Lord listened to Israel's plea and gave the Canaanites over to them. They completely destroyed them and their towns.” (Num 21:1-3)

“They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!’ Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, ‘We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us.’ So, Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.’ So, Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.” (Num 21:4-9)

Comment: Recall Jesus said “when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. (John 12:32-34) His atoning sacrifice that would heal the souls of all who trust Him to do His will.

“Let us pass through your country. We will not turn aside into any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the king's highway until we have passed through your territory.’ But Sihon would not let Israel pass through his territory. He mustered his entire army and marched out into the desert against Israel. When he reached Jahaz, he fought with Israel. Israel, however, put him to the sword and took over his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, but only as far as the Ammonites, because their border was fortified. Israel captured all the cities of the Amorites and occupied them, including Heshbon and all its surrounding settlements. Heshbon was the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken from him all his land as far as the Arnon.” (Num 21:22-26)

“Then the Israelites traveled to the plains of Moab and camped along the Jordan across from Jericho. Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, and Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites. The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, ‘This horde is going to lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.’ ... The elders of Moab and Midian left, taking with them the fee for divination. When they came to Balaam, they told him what Balak had said. ... God said to Balaam, ‘Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed.’” (Num 22:1-4, 7, 12)

“Balaam went even after God told him not to go. Four times Balaam attempted to curse them and four time he uttered blessings. Balak's anger burned against Balaam. Now leave at once and go home! I said I would reward you handsomely, but the Lord has kept you from being rewarded.” ... Then Balaam got up and returned home and Balak went his own way.” (Num 24:10-11; 25)

“An Israelite man brought to his family a Midianite woman right before the eyes of Moses and the whole assembly of Israel while they were weeping at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. When Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saw this, he left the assembly, took a spear in his hand and followed the Israelite into the tent. He drove the spear through both of them — through the Israelite and into the woman's body. ... The Lord said to Moses, ‘Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites; for he was as zealous as I am for my honor among them, so that in my zeal I did not put an end to them. Therefore, tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him. He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites.’” (Num 25:6-8; 10-13)

Time to Occupy the Promised Land

“The Lord said to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, ‘Take a census of the whole Israelite community by families — all those twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army of Israel.’ So, on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho, Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them and said, ‘Take a census of the men twenty years old or more.’” (Num 26:1-4)

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go up this mountain in the Abarim range and see the land I have given the Israelites. After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was, for when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, both of you disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes.’ (These were the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin.) Moses said to the Lord, ‘May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.’ So, the Lord said to Moses, ‘Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him. Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him.’” (Num 27:12-20)

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Give this command to the Israelites and say to them: See that you present to me at the appointed time the food for my offerings made by fire, as an aroma pleasing to me.’ ... Moses told the Israelites all that the Lord commanded him.” (Num 28:1-2; 29:40)

“The Lord commands: When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.” (Num 30:2)

Comment: Vows and covenants are very important, not to be made or taken lightly. They are commitment with the Lord.

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Take vengeance on the Midianites for the Israelites. After that, you will be gathered to your people.’ So, Moses said to the people, ‘Arm some of your men to go to war against the Midianites and to carry out the Lord's vengeance on them. ... They fought against Midian, as the Lord commanded Moses, and killed every man.’ ... ‘Have you allowed all the women to live?’ he asked them. ‘They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from the Lord in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the Lord's people. Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man.’” (Num 31:1-3; 7, 15-17)

Comment: The influence of evil including idol worship must be removed. Retaining any evil influence brings temptations and desires that lead to sin.

“On the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho the Lord said to Moses, ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you cross the Jordan into Canaan, drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places. Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess. Distribute the land by lot, according to your clans. To a larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller group a smaller one. Whatever falls to them by lot will be theirs. Distribute it according to your ancestral tribes. But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them.’” (Num 33:50-56)

DEUTERONOMY

The fifth book of the Pentateuch is Deuteronomy, which signifies “The Law Repeated” or a Second Declaration of the Law. (From Dickson Bible) This presentation will generally identify without detail what has been summarized in Numbers.

“These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel in the desert east of the Jordan. ‘The Lord our God said to us at Horeb, You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites; go to all the neighboring peoples in the Arabah, in the mountains, in the western foothills, in the Negev and along the coast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates.’” (Deut. 1:1; 6-7)

See, I have given you this land.

- “Go in and take possession of the land that the Lord swore he would give to your fathers — to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — and to their descendants after them.” (Deut. 1:8)
- “Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you.” (Deut. 1:13)
- “Let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us and bring back a report about the route we are to take and the towns we will come to.” (Deut. 1:22)
- It is a good land that the Lord our God is giving us. But you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God. You grumbled in your tents. (Deut. 1:25-27)
- “When the Lord heard what you said, he was angry and solemnly swore: “Not a man of this evil generation shall see the good land I swore to give your forefathers.” (Deut. 1:34-35)
- “We turned back and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea, as the Lord had directed me. For a long time, we made our way around the hill country of Seir.” (Deut. 2:1)
- “Thirty-eight years passed from the time we left Kadesh Barnea until we crossed the Zered Valley. By then, that entire generation of fighting men had perished from the camp.” (Deut. 2:14)
- “Now when the last of these fighting men among the people had died, the Lord said to me, ‘Today you are to pass by the region of Moab at Ar.’” (Deut. 2:16-18)
- “Set out now and cross the Arnon Gorge. See, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his country.” (Deut. 2:24)
- “Next, we turned and went up along the road toward Bashan, ... So, the Lord our God also gave into our hands Og king of Bashan and all his army.” (Deut. 3:1, 3)
- “Hear now, O Israel, the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.” (Deut. 4:1-2)

“See I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?”” (Deut. 4:5-8)

“Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when he said to me, “Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.” You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens, with black clouds and deep darkness. Then the Lord spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets. And the Lord directed me at that time to teach you the decrees and laws you are to follow in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.” (Deut. 4:9-14)

“... Therefore, watch yourselves very carefully, so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman, or like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in the air,

or like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish in the waters below. And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars — all the heavenly array — do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshiping things the Lord your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven. But as for you, the Lord took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as you now are.” (Deut. 4:15-20)

“Be careful not to forget the covenant of the Lord your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the Lord your God has forbidden. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.” (Deut. 4:23-24)

“... If you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the Lord your God and provoking him to anger, I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed. The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive.” (Deut. 4:25-27)

“But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the Lord your God and obey him. For the Lord your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath.” (Deut. 4:29-31)

Moses repeats of the Ten Commandments concluding with – “be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.” (Deut. 5:32-33)

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” ... “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” (Deut. 6:4-9; 16)

“When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations — the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you — and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.” (Deut. 7:1-4)

“If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the Lord your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your forefathers. He will love you and bless you.” ... “Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today. ... Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you.” (Deut. 7:12-13; 8:2-5)

“When you build fine houses and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God.” ... “If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed.” (Deut. 8:12-14; 19)

“And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. Yet the Lord set his affection on your forefathers and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, as it is today. Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. Fear the Lord your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name.” (Deut. 10:12-21)

“These are the decrees and laws you must be careful to follow in the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess — as long as you live in the land. Destroy completely all the places on the high mountains and on the hills and under every spreading tree where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods. Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places. You must not worship the Lord your God in their way. But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give.” (Deut. 12:1-6)

“You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit, since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the Lord your God is giving you.” ... “Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you please. Offer them only at the place the Lord will choose in one of your tribes, and there observe everything I command you.” ... “Be careful not to neglect the Levites as long as you live in your land.” (Deut. 12:8-9, 13-14, 19)

“... You may eat as much of it as you want” ... “but be sure you do not eat the blood, because blood is the life, pour it out on the ground like water.” (Deut. 12:20, 23-24)

“The Lord your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, ‘How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same.’ You must not worship the Lord your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.” (Deut. 12:29-31)

“At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts.” (Deut. 15:1)

“If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs. Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought.” (Deut. 15:7-9)

“If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs. Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: “The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near,” so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the Lord against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.” (Deut. 15:7-11)

Feast to be Observed

- Celebrate the Passover of the Lord your God, because in the month of Abib he brought you out of Egypt by night. (Deut. 16:1-2)

- Celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the Lord your God has given you. (Deut. 16:10)
- Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress. (Deut. 16:13)
- Feast of Unleavened Bread
- Feast of Weeks
- Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the Lord empty-handed. (Deut. 16:16)

“Do not sacrifice to the Lord your God an ox or a sheep that has any defect or flaw in it, for that would be detestable to him.” (Deut. 17:1)

“When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God.” (Deut. 18:9-13)

“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.” (Deut. 18:15)

“The Lord said to me: ‘What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death.’ You may say to yourselves, ‘How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?’ If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.” (Deut. 18:17-22)

“If a man hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him, assaults and kills him. ... You must purge from Israel the guilt of shedding innocent blood.” (Deut. 19:11-13)

“Do not move your neighbor's boundary stone.” (Deut. 19:14)

“One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense.” (Deut. 19:15)

“If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse.” (Deut. 21:22-23)

Comment: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” (Gal 3:13)

“If you see your brother's ox or sheep straying, do not ignore it but be sure to take it back to him.” (Deut. 22:1)

“A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this.” (Deut. 22:5)

“If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept (sexual relations) with her and the woman must die.” (Deut. 22:22)

“A man is not to marry his father's wife; he must not dishonor his father's bed.” (Deut. 22:30)

Comment: It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality (Greek *porneia* – fornication) among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.” (1 Cor 5:1-2)

“If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled.” (Deut. 24:1-4)

Comment: Sending away a wife with a certificate of divorcement (Hebrew word *kriythuwth*) permits re-marriage without being considered an adulteress. Without a certificate of divorcement (Hebrew word *Shalach*) anyone who marries another is committing fornication as she is still married thereby committing adultery by breaking the marriage covenant.

“Today the Lord your God is commanding you to obey these laws and rules. You must faithfully obey them with all your heart and with all your soul. Today you have declared that the Lord is your God and that you will follow his directions, obey his laws, commands, and rules, and listen to him. Today the Lord has declared that you are his people, his own special possession, as he told you. But you must be sure to obey his commands. Then he will place you high above all the other nations he has made. He will give you praise, fame, and honor, and you will be a people holy to the Lord your God, as he promised.” (Deut. 26:16-19)

“Then Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, ‘Be quiet and listen, Israel. Today you have become the people of the Lord your God. Obey the Lord your God and follow his commands and laws which I'm giving you today.’” (Deut. 27:9-10)

“When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. And these tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali. The Levites shall recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice: Then all the people shall say!

- Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol — a thing detestable to the Lord, the work of the craftsman's hands — and sets it up in secret. (15)
- Cursed is the man who dishonors his father or his mother. (16)
- Cursed is the man who moves his neighbor's boundary stone. (17)
- Cursed is the man who leads the blind astray on the road. (18)
- Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow. (19)
- Cursed is the man who sleeps with his father's wife, for he dishonors his father's bed. (20)
- Cursed is the man who has sexual relations with any animal. (21)
- Cursed is the man who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother. Recall Amnon, David's son, raped Tamar his half-sister. (2 Samuel 13:12) (22)
- Cursed is the man who sleeps with his mother-in-law. (23)
- Cursed is the man who kills his neighbor secretly. (24)
- Cursed is the man who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person. (25)
- Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out. (26)

“If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands, I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God.” (Deut. 27:12-28:2)

“However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees, I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country. Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out. The Lord will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking him.” (Deut. 28:15-20)

“If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name — the Lord your God ... Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other.” (Deut. 28:58, 64)

“When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything, I command you today, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.” (Deut. 30:1-5)

“However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees, I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country. Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out. The Lord will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking him.” (Deut. 28:15-20)

“If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name — the Lord your God. ... Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other.” (Deut. 28:58, 64)

“When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything, I command you today, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.” (Deut. 30:1-5)

“See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you, life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” (Deut. 30:15-20)

“Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel: ‘I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The Lord has said to me, you shall not cross the Jordan.’ The Lord your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua also will cross over ahead of you, as the Lord said.” (Deut. 31:1-3)

“Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their forefathers to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” (Deut. 31:7-8)

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘Now the day of your death is near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the Tent of Meeting, where I will commission him.’ So, Moses and Joshua came and presented themselves at the Tent of Meeting. Then the Lord appeared at the Tent in a pillar of cloud, and the cloud stood over the entrance to the Tent. And the Lord said to Moses: ‘You are going to rest with your fathers.’” (Deut. 31:14-16)

“The Lord gave this command to Joshua son of Nun: ‘Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I promised them on oath, and I myself will be with you.’” (Deut. 31:23)

“After Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end, he gave this command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord: ‘Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God. There it will remain as a witness against you.’” (Deut. 31:24-27)

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“On that same day the Lord told Moses, ‘Go up into the Abarim Range to Mount Nebo in Moab, across from Jericho, and view Canaan, the land I am giving the Israelites as their own possession. There on the mountain that you have climbed you will die and be gathered to your people, just as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. This is because both of you broke faith with me in the presence of the Israelites at the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the Desert of Zin and because you did not uphold my holiness among the Israelites. Therefore, you will see the land only from a distance; you will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel.’” (Deut. 32:48-52)

“Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the Lord showed him the whole land — from Gilead to Dan, all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. Then the Lord said to him, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it." And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said. He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is.” (Deut. 34:1-7)

“Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt — to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.” (Deut. 34:10-12)

Comment: Jesus of Nazareth did all kinds of sign, miracles and wonders, including raising one dead for four days. The leaders of the Jews rejected this miracle, thus hardening their heart. The leaders of the Jews just like Pharaoh, the leader of Egypt, rejected these miracles that prove they were messengers of God.

JOSHUA

“After the death of Moses, the Lord said to Joshua ... Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers. Be careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Joshua commanded the officers to

command the people to 'Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess.'" (Josh. 1:1; 5-11)

"Joshua sent two men secretly as spies, saying, 'Go, view the land, especially Jericho.' And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. . . . Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof and said to the men, 'I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites. As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God. Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.' And the men said to her, "Our life for yours even to death! She let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall, so that she lived in the wall. And she said, "Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way." (Josh. 2:1-2; 8-16)

"They came down from the hills and passed over and came and told Joshua all that had happened to them saying 'Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands. And also, all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us.'" Josh. 2:23-24

"The Lord said to Joshua, 'Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. Command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, when you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.' Joshua said to the people of Israel, 'Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God." Then you will know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you.'" (Josh. 3:7-10)

"When the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest). The waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan. . . . The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho." (Josh. 3:14-17; 4:19)

The Lord told Joshua to circumcise all uncircumcised men as none were circumcised after departing Egypt. Circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Abraham well before Moses was given the Old Covenant.

"On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover." (Josh. 5:10)

"When Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, 'Are you for us or for our enemies?' 'Neither,' he replied, 'but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.' Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, 'What message does my Lord have for his servant?'" (Josh. 5:13-14)

"Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. Then the Lord said to Joshua, 'See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets.' . . . On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. When the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city! The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who

are with her in her house shall be spared. ... So, the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel. When they burned the whole city and everything in it.” (Josh. 6:1-4; 15-17; 23-24)

“But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things. ... Achan replied, ‘It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them, took them and hid them in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.’ ... Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. Then the Lord turned from his fierce anger. Joshua then captured and burned Ai.” (Josh. 7:1; 20-21, 25-26, 28)

“Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses — an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. On it they offered to the Lord burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings. There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua copied on stones the law of Moses, which he had written. All Israel, aliens and citizens alike, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the Lord, facing the priests who carried.” (Josh. 8:30-33)

“When the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they resorted to a ruse (deception, trickery). With worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. The men put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, ‘We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.’ ... The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.” (Josh. 9:3-6, 14-15)

“Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. ... The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, but all the leaders answered, “We have given them our oath by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. ... Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, “Why did you deceive us by saying, ‘We live a long way from you,’ while actually you live near us? You are now under a curse: You will never cease to serve as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God.” (Josh. 9:18-19, 22-23)

“When the five kings of the Amorites — the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon — joined forces. They moved up with all their troops and took up positions against Gibeon and attacked it. The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: ‘Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us!’ So, Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army. The Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel.” (Josh. 10:5 -7)

“When Joshua was old and well advanced in years, the Lord said to him, “You are very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over. But the Israelites did not drive out (all) the people.” (Josh. 12:7; 13:1)

“Caleb said to Joshua, ‘You know what the Lord said to Moses at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. I brought him back a report according to my convictions, but my brothers who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt with fear. I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly. So, on that day Moses swore to me, ‘The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.’ ... He (God) has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the desert. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I’m just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said.” Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. So, Hebron has belonged to Caleb because he followed the Lord, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. Then the land had rest from war.” (Josh. 14: 6-9, 10-15)

“The Lord gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the Lord handed all their enemies over to them. Not one of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; everyone was fulfilled.” (Josh. 21:44-45)

“Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh and said to them, “You have done all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded, and you have obeyed me in everything I commanded. For a long time now — to this very day — you have not deserted your brothers but have carried out the mission the Lord your God gave you. Now that the Lord your God has given your brothers rest as he promised, return to your homes in the land that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side of the Jordan. But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul.’ Then Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their homes.” (Josh. 22:1-6)

“When they came to Gilead near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an imposing altar there by the Jordan. When the Israelites heard that they had built the altar on the border of Canaan at Gilead near the Jordan on the Israelite side, the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them. So, the Israelites sent Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, to the land of Gilead — to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. With him they sent ten of the chief men, one for each of the tribes of Israel, each the head of a family division among the Israelite clans. When they went to Gilead — to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh — they said to them: “The whole assembly of the Lord says: ‘How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from the Lord and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now? Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day we have not cleansed ourselves from that sin, even though a plague fell on the community of the Lord! And are you now turning away from the Lord.’” (Josh 22:10-18)

“Then Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh replied ‘The Mighty One, God, the Lord! The Mighty One, God, the Lord! He knows! ... Let us get ready and build an altar — but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices.’ On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the Lord at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, ‘You have no share in the Lord. If they ever say this to us, or to our descendants, we will answer: Look at the replica of the Lord's altar, which our fathers built, not for burnt offerings and sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you.’ ... When Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the community — the heads of the clans of the Israelites — heard what Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had to say, they were pleased. And Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, said to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, “Today we know that the Lord is with us, because you have not acted unfaithfully toward the Lord in this matter. Now you have rescued the Israelites from the Lord's hand.” (Josh. 22:21-22, 26-28, 30-31)

“After a long time had passed, Joshua was old and well advanced in years summoned all Israel and said to them: “I am old and well advanced in years. You yourselves have seen everything the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the Lord your God who fought for you.” (Josh. 23:1-4)

“Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them. But you are to hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have until now.” (Josh. 23:6-8)

“But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them, then you may be sure that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the Lord your God has given you.” (Josh. 23:12-13)

“Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed. But just as every good promise of the Lord your God has come true, so the Lord will bring on you all the evil he has threatened, until he

has destroyed you from this good-land he has given you. If you violate the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, the Lord's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly perish from the good land he has given you.” (Josh. 23:14-16)

“Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods. But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the River and led him throughout Canaan.' ... I sent Moses and Aaron, and I afflicted the Egyptians by what I did there, and I brought you out of Egypt. ... Then you crossed the Jordan. ... 'I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.' 'Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness.'” (Josh. 24:1-3, 5, 11, 13-14)

“If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you. But the people said to Joshua, ‘No! We will serve the Lord.’ Then Joshua said, ‘You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord.’ ‘Yes, we are witnesses.’” (Josh. 24:20-22)

“Joshua died at the age of a hundred and ten. They buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. Israel served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the Lord had done for Israel. And Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants. And Eleazar son of Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim.” (Josh. 24:29-33)

Key Points from Joshua

- None of God's promises ever fail.
- The Lord spoke to the Israelites directly through His servant Joshua but now speaks to His people through His son Jesus, the Christ.
- Do not depart from the Book of the Law but meditate on it day and night. For us today we should study diligently and meditate on the inspired word of God to know His will and not depart from it.
- Unfaithfulness brings pain and sorrow whether with God or people. It may not be in this present life but in the eternal life, if unforgiven.
- The Israelites remained faithful to God when there were strong, faithful and righteous leaders. God gave requirements of His spiritual leaders in the kingdom established by Christ's and His atoning sacrifice.

JUDGES

“After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the Lord, ‘Who will be the first to go up and fight for us against the Canaanites?’ The Lord answered, ‘Judah is to go; I have given the land into their hands.’ Then the men of Judah said to the Simeonites their brothers, ‘Come up with us into the territory allotted to us, to fight against the Canaanites. We in turn will go with you into yours.’ So, the Simeonites went with them attacked Jerusalem also and took it.” (Judges 1:1-3)

“Several tribes did not drive out the idol worshipers. Therefore, the angel of the Lord asked why have you disobeyed me? Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be [thorns] in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.” (Judges 2:3)

“After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. In his anger against Israel the Lord handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the Lord was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them.” (Judges 2:10-11, 13-15)

Comment: “Another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord” appears to be repeated throughout the history of Israel. Was this also true from the first century? What about the present generation?

“Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them.” (Judges 2:16-17)

“But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their fathers, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.” (Judges 2:19)

“The Lord said because this nation has violated the covenant that I laid down for their forefathers and has not listened to me, I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations, Joshua left when he died. I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the Lord.” (Judges 2:20-22)

Comment: Are we aware of evil with which God allows to be test?

Othniel

“The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods. The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord; they forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs. The anger of the Lord burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram for eight years then they cried out to the Lord. ... The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. The Lord gave Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram into his hand.” (Judges 3:5-8, 10)

“Once again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord. ... So, the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin, commander of his army was Sisera who oppressed them for twenty years.” (Judges 3:12; 4:1-3)

Deborah

“Deborah, a prophetess was leading Israel at that time sent for Barak and said to him, ‘The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’” (Judges 4:4, 6-7)

“Ten thousand men followed him, and Deborah also went with him. At Barak's advance, the Lord routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot. Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as Harosheth Haggoyim. All the troops of Sisera fell by the sword; not a man was left. Sisera, however, fled on foot to the tent of Jael. ... Jael picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died. Then the land had peace forty years.” (Judges 4:10, 15-17; 5:31)

Gideon

“Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. ... Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.” (Judges 6:1, 6)

“The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak where Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, ‘The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.’ ‘But sir,’ Gideon replied, ‘if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said’, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us

and put us into the hand of Midian.’ The Lord turned to him and said, ‘Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?’” (Judges 6:11-13, 14)

‘So, Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it The Lord is Peace. That same night the Lord said to him, ‘Take the second bull from your father’s herd, the one seven years old. Tear down your father’s altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. Then build a proper kind of altar to the Lord your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering.’” (Judges 6:24-26)

“Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the Lord told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the men of the town, he did it at night rather than in the daytime. In the morning when the men of the town got up, there was Baal’s altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar! They asked each other, ‘Who did this?’ When they carefully investigated, they were told, ‘Gideon son of Joash did it.’ The men of the town demanded of Joash, ‘Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal’s altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.’ But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, ‘Are you going to plead Baal’s cause? Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning! If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar.’” (Judges 6:27-31)

“Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them. Gideon said to God, ‘If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised— I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said.’ And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew — a bowlful of water. Then Gideon said to God, ‘Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece. This time make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew.’ That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.” (Judges 6:33-40)

“Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. The Lord said to Gideon, ‘You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, announce now to the people, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead’ So, twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. But the Lord said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go.’ So, Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. The Lord said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place.’ So, Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.” (Judges 7:1-8)

Comment: Man’s victories in life are from God not man.

“Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. They shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.” (Judges 7:19-21)

“The army and its two kings of Midian, fled, but he pursued them and captured them, routing their entire army.” (Judges 8:12)

“The Israelites said to Gideon, ‘Rule over us — you, your son and your grandson — because you have saved us out of the hand of Midian.’ But Gideon told them, ‘I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The Lord will rule over you.’ ... During Gideon's lifetime, the land enjoyed peace forty years. No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites again prostituted themselves to the Baals.” (Judges 8:22-23, 28, 33)

Abimelech

“Abimelech son of Gideon murdered his seventy brothers. ... The people of Shechem made him king and during his reign he killed many while destroying cities. ... After Abimelech had governed Israel three years, God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem, who acted treacherously against Abimelech.” (Judges 9:1, 5, 22-23)

“Gaal led out the citizens of Shechem and fought Abimelech. Abimelech chased him, and many fell wounded in the flight. ... The next day the people of Shechem went out to the fields where Abimelech had set an ambush. All that day Abimelech pressed his attack against the city until he had captured it and killed its people. Then he destroyed the city and scattered salt over it.” (Judges 9:39-40, 42-45)

“Abimelech went to Thebez and besieged it and captured it. Inside the city, however, was a strong tower, to which all the men and women — all the people of the city — fled. They locked themselves in and climbed up on the tower roof. Abimelech went to the tower and stormed it. But as he approached the entrance to the tower to set it on fire, a woman dropped an upper millstone on his head and cracked his skull. ... Thus, God repaid the wickedness that Abimelech had done to his father by murdering his seventy brothers.” (Judges 9:50-53, 56)

“After the time of Abimelech, a man of Issachar, Tola rose up to save Israel. He lived in Shamir, in the hill country of Ephraim. He led Israel twenty-three years; then he died, and was buried in Shamir. He was followed by Jair of Gilead, who led Israel twenty-two years. ... When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.” (Judges 10:1-5)

“Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord. They served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, and the gods of the Ammonites and Philistines. Because the Israelites forsook the Lord and no longer served him, he became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, who that year shattered and crushed them. For eighteen years they oppressed all the people of Israel. Then Israel cried out to the Lord. ... So, they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the Lord, and he became impatient over the misery of Israel.” (Judges 10:6-8, 10-11, 16)

Jephthah

“Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior, but he was the son of a prostitute. ... Consequently, his brothers drove him out. So, he fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob, and worthless fellows collected around Jephthah and went out with him.” (Judges 11:1, 3)

“When the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to bring Jephthah and said, ‘Come and be our leader, that we may fight with the Ammonites.’” (Judges 11:5-6)

“Then Jephthah sent messengers to the Ammonite king with the question: ‘What do you have against us that you have attacked our country?’ The king of the Ammonites answered ‘When Israel came up out of Egypt, they took away my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, all the way to the Jordan. Now give it back peaceably.’ Jephthah sent back messengers to the Ammonite king, saying Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites. But when they came up out of Egypt, Israel went through the desert to the Red Sea and on to Kadesh. Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, ‘Give us permission to go through your country,’ but the kings of Edom and Moab would not listen - they refused. So, Israel stayed at Kadesh.” (Judges 11:12-17)

“Then the Lord, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and all his men into Israel's hands, and they defeated them. Israel took over all the land of the Amorites who lived in that country, capturing all of it from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the desert to the Jordan.” (Judges 11:21-22)

“For three hundred years Israel occupied Heshbon, Aroer, the surrounding settlements and all the towns along the Arnon. I have not wronged you, but you are doing me wrong by waging war against me. Let the Lord, the Judge, decide the dispute this day between the Israelites and the Ammonites.’ The king of Ammon, however, paid no attention to the message Jephthah sent him. Therefore, Jephthah crossed Gilead and Manasseh, passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there he advanced against the Ammonites. And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord: ‘If you give the Ammonites into my hands, whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the Lord's, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.’ Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the Lord gave them into his hands. He devastated twenty towns from Aroer to the vicinity of Minnith, as far as Abel Keramim. Thus, Israel subdued Ammon. When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of tambourines! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter. When he saw her, he tore his clothes and cried, ‘Oh! My daughter! You have made me miserable and wretched, because I have made a vow to the Lord that I cannot break.’ Jephthah led Israel six years.” (Judges 11:26-35)

Samson

“Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, so the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was sterile and remained childless. The angel of the Lord appeared to her and said, "You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean, because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines.” (Judges 13:1-5)

“Manoah prayed to the Lord: "O Lord, I beg you, let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born." God heard Manoah, and the angel of God came again the angel of the Lord answered, ‘Your wife must do all that I have told her. She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her.’” (Judges 13:6, 9, 13-14)

Comment: A Nazirite vow - a period of separation to the Lord for some purpose by either man or woman. They must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or from other fermented drink. He must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins and no razor may be used on his head. (Num 6:2-5)

“The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him while he was in Mahaneh. Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. When he returned, he said to his father and mother, ‘I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife.’ But Samson said to his father, ‘Get her for me. She's the right one for me.’” (Judges 13:24-25; 14:1-3)

Comment: One should choose a spouse to help him obtain eternal life.

“Now his father went down to see the woman. Samson made a feast there, as was customary for bridegrooms. When he appeared, he was given thirty companions. ‘Let me tell you a riddle,’ Samson said to them. ‘If you can give me the answer within the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes. If you can't tell me the answer, you must give me thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes.’ ‘Tell us your riddle,’ they said. ‘Let's hear it.’ He replied, ‘Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet.’ (Unable to solve the riddle they threatened Samson's wife and family. After much begging, pleading and nagging Samson revealed the secret of his strength. Then they gave him the answer to his riddle.) Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he went up to his father's house.” (Judges 14:4, 10-19)

“Tamnah's father said to Samson ‘I was so sure you thoroughly hated her,’ so I gave her to your friend. In anger Samson went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves. When the Philistines determined it was Samson, they burned her and her

father to death. Samson said to them, 'Since you've acted like this, I won't stop until I get my revenge on you.' He attacked them viciously and slaughtered many of them. Then he went down and stayed in a cave in the rock of Etam." (Judges 15:1-8)

"Sometime later, he fell in love with Delilah. The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, 'See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver.' So, many times Delilah said to Samson, 'Tell me the secret of your great strength.'" (Judges 16: 4-6)

"Finally, with such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death. So, he told her everything. 'No razor has ever been used on my head,' he said, 'because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man.' When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, 'Come back once more; he has told me everything.' So, the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. Having put him to sleep on her lap, she called a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him. Then she called, 'Samson, the Philistines are upon you!' He awoke from his sleep and thought, 'I'll go out as before and shake myself free.' But he did not know that the Lord had left him. Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison. But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved. Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands." When the people saw him, they praised their god." (Judges 16:7-24)

"While they were in high spirits, they shouted, 'Bring out Samson to entertain us.' So, they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them. When they stood him among the pillars, Samson said to the servant who held his hand, 'Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them.' Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. Then Samson prayed to the Lord, 'O Sovereign Lord, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.' Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, Samson said, 'Let me die with the Philistines!' Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus, he killed many more when he died than while he lived. Then his brothers and his father's whole family went down to get him. They brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had led Israel twenty years." (Judges 16:25-31)

The Levite and His Concubine

"Now a Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her father's house in Bethlehem, Judah. After she had been there four months, her husband went to her to persuade her to return. ... The man left and went toward Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine. When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, 'Come, let's stop at this city of the Jebusites and spend the night.' His master replied, 'No. We won't go into an alien city, whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah.' He added, 'Come, let's try to reach Gibeah or Ramah and spend the night in one of those places.' So, they went on, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin. There they stopped to spend the night. They went and sat in the city square, but no one took them into his home for the night. That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah (the men of the place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the fields. When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, "Where are you going? Where did you come from?" (Judges 19:1-3, 10-17)

"You are welcome at my house," the old man said. 'Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square.' So, he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink. While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding

on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, 'Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him.' The owner of the house went outside and said to them, 'No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this disgraceful thing. Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But to this man, don't do such a disgraceful thing.' But the men would not listen to him. So, the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight." (Judges 19:20-26)

"He said to her, 'Get up; let's go.' But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home. When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel." (Judges 19:28-29)

"Then all the Israelites from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came out as one man and assembled before the Lord in Mizpah. The leaders of all the people of the tribes of Israel took their places in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand soldiers armed with swords. (The Benjamites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the Israelites said, 'Tell us how this awful thing happened.' So, the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, said, 'I and my concubine came to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night. During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died. I took my concubine, cut her into pieces and sent one piece to each region of Israel's inheritance, because they committed this lewd and disgraceful act in Israel. Now, all you Israelites, speak up and give your verdict.' All the people rose as one man, saying, 'None of us will go home.'" (Judges 20:1-8)

"Then the tribes of Israel sent men throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, 'What about this awful crime that was committed among you? Now surrender those wicked men of Gibeah so that we may put them to death and purge the evil from Israel.' But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites. From their towns they came together at Gibeah to fight against the Israelites. ... On that day twenty-five thousand Benjamite swordsmen fell, all of them valiant fighters. But six hundred men turned and fled into the desert to the rock of Rimmon, where they stayed four months. The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put all the towns to the sword, including the animals and everything else they found. All the towns they came across they set on fire." (Judges 20:12-16, 46-48)

RUTH

"In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and his two sons Mahlon and Kilion went to live for a while in Moab. Now Elimelech died leaving her with their two sons who married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both sons died."

Comment: In tragedies there are choices. One can give thanks for past blessing or blame God for their present troubles.

"When she heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home. She set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go back, each of you, to your mother's home that you may find rest in the home of another husband.' They refused, but Naomi insisted. At this they wept and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to her."

Comment: Orpah's love was not as deep as Ruth's. Their actions clearly show their degree of love. One's actions toward God's love for them also shows personal depth of their love for Him.

"But Ruth replied, 'Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.' When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her."

“So, the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning. Ruth said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor. Naomi said to her, ‘Go ahead, my daughter.’ So, she went out and began to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelech.”

“Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, ‘The Lord be with you!’ ‘The Lord bless you!’ they called back. Boaz asked the foreman of his harvesters, ‘Whose young woman is that?’ The foreman replied, ‘She is the Moabitess who came back from Moab with Naomi.’ She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.’ She went into the field and has worked steadily from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter.”

Comment: According to their law Ruth, as a widow of an Israelite, had the right to glean but she acted wisely and asked permission showing her respect for the owner.

“Boaz said to Ruth, ‘My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with my servant girls. Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the girls. I have told the men not to touch you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled.’ She exclaimed, ‘Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me — a foreigner?’ Boaz replied, ‘I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband — how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before.’ ‘May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord,’ she said. ‘You have given me comfort and have spoken kindly to your servant — though I do not have the standing of one of your servant girls.’”

Comment: Love can be expressed in words; e.g., “I love you” but the degree of one’s love is more easily measured by actions such as Ruth’s actions toward Naomi, which can be observed by others.

“Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and carried it back to town. Naomi saw how much she had gathered and asked, where did you glean today? ‘Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!’ Then Ruth said ‘the name of the man in whose field I worked today was Boaz. He even said to me’, 'Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.’”

“Naomi said the Lord bless him adding he is a close relative; one of our kinsman-redeemers. It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with his girls, because in someone else's field you might be harmed." Ruth stayed close to the servant girls of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished.”

“One day Naomi said, ‘My daughter, should I not try to find a home for you, where you will be well provided for? Is not Boaz, with whose servant girls you have been, a kinsman of ours? Tonight, he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. Wash and perfume yourself, and put on your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do.’ Ruth did as Naomi said. In the middle of the night something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet. ‘Who are you?’ he asked. ‘I am your servant Ruth,’ she said. ‘Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer.’”

“The Lord bless you, my daughter, he replied. ‘This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives, I will do it.’”

Comment: A righteous heart desires to do what is right regardless of personal desires.

“Early the next morning she got up before anyone could be recognized. Boaz said, ‘Don't let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor.’ Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there. When the kinsman-redeemer he had mentioned came along, Boaz said, ‘Come over here, my friend, and sit down.’ Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, ‘Sit here,’ Then he said to the kinsman-redeemer, ‘Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech. I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest

that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line.”

“The next of kin said ‘I will redeem it,’ Then Boaz said, ‘On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabitess, you acquire the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.’ At this, the kinsman-redeemer said, ‘Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it.’ So, the kinsman-redeemer said to Boaz, ‘Buy it yourself.’ Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, ‘Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon. I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records. Today you are witnesses!’”

“So, Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. Then he went to her, and the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. The women said to Naomi: ‘Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.’ The women living there said, ‘Naomi has a son.’ They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.”

Comment: The genealogy of Jesus of Nazareth includes a Moabite – Ruth and her husband, Obed, were David’s grandparents. For Jesus genealogy refer to thebiblewayonline.com/Genealogy/genealogy.htm

1 SAMUEL

“Elkanah, son of Jeroham, had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none and Peninnah kept provoking her in order to irritate her. This went on year after year till she wept and would not eat. Elkanah her husband would say to her, ‘Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?’” (1 Sam 1:2,7-8)

“Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh (where sacrifices were made), Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the Lord's temple. In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord. Hannah made a vow, saying, ‘O Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.’” (1 Sam 1:9-11)

“As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, ‘How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine.’ ‘Not so, my lord,’ Hannah replied, ‘I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.’ Eli answered, ‘Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.’ Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.” (1 Sam 1:12-18)

“Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the Lord and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. So, in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel.” (1 Sam 1:19-20)

“When Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfill his vow, Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, ‘After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the Lord, and he will

live there always.' Elkanah told her 'Do what seems best to you,'. 'Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the Lord make good his word.'" (1 Sam 1:21-23)

"After he was weaned, Hannah took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. When they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli, and she said to him, 'As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord.' And he worshiped the Lord there. Then Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the Lord; in the Lord my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance. 'There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you.' ... Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the Lord under Eli the priest." (1 Sam 1:24-2:1-2)

Comment: Vows are to be kept whether with the Lord of anyone else. Hanna's joy of having a son was greater than not having him near her to hold and love. The question is do today's children of God keep their vows and promises? Or, for that matter make promises or vows.

Eli, the Priest

"Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the Lord, treating the Lord's offering with contempt. ... But Samuel was ministering before the Lord—a boy wearing a linen ephod and Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord. ... Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. So, he said to them, 'Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the Lord's people. If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?' His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the Lord's will to put them to death." (1 Sam 2:12, 18, 22-25)

Comment: Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and men. The same was said about Jesus in Luke 2:52

"Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him 'The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your family line and you will see distress in my dwelling. Although good will be done to Israel, in your family line there will never be an old man. Every one of you that I do not cut off from my altar will be spared only to blind your eyes with tears and to grieve your heart, and all your descendants will die in the prime of life. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas will both die on the same day. I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his house, and he will minister before my anointed one always.'" (1 Sam 2:27-35)

"In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions. One night, Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. The Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, 'Here I am.' And he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am; you called me.' But Eli said, 'I did not call; go back and lie down.' The Lord call Samuel three more times. After the fourth call, Samuel answered the Lord saying 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.' So, Samuel went and lay down in his place." (1 Sam 3:1-5)

"The Lord said: 'See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. At that time, I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family.' ... Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the Lord. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, but Eli called him and said, 'Samuel, my son.' 'What was it he said to you?' 'Do not hide it from me.' So, Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, 'He is the Lord; let him do what is good in his eyes.'" (1 Sam 3:11-12, 15-18)

Comment: Eli's heart and attitude were good but he did not discipline his children in the way of the Lord.

"Now the Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines at Aphek. The Philistines deployed their forces to meet Israel, and as the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines,

who killed about four thousand of them on the battlefield. When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, 'Why did the Lord bring defeat upon us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the Lord's covenant from Shiloh, so that it may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies.' When the ark of the Lord's covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook." (1 Sam 4:1-3, 5)

"Hearing the uproar, the Philistines asked, 'What's all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?' When they learned that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp, the Philistines were afraid. 'A god has come into the camp," they said. Be strong, Philistines! Be men, or you will be subject to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Be men, and fight!' So, the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty-thousand foot-soldiers. The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died." (1 Sam 4:6-11)

"That same day a Benjamite ran from the battle line and went to Shiloh, his clothes torn and dust on his head. When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on his chair by the side of the road, watching, because his heart feared for the ark of God. When the man entered the town and told what had happened, the whole town sent up a cry. Eli heard the outcry and asked, 'What is the meaning of this uproar?' The man hurried over to Eli, who was ninety-eight years old and whose eyes were set so that he could not see. He told Eli, 'I have just come from the battle line; I fled from it this very day.' Eli asked, 'What happened, my son?' The man who brought the news replied, 'Israel fled before the Philistines, and the army has suffered heavy losses. Also, your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.' When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. He had led Israel forty years." (1 Sam 4:12-18)

The Ark of the Covenant

"After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. They carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. The next day Dagon had fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. ... When the men of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, 'The ark of the god of Israel must not stay here with us, because his hand is heavy upon us and upon Dagon our god.' ... So, they moved the ark of the God of Israel to Gath then Ekron, but they demanded. 'Send the ark of the god of Israel away; let it go back to its own place.'" (1 Sam 5:1-4, 7, 11)

"They took two such cows and hitched them to the cart and placed the ark of the Lord on the cart and along with it the chest containing the gold rats and the models of the tumors. Then the cows went straight up toward Beth Shemesh where the people were harvesting their wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced at the sight. The cart came to the field of Joshua and stopped beside a large rock. The people chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the Lord. ... God struck down 70 men because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the Lord had dealt them, and the men of Beth Shemesh asked, "Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?" The men of Kiriath Jearim came and took up the ark of the Lord. They took it to Abinadab's house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the Lord. The ark remained at Kiriath Jearim, for twenty years and all the people of Israel mourned and sought after the Lord." (1 Sam 6:11-14, 19-20; 7:2)

"Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, 'If you are returning to the Lord with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.' So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the Lord only. Then Samuel said, 'Assemble all Israel at Mizpah and I will intercede with the Lord for you.' When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the Lord. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, 'We have sinned against the Lord.'" (1 Sam 7:3-6)

“When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah they came up to attack them. When the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. They said to Samuel, ‘Do not stop crying out to the Lord our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines.’ Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. He cried out to the Lord on Israel’s behalf, and the Lord answered him. While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the Lord thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. ... Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far has the Lord helped us.’ So, the Philistines were subdued.” (1 Sam 7:7-13)

“When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.” (1 Sam 8:1-3)

Comment: Apparently Samuel did not seek God before appointing his sons as judges. It is so important to seek God’s guidance.

“So, all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, ‘You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.’ This displeased Samuel; so, he prayed to the Lord. And the Lord told him: ‘Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.’ ... ‘Listen to them and give them a king.’” (1 Sam 8:4-8)

Comment: Wanting to be like those around us rather than wanting to be what God desires is rebellion against God.

“There was a Benjamite whose name was Kish He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites — a head taller than any of the others. Now the donkeys belonging to Saul’s father Kish were lost, and Kish said to his son Saul, ‘Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys.’ So, he passed through the hill country of Ephraim, Shalisha and Shaalim and when they reached the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, ‘Come, let’s go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us.’ But the servant replied, ‘Look, in this town there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let’s go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take.’ ‘So, they set out for the town where the man of God was.’” (1 Sam 9:1-6)

“Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel: ‘About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me.’ When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, ‘This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.’ Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, “Would you please tell me where the seer’s house is?” “I am the seer,” Samuel replied. ‘Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me, and in the morning, I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart. As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found.’” (1 Sam 9:15-20)

“After they came down from the high place Samuel talked with Saul on the roof of his house. They rose about daybreak and Samuel called to Saul on the roof, ‘Get ready, and I will send you on your way.’ When Saul got ready, he and Samuel went outside together. As they were going down to the edge of the town, Samuel said to Saul, ‘Tell the servant to go on ahead of us’- and the servant did so – ‘but you stay here awhile, so that I may give you a message from God.’ Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul’s head and kissed him, saying, ‘Has not the Lord anointed you leader over his inheritance.’ ... ‘Go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets. The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.’” (9:25-27; 10:5-7)

“Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the Lord at Mizpah and said ‘you have said set a king over us. So, now present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and clans.’ The tribe of Benjamin was chosen. Then Matri's clan was chosen. Finally, Saul son of Kish was chosen. Samuel said to all the people. This is the man the Lord has chosen. ... Samuel explained to the people the regulations of the kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the Lord.” (1 Sam 10:17-21, 25)

The Ammorites

“Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. But some troublemakers said, ‘How can this fellow save us?’ They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.” (1 Sam 10:26-27)

Comment: "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor." (Matt 13:57)

“Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh Gilead saying ‘I will make a treaty with you only on the condition that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israel.’ The elders of Jabesh said to him, ‘Give us seven days so we can send messengers throughout Israel; if no one comes to rescue us, we will surrender to you.’ ... Saul mustered three hundred and thirty thousand and sent word to Jabesh Gilead, ‘By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be delivered.’ Then they said to the Ammonites, ‘Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever seems good to you.’ The next day Saul separated his men into three divisions; during the last watch of the night, they broke into the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.” (1 Sam 11:1-3, 8-11)

“Then Samuel said to the people, ‘Come, let us go to Gilgal and there reaffirm the kingship.’ So, all the people went to Gilgal and confirmed Saul as king in the presence of the Lord. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings before the Lord, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration.” (1 Sam 11:14-15)

“But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, ‘No, we want a king to rule over us’-even though the Lord your God was your king. Now here is the king the Lord has set over you. If you fear the Lord and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God — good! But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers. ‘Now then, stand still and see this great thing the Lord is about to do before your eyes!’ It was wheat harvest time so, the Lord sent thunder and rain to damage the wheat. The people stood in awe.” (1 Sam 12:12-17)

“Do not be afraid,’ Samuel replied. ‘You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own. As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away.’” (1 Samuel 12:20-25)

Comment: Refusing to follow God’s commands brings disaster, sometimes in the present world but always in the spiritual world unless one repent, seeks forgiveness and returns to God.

The Philistines

“Later Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba. When the Philistines heard about it assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. ... When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns ... quaking with fear. Saul waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter. So, he said, ‘Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.’ And Saul offered up the burnt offering. Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived,

and Saul went out to greet him. ‘What have you done?’ asked Samuel. Saul replied, ‘When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, I thought, Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord's favor. So, I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.’” (1 Sam 13:3, 6-12)

“‘You acted foolishly,’ Samuel said. ‘You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command.’” (1 Sam 13:13-14)

“One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armor, ‘Come, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side.’ But he did not tell his father. ... Jonathan said, if the Philistines say, ‘Come up to us,’ we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands.’ ... Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him. In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre. Panic struck the whole army and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God. ... While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle.” (1 Samuel 14:1, 8-15, 19-20)

“Now the men of Israel were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, ‘Cursed be any man who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!’ So, none of the troops tasted food. ... But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. Then one of the soldiers told him, ‘Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, ‘Cursed be any man who eats food today!’ That is why the men are faint. Jonathan said, ‘My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey. How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?’ That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines, they were exhausted. They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood. ... sinning against the Lord by eating meat that has blood in it.’ ... Then Saul built an altar to the Lord; it was the first time he had done this.” (1 Sam 14:24, 27-32, 35)

Comment: Rash demands and statements may cause many to sin.

The Amalekites

“Samuel said to Saul, listen now to the message from the Lord ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.’ So, Saul summoned the men — two hundred thousand foot-soldiers and ten thousand men from Judah. Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. Then Saul attacked the Amalekites and took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs. Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel: ‘I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.’ ... When Samuel reached him, Saul said, ‘The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord's instructions.’ Samuel said the Lord told you to ‘Go and completely destroy those wicked people. ... Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?’ ‘But I did obey the Lord,’ Saul said. ‘I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal.’” (1 Sam 15:1-11, 13, 19-21)

Comment: Doing only part of God's commands is not obeying Him. Neither does not accepting responsibility, while blaming others for actions of sin of which you approved, relieve you of guilt.

“But Samuel replied: ‘Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because, you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.’” (1 Sam 15:22-23)

“The Lord said to Samuel ‘fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.’ But Samuel said, ‘How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me.’ The Lord said, ‘Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.’ Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, ‘Do you come in peace?’ Samuel replied, ‘Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.’ Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. Each son passed before Samuel. But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height but his heart.’ The Lord rejected Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah and four other sons who passed before Samuel. So, Samuel asked Jesse, ‘Are these all the sons you have?’ ‘There is still the youngest,’ Jesse answered, ‘but he is tending the sheep.’ Samuel said, ‘Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.’ So, he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then, the Lord said, ‘Rise and anoint him; he is the one.’ Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.” (1 Sam 16:1, 6-13)

“Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. Saul's attendants said to him, ‘See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the harp. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes upon you, and you will feel better.’ One of the servants answered, ‘I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man and the Lord is with him.’ Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, ‘Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.’” (1 Sam 16:14-19)

“David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much. ... Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.” (1 Sam 16:21, 23)

“Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war. Their champion, over nine feet tall, named Goliath came out of the Philistine camp stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, ‘Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.’ For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand.” (1 Sam 17:1-16)

“Now Jesse said to his son David, ‘Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them.’ Early in the morning David left the flock with a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry. Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and greeted his brothers. As he was talking with them, Goliath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear.” (1 Samuel 17:17-24)

“David asked the men standing near him, ‘What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?’ ... What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him. David said to Saul, ‘Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.’ Saul replied, ‘You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.’ But David said to Saul, ‘Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock. I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.’” (1 Sam 17:26, 31-37)

“Saul said to David, ‘Go, and the Lord be with you.’ ... Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand he approached the Philistine. Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, ‘Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?’ And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ‘Come here,’ he said, ‘and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!’” (1 Sam 17:37 ...40-44)

“David said to the Philistine, ‘You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands.’” (1 Sam 17:45-47)

“As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.” (1 Sam 17:48-51)

“As soon as David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul. After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.” (1 Sam 17:57, 18:1-4)

“Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well. When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. As they danced, they sang: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.’ Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. ‘From that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.’” (1 Samuel 18:5-8)

Comment: Neither pride nor the desire for power and prominence is God's nature. These type attitudes can create jealousy among rivals.

“When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns. Saul said to David, ‘Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the Lord.’ For Saul said to himself, ‘I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!’ ... But when the time came for Merab to be given to David, she was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah.” (1 Samuel 18:15-17, 19)

“Now Saul's daughter Michal was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. ‘I will give her to him,’ he thought, ‘so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.’ David

said, 'Do you think it is a small matter to become the king's son-in-law? I'm only a poor man and little known.' Saul's attendant said, all the 'The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.' Saul's plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines. So, before the allotted time elapsed, David and his men went out and killed two hundred Philistines. He brought their foreskins and presented the full number to the king so that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal in marriage." (1 Samuel 18:20-21-27)

"While David was playing the harp, Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape. ... When David had fled and made his escape, he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there." (1 Samuel 19:9-10, 18)

"Then David went to Jonathan and asked, 'What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to take my life?' 'Never!' Jonathan replied. 'You are not going to die! Look, my father doesn't do anything, great or small, without confiding in me. Why would he hide this from me? It's not so!' But David took an oath and said, 'Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.' Yet as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death.' Jonathan said to David, 'Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you.'" (1 Samuel 20:1-4)

"So, David said, 'Look, tomorrow is the New Moon festival, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow. If your father misses me at all, tell him, 'David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan.' If he says, 'Very well,' then your servant is safe. But if he loses his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me. As for you, show kindness to your servant, for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the Lord. If I am guilty, then kill me yourself! Why hand me over to your father?' 'Never!' Jonathan said. 'If I had the least inkling that my father was determined to harm you, wouldn't I tell you?'" (1 Samuel 20:5-9)

"So, Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, 'May the Lord call David's enemies to account.' And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself." (1 Samuel 20:16-17)

"When the New Moon festival came, the king sat down to eat. He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan, and Abner sat next to Saul, but David's place was empty. Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, 'Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean — surely he is unclean.' But the next day, the second day of the month, David's place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, 'Why hasn't the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?' Jonathan answered, 'David earnestly asked me for permission to go to Bethlehem. He said, 'Let me go, because our family is observing a sacrifice in the town and my brother has ordered me to be there. If I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away to see my brothers.' That is why he has not come to the king's table.'" (1 Sam 20:24-29)

"Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, 'You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!' 'Why should he be put to death? What has he done?' Jonathan asked his father. But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David." (1 Sam 20:30-33)

"Jonathan and David now knew Saul's intent to kill David. Jonathan said to David, 'Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.' Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town." (1 Sam 20:41-42)

“David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech trembled when he met him, and asked, ‘Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?’ David answered Ahimelech ‘The king charged me with a certain matter and said to me, ‘No one is to know anything about your mission and your instructions.’ As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place. Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find.’ But the priest answered David, ‘I don't have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here. ... So, the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the Lord and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away. ... David asked Ahimelech, ‘Don't you have a spear or a sword here? I haven't brought my sword or any other weapon, because the king's business was urgent.’ the sword of Goliath was there so David took it.” (1 Sam 21:1-4, 6, 8-8)

“That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath. But the servants of Achish said to him, ‘Isn't this David, the king of the land? Isn't he the one they sing about in their dances: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?"’ David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath. So, he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard. Achish said to his servants, ‘Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me? Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?’” (1 Sam 21:10-15)

“David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him. From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, ‘Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?’ So, he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold. But the prophet Gad said to David, ‘Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah.’ So, David left and went to the forest of Hereth.” (1 Sam 22:1-5)

“Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul, spear in hand, was seated under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing around him. Saul said to them, ‘Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? Is that why you have all conspired against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait for me, as he does today.’” (1 Sam 22:6-8)

“But Doeg who had overheard the conversation between David and Ahimelech was standing with Saul's officials, said, ‘I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob. Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine.’ Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelech son of Ahitub and his father's whole family, who were the priests at Nob, and they all came to the king. Saul said, ‘Listen now, son of Ahitub.’ ... ‘Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me, as he does today?’ ... ‘You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and your father's whole family.’ Then the king ordered the guards at his side: ‘Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me.’ But the king's officials were not willing to raise a hand to strike the priests of the Lord. The king then ordered Doeg, ‘You turn and strike down the priests.’ So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep. But Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech escaped and fled to join David and told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. Then David said to Abiathar: ... I am responsible for the death of your father's whole family. Stay with me; don't be afraid; the man who is seeking your life is seeking mine also. You will be safe with me.” (1 Sam 22:9-12, 17-23)

The Philistines go up against

“When David was told, ‘Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors,’ he inquired of the Lord, saying, ‘Shall I go and attack these Philistines?’ The Lord answered him, ‘Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah’ ... for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand.’ So, David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah. (Now Abiathar son of Ahimelech had brought the ephod down with him when he fled to David at Keilah).” (1 Sam 23:1-6)

“Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, ‘God has handed him over to me, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars.’ And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, ‘Bring the ephod.’ David said, ‘O Lord, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, God of Israel, tell your servant.’ And the Lord said, ‘He will.’ David stayed in the desert strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands.” (1 Sam 23:7-11, 14)

Wicked Nabal

“Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon where a very wealthy man in Maon had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings. David sent ten young men and said to them, ‘Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. Say to him ‘Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore, be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.’ Nabal answered David's servants, ‘Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?’ When they arrived, they reported every word. David said to his men, ‘Put on your swords!’ So, they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.” (1 Sam 25:1-13)

“One of the servants told Abigail: what Nabal told David's men. Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. Then she told her servants, ‘Go on ahead; I'll follow you.’ But she did not tell her husband Nabal.” (1 Sam 25:17-19)

“As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. She fell at his feet and said: ‘My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name — his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent.’” (1 Sam 25:20-25)

“David said to Abigail, ‘Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. Otherwise, as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.’ Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, ‘Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.’” (1 Sam 25:32-35)

Comment: Vengeance belongs to God.

“When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So, she told him nothing until daybreak. Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died. When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, ‘Praise be to the Lord, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head.’ Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife. She quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five maids, went with David's messengers and became his wife. But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Paltiel son of Laish.” (1 Sam 25:36-44)

“David thought to himself, ‘One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand.’” (1 Sam 27:1)

Witch of Endor

“Sometime later the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel and set up camp at Shunem. Saul gathered all the Israelites and set up camp at Gilboa. When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. He inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets. Saul then said to his attendants, ‘Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her.’ ‘There is one in Endor,’ they said. So, Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. ‘Consult a spirit for me,’ he said, ‘and bring up for me the one I name.’ But the woman said to him, “Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?” Saul swore to her by the Lord, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, you will not be punished for this.’” (1 Sam 28:4-10)

“Then the woman asked, ‘Whom shall I bring up for you?’ ‘Bring up Samuel,’ he said. When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, ‘Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!’ The king said to her, ‘Don't be afraid. What do you see?’ The woman said, ‘I see a spirit coming up out of the ground.’ ‘What does he look like?’ he asked. ‘An old man wearing a robe is coming up,’ she said. Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. Samuel said to Saul, ‘Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?’ ‘I am in great distress,’ Saul said. ‘The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So, I have called on you to tell me what to do.’ Samuel said, ‘Why do you consult me, now that the Lord has turned away from you and become your enemy? The Lord has done what he predicted through me. The Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to David. Because you did not obey the Lord or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the Lord has done this to you today. The Lord will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also hand over the army of Israel to the Philistines.’ Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel's words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all that day and night. After much pleading Saul ate and left.” (1 Sam 28:11-20)

“David and his men found that the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag, burned it and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old including Ahinoam and Abigail, David's wives. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way. But David found strength in the Lord his God and asked Abiathar the priest, to ‘Bring me the ephod.’ Abiathar brought it to him, and David inquired of the Lord, ‘Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?’ ‘Pursue them,’ he answered. ‘You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.’” (1 Sam 30:1-8)

“David found the raiding party scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah. David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled. David

recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back. He took all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying, ‘This is David’s plunder.’” (1 Sam 30:16-20)

“David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him and who were left behind at the Besor Ravine. They came out to meet David and the people with him. As David and his men approached, he greeted them. But all the evil men and troublemakers among David’s followers said, ‘Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go.’ David replied, ‘No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the Lord has given us. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us. Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.’ David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel. When David arrived in Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends, saying, ‘Here is a present for you from the plunder of the Lord’s enemies.’ ... and to those in all the other places where David and his men had roamed.” (1 Sam 30:21-26)

“Now the Philistines fought against Israel; the Israelites fled before them, and many fell slain on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines pressed hard after Saul and his sons, and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua. The fighting grew fierce around Saul, and when the archers overtook him, they wounded him critically. Saul said to his armor-bearer, ‘Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me.’ But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so, Saul took his own sword and fell on it. When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him. So, Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer and all his men died together that same day.” (1 Sam 31:1-6)

“When the Israelites along the valley and those across the Jordan saw that the Israelite army had fled and that Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their towns and fled. And the Philistines came and occupied them. The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. They cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and they sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news in the temple of their idols and among their people. They put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths and fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan. When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard of what the Philistines had done to Saul, all their valiant men journeyed through the night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan and went to Jabesh, where they burned them. Then they took their bones and buried them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted seven days.” (1 Sam 31:7-13)

2 SAMUEL

“David returned from defeating the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days. On the third day a man arrived from Saul’s camp, with his clothes torn and with dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honor. He said, ‘The men fled from the battle. Many of them fell and died. And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead.’ David asked ‘How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?’ (2 Sam 1:1-5)

“At Mount Gilboa Saul was leaning on his spear, with the chariots and riders almost upon him. He called out to me and said ‘Stand over me and kill me! I am in the throes of death, but I’m still alive.’ ‘So, I killed him, took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord.’” (2 Sam 1:9-10)

“David asked young man who brought him the report ‘Why were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord’s anointed?’ Then David called one of his men and said, ‘Go, strike him down!’ So, they did and he died. For David had said to him, ‘Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, I killed the Lord’s anointed.’” (2 Sam 1:14-15)

“In the course of time, David inquired of the Lord. ‘Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?’ he asked. The Lord said, ‘Go up to Hebron.’ So, David went up there with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail. David also took the men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in Hebron and its towns. Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.” (2 Sam 2:1-4)

Abner and Ish-Bosheth

“Meanwhile, Abner son of Ner, the commander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-Bosheth son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim. He made him king over Gilead, Ashuri and Jezreel, and also over Ephraim, Benjamin and all Israel. Ish-Bosheth reigned Israel for two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David. The length of time David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. Abner together with the men of Ish-Bosheth left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon. Joab and David's men went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. One group sat down on one side of the pool and one group on the other side. Then Abner said to Joab, ‘Let's have some of the young men get up and fight hand to hand in front of us.’ Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by David's men.” (2 Sam 2:8-14)

“The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Now Asahel was as fleet-footed as a wild gazelle. He chased Abner, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he pursued him. Abner looked behind him and asked, ‘Is that you, Asahel?’ ‘It is,’ he answered. Then Abner said to him, ‘Turn aside to the right or to the left; take on one of the young men and strip him of his weapons.’ But Asahel would not stop chasing him. Again, Abner warned Asahel, ‘Stop chasing me! Why should I strike you down? How could I look your brother Joab in the face?’” (2 Sam 2:18-22)

“The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker. Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to say to David, ‘Whose land is it? Make an agreement with me, and I will help you bring all Israel over to you.’ ... Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said, ‘For some time you have wanted to make David your king. Now do it! For the Lord promised David, By my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.’” (2 Sam 3:11-18)

“Abner also spoke to the Benjamites in person. Then he went to Hebron to tell David everything that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin wanted to do. When Abner, who had twenty men with him, came to David at Hebron, David prepared a feast for him and his men. Then Abner said to David, ‘Let me go at once and assemble all Israel for my lord the king, so that they may make a compact with you, and that you may rule over all that your heart desires.’ So, David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.” (2 Sam 3:19-21)

“Just then David's men and Joab returned from a raid and brought with them a great deal of plunder. But Abner was no longer with David in Hebron, because David had sent him away, and he had gone in peace. When Joab and all the soldiers with him arrived, he was told that Abner had come to the king and that the king had sent him away and that he had gone in peace. So, Joab went to the king and said, “What have you done? Look, Abner came to you. Why did you let him go? Now he is gone! You know Abner son of Ner; he came to deceive you and observe your movements and find out everything you are doing.” (2 Sam 3:22-25)

“Joab then left David and sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the well of Sirah. But David did not know it. Now when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the gateway, as though to speak with him privately. And there, to avenge the blood of his brother Asahel, Joab stabbed him in the stomach, and he died. Later, when David heard about this, he said, ‘I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the Lord concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner. May his blood fall upon the head of Joab and upon all his father's house! May Joab's house never be without someone who has a running sore or leprosy or who leans on a crutch or who falls by the sword or who lacks food.’” (2 Sam 3:26-30)

Comment: Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.

“Then David said to Joab and all the people with him, ‘Tear your clothes and put-on sackcloth and walk-in mourning in front of Abner.’ King David himself walked behind the bier. They buried Abner in Hebron, and the king wept aloud at

Abner's tomb. All the people wept also. ... All the people took note and were pleased; indeed, everything the king did pleased them. So, on that day all the people and all Israel knew that the king had no part in the murder of Abner son of Ner.” (2 Sam 3:31-37)

Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled. His name was Mephibosheth.” (2 Sam 4:1)

“Now Recab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out for the house of Ish-Bosheth, and they arrived there in the heat of the day while he was taking his noonday rest. They went into the inner part of the house as if to get some wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Recab and his brother Baanah slipped away.” (2 Sam 4:5-6)

“They had gone into the house while he was lying on the bed in his bedroom. After they stabbed and killed him, they cut off his head. Taking it with them, they traveled all night by way of the Arabah. They brought the head of Ish-Bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, ‘Here is the head of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who tried to take your life. This day the Lord has avenged my lord the king against Saul and his offspring.’” (2 Sam 4:7-8)

“David answered Recab and his brother Baanah, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, who has delivered me out of all trouble, when a man told me, Saul is dead, and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and put him to death in Ziklag. That was the reward I gave him for his news! How much more — when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed — should I not now demand his blood from your hand and rid the earth of you!’ So, David gave an order to his men, and they killed them. They cut off their hands and feet and hung the bodies by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-Bosheth and buried it in Abner's tomb at Hebron.” (2 Samuel 4:9-12)

Comment: God does not reward evil.

King Over Israel and Judah

“All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, ‘We are your own flesh and blood. In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. The Lord said to you, You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.’ David made a compact with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel.” (2 Sam 5:1-2)

“David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years. The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. David captured the fortress of Zion. ... David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the supporting terraces inward. And he became more and more powerful, because the Lord God Almighty was with him.” (2 Sam 5:4-5, 9-10)

“Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a palace for David. David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.” (2 Sam 5:11-12)

“When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold. Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; so, David inquired of the Lord, ‘Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?’ The Lord answered him, ‘Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you.’ David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them.” (2 Sam 5:17-19)

Comment: David constantly inquired of the Lord before making major decisions.

“Once more the Philistines came up and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim to attack the Israelites; so, David inquired of the Lord, and he answered, ‘Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the balsam trees. As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, move quickly, because that will

mean the Lord has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army.' So David did as the Lord commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer." (2 Sam 5:22-25)

Ark to Jerusalem

"David again brought together out of Israel chosen men, thirty thousand in all. He and all his men set out from Baalah of Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark. They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals. When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore, God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God." (2 Sam 6:1-7)

Comment: Be careful not to do what seems right before you find out what God desires.

"Then David was angry because the Lord's wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah. David was afraid of the Lord that day and said, "How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?" He was not willing to take the ark of the Lord to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the Lord blessed him and his entire household." (2 Sam 6:8-11)

"Now King David was told, "The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God." So, David went down and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. When those who were carrying the ark of the Lord had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord with all his might, while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets. As the ark of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart." (2 Sam 6:12-16)

"They brought the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord. After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord Almighty. Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes." (2 Sam 6:17-19)

"After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, 'Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.' ... Nathan told David 'The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.'" (2 Sam 7:1-16)

"Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation. Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said: 'Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign Lord? What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign Lord. For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant. How great you are, O Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as

we have heard with our own ears. And who is like your people Israel — the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, O Lord, have become their God. And now, Lord God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, so that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, ‘The Lord Almighty is God over Israel!’ And the house of your servant David will be established before you. O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, ‘I will build a house for you.’ So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer. O Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign Lord, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever.” (2 Sam 7:17-29)

“In the course of time, David defeated the Philistines, the Moabites, Hadadezer, king of Zobah and the Arameans of Damascus. The Lord gave David victory wherever he went. David took the plunder and dedicated them articles to the Lord. ... David became famous after he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. ... David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people.” (2 Sam 8:1-15)

“David asked, ‘Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?’ A servant of Saul's household named Ziba said there is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet. ... When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, ‘don't be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.’ Mephibosheth bowed down and said, ‘What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?’ Then the king summoned Ziba stating, ‘I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table.’ Then Ziba said to the king, ‘Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do.’ So, Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.” (2 Sam 9:1-11)

Sin of David with Bathsheba

“In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, ‘Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?’ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, ‘I am pregnant.’” (2 Sam 11:1-5)

Comment: Lingering looks of a sensual nature brings the temptation of lust and when fulfilled fornication.

“David sent this word to Joab: ‘Send me Uriah the Hittite.’ And Joab sent him to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, ‘Go down to your house and wash your feet.’ Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.” (2 Sam 11:6-9)

“When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord. The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, ‘There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he

took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.” (2 Sam 11:26-27; 12:1-4)

“David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.’ Then Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’” (2 Sam 12:5-10)

“Then David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’ Nathan replied, ‘The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the Lord show utter contempt, the son born to you will die.’ After Nathan had gone home, the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. . . . David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized the child was dead. “Is the child dead?” he asked. ‘Yes,’ they replied. Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the Lord and worshipped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.” (2 Sam 12:13-20)

“His servants asked him, ‘Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!’ He answered, ‘While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.’ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.’ Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and lay with her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The Lord loved him; and because the Lord loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah.” (2 Sam 12:21-25)

Trouble in David's House

“In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David. Amnon became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her. Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. He asked Amnon, “Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?” Amnon said to him, ‘I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.’ ‘Go to bed and pretend to be ill,’ Jonadab said. ‘When your father comes to see you, say to him, I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.’ So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, ‘I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand.’ David sent word to Tamar at the palace: ‘Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him.’ Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat. ‘Send everyone out of here,’ Amnon said. Everyone left then he raped her.” (2 Sam 13:1-10)

“Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred and called his personal servant and said, ‘Get this woman out of here and bolt the door after her. She put her hand on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went. . . . Her brother Absalom said to her, ‘Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet now, my sister; he is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart.’ Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman. When King David heard all this, he was furious. Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar. Two years later, when Absalom's men kill Amnon. Then all the king's sons got up, mounted their mules and fled to Geshur, he stayed there three years.” (2 Sam 13:15, 20-23)

“Joab knew that the king's heart longed for Absalom. So, Joab arranged by intrigue to get David have Absalom return to Jerusalem. ... The king said to Joab, ‘Very well, I will do it. Go, bring back the young man Absalom.’ Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. But the king said, ‘He must go to his own house; he must not see my face.’ So, Absalom went to his own house and did not see the face of the king. In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him.” (2 Sam 14:1-2, 21-25)

Absalom’s Plot to Take David’s Throne and Become King

“In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him. He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, “What town are you from?” He would answer, ‘Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel.’ Then Absalom would say to him, ‘Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you.’ And Absalom would add, ‘If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that he gets justice.’ Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him. Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.” (2 Sam 15:1-6)

“At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, ‘Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the Lord. While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: If the Lord takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron.’ The king said to him, ‘Go in peace.’ So, he went to Hebron. Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, ‘As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, Absalom is king in Hebron.’ Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter. While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to come from Giloh, his hometown. The conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom's following kept on increasing.” (2 Sam 15:7-12)

“A messenger came and told David, ‘The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.’ Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, ‘Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin upon us and put the city to the sword.’ The king set out, with his entire household following him; but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace. The king set out, with all the people following him, and they halted at a place some distance away. All his men marched past him, along with all the Kerethites and Pelethites; and all the six hundred Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath marched before the king.” (2 Sam 15:13-18)

“Then the king said to Zadok, ‘Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the Lord's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. But if he says, I am not pleased with you, then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him.’ The king also said to Zadok the priest, ‘Aren't you a seer? Go back to the city in peace, with your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan son of Abiathar. You and Abiathar take your two sons with you. I will wait at the fords in the desert until word comes from you to inform me.’ So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there. But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up. Now David had been told, ‘Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.’ So, David prayed, “O Lord, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness.” (2 Sam 15:25-31)

“When David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head. David said to him, ‘If you go with me, you will be a burden to me. But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, I will be your servant, O king; I was your father's servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,’ then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice. Won't the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king's palace. Their two sons, Ahimaaz son of Zadok and Jonathan son of

Abiathar, are there with them. Send them to me with anything you hear.’ So, David's friend Hushai arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city.” (2 Sam 15:32-37)

“When David had gone a short distance beyond the summit, there was Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, waiting to meet him. He had a string of donkeys saddled and loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred cakes of raisins, a hundred cakes of figs and a skin of wine.

The king then asked, ‘Where is your master's grandson?’ Ziba said to him, ‘He is staying in Jerusalem, because he thinks, Today the house of Israel will give me back my grandfather's kingdom.’” (2 Sam 16:1-3)

“David and his men continued along the road while Shimei was going along the hillside opposite him, cursing as he went and throwing stones at him and showering him with dirt. The king and all the people with him arrived at their destination exhausted. There he refreshed himself. Meanwhile, Absalom and all the men of Israel came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with him. Then Hushai, David's friend, went to Absalom and said to him, ‘Long live the king! Long live the king!’ Absalom asked Hushai, ‘Is this the love you show your friend? Why didn't you go with your friend?’ Hushai said to Absalom, ‘No, the one chosen by the Lord, by these people, and by all the men of Israel — his I will be, and I will remain with him. Furthermore, whom should I serve? Should I not serve the son? Just as I served your father, so I will serve you.’ Absalom said to Ahithophel, ‘Give us your advice. What should we do?’ Ahithophel answered, ‘Lie with your father's concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. Then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench in your father's nostrils, and the hands of everyone with you will be strengthened.’ So, they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he lay with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.” (2 Sam 16:13-22)

Comment: Just as Nathan had prophesied.

“Now in those days the advice Ahithophel gave was like that of one who inquires of God. That was how both David and Absalom regarded all of Ahithophel's advice. Ahithophel said to Absalom, ‘I would choose twelve thousand men and set out tonight in pursuit of David. I would attack him while he is weary and weak. I would strike him with terror, and then all the people with him will flee. I would strike down only the king and bring all the people back to you. The death of the man you seek will mean the return of all; all the people will be unharmed.’ This plan seemed good to Absalom and to all the elders of Israel. But Absalom said, ‘Summon also Hushai the Arkite, so we can hear what he has to say.’ When Hushai came to him, Absalom said, ‘Ahithophel has given this advice. Should we do what he says? If not, give us your opinion.’” (2 Sam 16:23, 17:1-6)

“Hushai replied to Absalom, ‘The advice Ahithophel has given is not good this time. You know your father and his men; they are fighters, and as fierce as a wild bear robbed of her cubs. Besides, your father is an experienced fighter; he will not spend the night with the troops. Even now, he is hidden in a cave or some other place. If he should attack your troops first, whoever hears about it will say, There has been a slaughter among the troops who follow Absalom. Then even the bravest soldier, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will melt with fear, for all Israel knows that your father is a fighter and that those with him are brave. So, I advise you: Let all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba — as numerous as the sand on the seashore — be gathered to you, with you yourself leading them into battle. Then we will attack him wherever he may be found, and we will fall on him as dew settles on the ground. Neither he nor any of his men will be left alive. If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we will drag it down to the valley until not even a piece of it can be found.’” (2 Sam 17:7-13)

“Absalom and all the men of Israel said, ‘The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than that of Ahithophel.’ For the Lord had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom. Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, “Ahithophel has advised Absalom and the elders of Israel to do such and such, but I have advised them to do so and so. Now send a message immediately and tell David, ‘Do not spend the night at the fords in the desert; cross over without fail, or the king and all the people with him will be swallowed up.’ David mustered the men who were with him and appointed over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. David sent the troops out — a third under the command of Joab, a third under Joab's brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, and a third under Ittai the

Gittite. The king told the troops, 'I myself will surely march out with you.' But the men said, 'You must not go out; if we are forced to flee, they won't care about us. Even if half of us die, they won't care; but you are worth ten thousand of us. It would be better now for you to give us support from the city.' ... So, the king stood beside the gate. The army marched into the field to fight Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. There the army of Israel was defeated by David's men, and the casualties that day were great — twenty thousand men. The battle spread out over the whole countryside, and the forest claimed more lives that day than the sword." (2 Sam 17:14-28; 18:1-8)

"Now Absalom happened to meet David's men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak, Absalom's head got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in midair, while the mule he was riding kept on going. ... Joab took three javelins in his hand and plunged them into Absalom's heart while Absalom was still alive in the oak tree. They took Absalom, threw him into a big pit in the forest and piled up a large heap of rocks over him. Meanwhile, all the Israelites fled to their homes. ... Then Joab said to a Cushite, 'Go, tell the king what you have seen.' When the Cushite arrived, he said, 'My lord the king, hear the good news! The Lord has delivered you today from all who rose up against you.' The king asked the Cushite, 'Is the young man Absalom safe?' The Cushite replied, 'May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man.'" (2 Sam 18:9-32)

David Mourns for Absalom

"The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: 'O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you — O Absalom, my son, my son!' Joab was told, "The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.' And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, 'The king is grieving for his son.' The men stole into the city that day as men steal in who are ashamed when they flee from battle. The king covered his face and cried aloud, 'O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!' Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, 'Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by the Lord that if you don't go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall. This will be worse for you than all the calamities that have come upon you from your youth till now.' So, the king got up and took his seat in the gateway. When the men were told, 'The king is sitting in the gateway,' they all came before him." (2 Sam 18:32; 19:1-7)

"Meanwhile, the Israelites had fled to their homes. Throughout the tribes of Israel, the people were all arguing with each other, saying, 'The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies; he is the one who rescued us from the hand of the Philistines. But now he has fled the country because of Absalom; and Absalom, whom we anointed to rule over us, has died in battle. So why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?' King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests: "Ask the elders of Judah, Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his palace, since what is being said throughout Israel has reached the king at his quarters? You are my brothers, my own flesh and blood. So why should you be the last to bring back the king? And say to Amasa, Are you not my own flesh and blood? May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if from now on you are not the commander of my army in place of Joab.' He won over the hearts of all the men of Judah as though they were one man. They sent word to the king, 'Return, you and all your men.' Then the king returned and went as far as the Jordan." (2 Sam 19:8-15)

"Now the men of Judah had come to Gilgal to go out and meet the king and bring him across the Jordan. Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, hurried down with the men of Judah to meet King David. With him were a thousand Benjamites, along with Ziba, the steward of Saul's household, and his fifteen sons and twenty servants. They rushed to the Jordan, where the king was. They crossed at the ford to take the king's household over and to do whatever he wished. When Shimei son of Gera crossed the Jordan, he fell prostrate before the king and said to him, 'May my lord not hold me guilty. Do not remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind. For I your servant know that I have sinned, but today I have come here as the first of the whole house of Joseph to come down and meet my lord the king.' Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said, 'Shouldn't Shimei be put to death

for this? He cursed the Lord's anointed.' David replied, 'What do you and I have in common, you sons of Zeruiah? This day you have become my adversaries! Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? Do I not know that today I am king over Israel?' So, the king said to Shimei, 'You shall not die.' And the king promised him on oath." (2 Sam 19:16-23)

"Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, 'Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?' He said, 'My lord the king, since I your servant am lame, I said, I will have my donkey saddled and will ride on it, so I can go with the king. But Ziba my servant betrayed me. And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king. My lord the king is like an angel of God; so, do whatever pleases you. All my grandfather's descendants deserved nothing but death from my lord the king, but you gave your servant a place among those who sat at your table. So, what right do I have to make any more appeals to the king?' The king said to him, 'Why say more? I order you and Ziba to divide the fields.' Mephibosheth said to the king, 'Let him take everything, now that my lord the king has arrived home safely.'" (2 Sam 19:24-30)

"Barzillai the Gileadite also came down from Rogelim to cross the Jordan with the king and to send him on his way from there. Now Barzillai was a very old man, eighty years of age. He had provided for the king during his stay in Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. The king said to Barzillai, 'Cross over with me and stay with me in Jerusalem, and I will provide for you.' But Barzillai answered the king, 'How many more years will I live, that I should go up to Jerusalem with the king? I am now eighty years old. Can I tell the difference between what is good and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats and drinks? Can I still hear the voices of men and women singers? Why should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? Your servant will cross over the Jordan with the king for a short distance, but why should the king reward me in this way? Let your servant return, that I may die in my own town near the tomb of my father and mother. But here is your servant Kimham. Let him cross over with my lord the king. Do for him whatever pleases you.' The king said, 'Kimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him whatever pleases you. And anything you desire from me I will do for you.' So, all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the king crossed over. The king kissed Barzillai and gave him his blessing, and Barzillai returned to his home. When the king crossed over to Gilgal, Kimham crossed with him. All the troops of Judah and half the troops of Israel had taken the king over." (2 Sam 19:31-40)

"Soon all the men of Israel were coming to the king and saying to him, 'Why did our brothers, the men of Judah, steal the king away and bring him and his household across the Jordan, together with all his men?' All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, 'We did this because the king is closely related to us. Why are you angry about it? Have we eaten any of the king's provisions? Have we taken anything for ourselves?' Then the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, 'We have ten shares in the king; and besides, we have a greater claim on David than you have. So why do you treat us with contempt? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?' But the men of Judah responded even more harshly than the men of Israel." (2 Sam 19:41-43)

"Now a troublemaker named Sheba son of Bicri, a Benjamite, happened to be there. He sounded the trumpet and shouted, 'We have no share in David, no part in Jesse's son! Every man to his tent, O Israel!' So, all the men of Israel deserted David to follow Sheba son of Bicri. But the men of Judah stayed by their king all the way from the Jordan to Jerusalem. Then the king said to Amasa, 'Summon the men of Judah to come to me within three days, and be here yourself.' But when Amasa went to summon Judah, he took longer than the time the king had set for him. David said to Abishai, 'Now Sheba son of Bicri will do us more harm than Absalom did. Take your master's men and pursue him, or he will find fortified cities and escape from us.' So, Joab's men and the Kerethites and Pelethites and all the mighty warriors went out under the command of Abishai. They marched out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba son of Bicri. While they were at the great rock in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Joab was wearing his military tunic, and strapped over it at his waist was a belt with a dagger in its sheath. As he stepped forward, it dropped out of its sheath. Joab said to Amasa, 'How are you, my brother?' Then Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. Amasa was not on his guard against the dagger in Joab's hand, and Joab plunged it into his belly, and his intestines spilled out on the ground.

Without being stabbed again, Amasa died. Then Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba son of Bicri.” (2 Sam 20:1-10)

“One of Joab's men stood beside Amasa and said, ‘Whoever favors Joab, and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab!’ Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the middle of the road, and the man saw that all the troops came to a halt there. When he realized that everyone who came up to Amasa stopped, he dragged him from the road into a field and threw a garment over him. After Amasa had been removed from the road, all the men went on with Joab to pursue Sheba son of Bicri. Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel Beth Maacah and through the entire region of the Berites, who gathered together and followed him. All the troops with Joab came and besieged Sheba in Abel Beth Maacah. They built a siege ramp up to the city, and it stood against the outer fortifications. While they were battering the wall to bring it down, a wise woman called from the city, ‘Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come here so I can speak to him.’ He went toward her, and she asked, ‘Are you Joab?’ ‘I am,’ he answered. She said, ‘Listen to what your servant has to say.’ ‘I'm listening,’ he said. She continued, ‘Long ago they used to say, Get your answer at Abel, and that settled it. We are the peaceful and faithful in Israel. You are trying to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why do you want to swallow up the Lord's inheritance?’ ‘Far be it from me!’ Joab replied, ‘Far be it from me to swallow up or destroy! That is not the case. A man named Sheba son of Bicri, from the hill country of Ephraim, has lifted up his hand against the king, against David. Hand over this one man, and I'll withdraw from the city.’ The woman said to Joab, ‘His head will be thrown to you from the wall.’ Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice, and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bicri and threw it to Joab. So, he sounded the trumpet, and his men dispersed from the city, each returning to his home. And Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.” (2 Sam 20:11-22)

“Again, the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, ‘Go and take a census of Israel and Judah.’” (2 Sam 24:1)

Comment: The “he incited” probably causes one to think that “he” is “the Lord.” The Hebrew word is *cuwth* without the “he.” Young’s Literal Translation has it as “an adversary.” 1 Chron 21:1-2 states “Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel.”

“The king said to Joab and the army commanders with him, ‘Go throughout the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and enroll the fighting men, so that I may know how many there are.’ But Joab replied to the king, ‘May the Lord your God multiply the troops a hundred times over, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king want to do such a thing?’ The king's word, however, overruled Joab and the army commanders; so, they left the presence of the king to enroll the fighting men of Israel. After crossing the Jordan, they camped near Aroer, south of the town in the gorge, and then went through Gad and on to Jazer. They went to Gilead and the region of Tahtim Hodshi, and on to Dan Jaan and around toward Sidon. Then they went toward the fortress of Tyre and all the towns of the Hivites and Canaanites. Finally, they went on to Beersheba in the Negev of Judah. After they had gone through the entire land, they came back to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. Joab reported the number of the fighting men to the king: In Israel there were eight hundred thousand able-bodied men who could handle a sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand. David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the Lord, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O Lord, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing.” (2 Sam 24:2-10)

Comment: David’s conscience was stricken and his statement “I have sinned” strongly supports that David yielded to a temptation. God does not tempt but Satan not only tempt but lies.

“Before David got up the next morning, the word of the Lord had come to Gad the prophet, David's seer: ‘Go and tell David, This is what the Lord says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.’ So, Gad went to David and said to him, ‘Shall there come upon you three years of famine in your land? Or three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you? Or three days of plague in your land? Now then, think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me.’ David said to Gad, “I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men.” So, the Lord sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, 'Enough! Withdraw your hand.' The angel of the Lord was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." (2 Sam 24:11-16)

"When David saw the angel, who was striking down the people, he said to the Lord, 'I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall upon me and my family.' On that day Gad went to David and said to him, 'Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.' So, David went up, as the Lord had commanded through Gad. When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground. Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?' 'To buy your threshing floor,' David answered, 'so I can build an altar to the Lord, that the plague on the people may be stopped.' Araunah said to David, 'Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. O king, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, 'May the Lord your God accept you.' But the king replied 'No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.' So, David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them. David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped." (2 Sam 24:17-25)

1 KINGS

"When King David was old and well advanced in years, Adonijah put himself forward and said, 'I will be king.' So, he got chariots and horses ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him. (His father had never interfered with him by asking, 'Why do you behave as you do?') Adonijah conferred with Joab and Abiathar the priest, and they gave him their support. But Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei and Rei and David's special guard did not join Adonijah, but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or his brother Solomon." (1 Kings 1:1, 6-10)

"Then Nathan asked Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, 'Have you not heard that Adonijah, has become king without our lord David's knowing it?' ... So, Bathsheba went to see the aged king and said to him, 'My lord, you yourself swore to me: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne. But now Adonijah has become king. My lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to learn from you who will sit on the throne. Otherwise, as soon as my lord the king is laid to rest with his fathers, I and my son Solomon will be treated as criminals.' While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet arrived and said, "Have you, my lord the king, declared that Adonijah shall be king after you, and that he will sit on your throne? But me your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and your servant Solomon he did not invite. Is this something my lord the king has done without letting his servants know who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?" (1 Kings 1:11, 15-27)

"King David said, 'Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada.' When they came before the king, he said to them: 'Take your lord's servants with you and set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him down to Gihon. There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, Long live King Solomon! Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah.' Trumpets were sounded and all the people shouted, "Long live King Solomon!" (1 Kings 1:32-35)

"As Adonijah and all the guests were finishing their feast, Joab asked, "What's the meaning of all the noise in the city?" Jonathan answered. 'Our lord King David has made Solomon king.' ... At this, all Adonijah's guests rose in alarm and dispersed. But Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, went and took hold of the horns of the altar. Then Solomon was told, 'Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon and is clinging to the horns of the altar. He says, Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.' Solomon replied, 'If he shows himself to be a worthy

man, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground; but if evil is found in him, he will die.’ Then King Solomon sent men, and they brought him down from the altar. And Adonijah came and bowed down to King Solomon, and Solomon said, “Go to your home.” (1 Kings 1:41, 49-53)

“David gave a charge to Solomon. ‘So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, and that the Lord may keep his promise to me: If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel. Now you yourself know what Joab did to me — Deal with him according to your wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down to the grave in peace. But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead and let them be among those who eat at your table. They stood by me when I fled from your brother Absalom. Remember Shimei who called down bitter curses on me. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do to him. Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood.’ Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. He had reigned forty years over Israel — seven years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem.” (1 Kings 2:2-11)

“Solomon removed Abiathar from the priesthood of the Lord, fulfilling the word the Lord had spoken at Shiloh about the house of Eli. ... The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the Lord. (initially)Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the statutes of his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.” (1 Kings 2:27; 3:2-3)

“The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, there the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, ‘Ask for whatever you want me to give you.’... Solomon answered, ‘You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. ... So, give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?’ The Lord was pleased so He said ‘Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for — both riches and honor — so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.’ Then Solomon awoke — and he realized it had been a dream.” (1 Kings 3:4, 6, 9-15)

“God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. ... Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.” (1 Kings 4:29, 34)

“When Hiram king of Tyre heard that Solomon had been anointed king he sent his envoys to Solomon, because he had always been on friendly terms with David.” ... Solomon told Hiram King of Tyre ‘I intend, therefore, to build a temple for the Name of the Lord my God.’ ... When Hiram heard Solomon's message, he was greatly pleased and said, "Praise be to the Lord today, for he has given David a wise son to rule over this great nation." Hiram sent word to Solomon: “I have received the message you sent me and will do all you want in providing the cedar and pine logs. ... In this way Hiram kept Solomon supplied with all the cedar and pine logs he wanted, and Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat as food for his household, in addition to twenty thousand baths of pressed olive oil. Solomon continued to do this for Hiram year after year. The Lord gave Solomon wisdom, just as he had promised him. There were peaceful relations between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty.” (1 Kings 5:1, 5, 7-8, 10-12)

“The word of the Lord came to Solomon: ‘As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, carry out my regulations and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel.’” (1 Kings 6:11-13)

“In the inner sanctuary he made a pair of cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high (a cubic = 18 inches). ... He placed the cherubim inside the innermost room of the temple, with their wings spread out. The wing of one cherub touched one wall, while the wing of the other touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. He overlaid the cherubim with gold.” (1 Kings 6:23, 27-28)

“It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace. He built the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon a hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high, with four rows of cedar columns supporting trimmed cedar beams. It was roofed with cedar above the beams that rested on the columns — forty-five beams, fifteen to a row. Its windows were placed high in sets of three, facing each other. All the doorways had rectangular frames; they were in the front part in sets of three, facing each other.” (1 Kings 7:1-5)

Comment: Solomon built the finest of things:

- the Hall of Justice where he was to judge.
- a magnificent palace for his wife, Pharaoh's daughter
- for the Temple he
 - cast two bronze pillars, each eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits around,
 - two bronze capitals on the tops of the pillars and a network of interwoven chains,
 - the Sea of cast metal which stood on twelve bulls
 - ten movable stands of bronze each stand had side panels with lions, bulls and cherubim and many ornate things. (1 Kings 7:15-45)

“Solomon also made all the furnishings that were in the Lord's temple: the golden altar, golden table on which was the bread of the Presence; the lampstands of pure gold, the gold floral work and lamps and tongs; gold basins, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and censers; and the gold sockets for the doors of the innermost room, the Most Holy Place, and the main hall of the temple doors. When all the work for the temple was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated — the silver and gold and the furnishings — and he placed them in the treasuries of the Lord's temple.” (1 Kings 7:48-51)

“Then King Solomon summoned into his presence at Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the Lord's covenant from Zion, the City of David. When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the priests took up the ark, and brought it and the Tent of Meeting and all the sacred furnishings in it to the temple. King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel were sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted. The priests then brought the ark of the Lord's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. ... There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt. When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the Lord. The priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple. Then Solomon said, ‘The Lord has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever.’” (1 Kings 8:1, 3-6, 9-13)

Comment: Mt. Zion is one of the hills that form Jerusalem, which includes Mount Moriah (the Temple Mount), the Mount of Olives.

“Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven and said: ‘O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below — you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. You have kept your promise to your servant David ... May your eyes be open to your servant's plea and to the plea of your people Israel, and may you listen to them whenever they cry out to you. For you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance, just as you declared through your servant Moses when you, O Sovereign Lord, brought our fathers out of Egypt.’” (1 Kings 8:22-53)

“When Solomon had finished building the temple of the Lord and the royal palace, and had achieved all he had desired to do, the Lord appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. The Lord said to him: "I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. ‘As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' "But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees, I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, ‘Why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’ People will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them — that is why the Lord brought all this disaster on them.’” (1 Kings 9:1-9)

Comment: “Israel became a byword and an object of ridicule” in 70 AD when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.

“King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter — Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, ‘You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.’ Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.” (1 Kings 11:1-3)

“The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord's command. So, the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.” (1 Kings 11:9-13)

“Then the Lord raised up against Solomon an adversary, Hadad the Edomite, and Rezon son of Eliada. ... Also, Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king. He was one of Solomon's officials. About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country, and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe. I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my statutes and laws as David did.’” (1 Kings 11:14, 29-33)

“As for you (Jeroboam), I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. If you do whatever I command you and walk in my ways and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you. I will humble David's descendants because of this, but not forever.’ Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon's death. ... Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.” (1 Kings 11:37-40, 42)

“Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king. When Jeroboam heard this, he returned from Egypt. So, they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said

to him: 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you.' Rehoboam answered, 'Go away for three days and then come back to me.' King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. They replied, 'If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants.' But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him but he took the advice of the young men he had grown up with. ... This turn of events was from the Lord, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite." (1 Kings 12:1-8, 15)

"When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king: they went home. But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them. ... Rehoboam he mustered a hundred and eighty thousand fighting men to make war against the house of Israel and to regain the kingdom. But this word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God: 'Say to Rehoboam and to the whole house of Judah and Benjamin, This is what the Lord says: Do not go up to fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing.' So, they obeyed the word of the Lord and went home again, as the Lord had ordered." (1 Kings 12:16-24)

"Now Jeroboam thought to himself, 'The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam.' Therefore, he made two golden calves. He said to the people, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.' One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. ... He then built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people and offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. Soon a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. He cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord: 'O altar, altar! This is what the Lord says: A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you. This is the sign the Lord has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out.' When King Jeroboam heard this, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, 'Seize him!' But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the Lord. Then the king said to the man of God, 'Intercede with the Lord your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored.' So, the man of God interceded with the Lord, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before. The king said to the man of God, 'Come home with me and have something to eat, and I will give you a gift.' But the man of God answered the king, 'Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. For I was commanded by the word of the Lord: 'You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.' So, he took another road and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel.'" (1 Kings 12:26-13:10)

"Now there was a certain old prophet living in Bethel, whose sons came and told him all that the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what he had said to the king. Their father asked them, 'Which way did he go?' And his sons showed him which road the man of God from Judah had taken. So, he said to his sons, 'Saddle the donkey for me.' And when they had saddled the donkey for him, he mounted it and rode after the man of God. He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked, 'Are you the man of God who came from Judah?' 'I am'," he replied. So, the prophet said to him, 'Come home with me and eat.' The man of God said, 'I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. I have been told by the word of the Lord: 'You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.' The old prophet answered, 'I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord: Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.' (But he was lying to him.) So, the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house." (1 Kings 13:11-19)
Comment: Paul's statement "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one, we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galatians)

"While they were sitting at the table, the word of the Lord came to the old prophet who had brought him back. He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, 'This is what the Lord says: You have defied the word of the Lord

and have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore, your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.’ When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was thrown down on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it. Some people who passed by saw the body thrown down there, with the lion standing beside the body, and they went and reported it in the city where the old prophet lived. When the prophet who had brought him back from his journey heard of it, he said, ‘It is the man of God who defied the word of the Lord. The Lord has given him over to the lion, which has mauled him and killed him, as the word of the Lord had warned him.’ The prophet said to his sons, ‘Saddle the donkey for me,’ and they did so. Then he went out and found the body thrown down on the road, with the donkey and the lion standing beside it. The lion had neither eaten the body nor mauled the donkey. So, the prophet picked up the body of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back to his own city to mourn for him and bury him. Then he laid the body in his own tomb, and they mourned over him and said, ‘Oh, my brother!’ (1 Kings 14:20-30)

Comment: God wants obedience.

“Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil (repent) ways. ... Ahijah said You have done more-evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal; you have provoked me to anger and thrust me behind your back. ‘Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam every last male in Israel — slave or free. I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone. Dogs will eat those belonging to Jeroboam who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country. The Lord has spoken!’” (1 Kings 14:33, 15:9-11)

“Judah did evil in the eyes of the Lord. They also set up for themselves high places, sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites. ... Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. He carried off the treasures of the temple of the Lord. ... Rehoboam died and was buried in the City of David.” (1 Kings 14:22-26, 31)

“Abijah became king of Judah and he reigned in Jerusalem three years. Asa became king of Judah, and he reigned in Jerusalem forty-one years. ... Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as his father David had done. He expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his fathers had made. He even deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive Asherah pole. Asa cut the pole down and burned it in the Kidron Valley. Although he did not remove the high places, Asa’s heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life. He brought into the temple of the Lord the silver and gold and the articles that he and his father had dedicated.” (1 Kings 15:1-2, 9, 11-15)

Kings of Israel after Jeroboam till Ahab. All caused Israel to sin.

- Nadab son of Jeroboam became king. He reigned 2 years. (15:25)
- Baasha killed Nadab and became king. He killed all of Jeroboam's whole family. He reigned 24 years. (15:27)
- Elah his son succeeded him as king and reigned two years. (15:33)
- Zimri killed Elah reigned 7 days then Omri laid siege against Zimri who burned his palace and died. (16:9, 15)
- Omri built a city the city of Samaria. He reigned 12 years. (16:21)

“Ahab his son became king. He did more-evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him and provoked the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger.” (1 Kings 16:30-31)

“Now Elijah the Tishbite said to Ahab, ‘As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.’ Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: ‘Leave here, turn eastward

and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there.’ So, he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. Sometime later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the Lord came to him: ‘Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food.’ So, he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, ‘Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?’ As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.” “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread — only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it — and die. Elijah said to her, ‘Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.’” (1 Kings 17:1-14)

“Sometime later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. She said to Elijah, ‘What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?’ ‘Give me your son,’ Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. Then he cried out to the Lord, ‘O Lord my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?’ Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the Lord, ‘O Lord my God, let this boy’s life return to him!’ The Lord heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him, and he lived. Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, ‘Look, your son is alive!’ Then the woman said to Elijah, ‘Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth.’” (1 Kings 17:17-24)

“The word of the Lord came to Elijah: ‘Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.’ So, Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. . . . When he saw Elijah, he said to him, ‘Is that you, you troubler of Israel?’ ‘I have not made trouble for Israel,’ Elijah replied. ‘But you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the Lord’s commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.’ So, Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, ‘How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing.” (1 Kings 18:1-2; 17-21)

Comment: They chose by remaining silent.

“Then Elijah said to them, ‘I am the only one of the Lord’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire — he is God.’ Then all the people said, ‘What you say is good.’ (1 Kings 18:22-24)

“So, they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. ‘O Baal, answer us!’ they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. At noon Elijah began to taunt them. ‘Shout louder!’ he said. ‘Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.’ So, they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention. Then Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord, which was in ruins. He took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes and built an altar in the name of the Lord, he dug a large trench around it, arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, ‘Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.” They did this for three times until the water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench. At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “O Lord,

God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.' Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The Lord-he is God! The Lord-he is God!'" (1 Kings 18:26-39)

"Then Elijah commanded them, 'Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!' They seized them and slaughtered there. Then Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.' Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. 'Go and look toward the sea,' he told his servant. And he went up and looked." There is nothing there,' he said. Seven times Elijah said, 'Go back.' The seventh time the servant reported, 'A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea.' Elijah said, 'Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.' Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.'" (1 Kings 18:40-46)

"Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, 'May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.' (1 Kings 19:1-2)

"Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, Lord,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' So, he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night." (1 Kings 19:3-9) The Lord provides.

"The word of the Lord came to him: 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' The Lord said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' A great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart – God was not there, then an earthquake – God was not there not in the fire. Then came a gentle whisper which When to him again, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He replied, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me.' The Lord said to him, 'Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat to succeed you as prophet. Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel — all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.'" (1 Kings 19:10-18)

Comment: Fear and self-pity causes many problems physically and spiritually!!!

"So, Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. 'Let me kiss my father and mother good-bye,' he said, 'and then I will come with you.' Elisha took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant." (1 Kings 19:19-20)

"Now Ben-Hadad king of Aram mustered his entire army. Accompanied by thirty-two kings with their horses and chariots, he went up and besieged Samaria and attacked it. He sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, saying, 'This is what Ben-Hadad says: Your silver and gold are mine, and the best of your wives and children are mine.' The king of Israel answered, 'Just as you say, my lord the king. I and all I have are yours.'" The messengers came again

and said, ‘This is what Ben-Hadad says: I sent to demand your silver and gold, your wives and your children. But about this time tomorrow I am going to send my officials to search your palace and the houses of your officials. They will seize everything you value and carry it away.’ Ahab replied this demand I cannot meet. Ben-Hadad said Prepare to attack.” (1 Kings 20:1-6)

“Meanwhile a prophet came to Ahab king of Israel and announced, ‘This is what the Lord says: Do you see this vast army? I will give it into your hand today, and then you will know that I am the Lord.’ ‘But who will do this?’ asked Ahab. The prophet replied, ‘This is what the Lord says: The young officers of the provincial commanders will do it.’ ‘Ahab summoned the young officers of the provincial commanders, 232 men. Then he assembled the rest of the Israelites, 7,000 in all. They set out at noon while Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings allied with ... The young officers of the provincial commanders marched out of the city with the army behind them and each one struck down his opponent. At that, the Arameans fled, with the Israelites in pursuit. But Ben-Hadad king of Aram escaped on horseback with some of his horsemen. The king of Israel advanced and overpowered the horses and chariots and inflicted heavy losses on the Arameans. ... The next spring Ben-Hadad mustered the Arameans and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. When the Israelites were also mustered and given provisions, they marched out to meet them. The Israelites camped opposite them like two small flocks of goats, while the Arameans covered the countryside. The man of God came up and told the king of Israel, ‘This is what the Lord says: Because the Arameans think the Lord is a god of the hills and not a god of the valleys, I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the Lord.’ The Israelites inflicted a hundred thousand casualties on the Aramean foot soldiers in one day. The rest of them escaped to the city of Aphek, where the wall collapsed on twenty-seven thousand of them. And Ben-Hadad fled to the city and hid in an inner room. His officials said to him, ‘Look, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful. Let us go to the king of Israel with sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads. Perhaps he will spare your life.’ Wearing sackcloth around their waists and ropes around their heads, they went to the king of Israel and said, ‘Your servant Ben-Hadad says: Please let me live.’ The king answered, ‘Is he still alive? He is my brother.’ On the basis of a treaty Ahab set Ben-Hadad free and let him go.” (1 Kings 20:13-16; 19-20, 26-32)

Comment: Never make a treaty with the enemy of God nor Comprise the truth.

“One of the sons of the prophets disguised himself with his headband down over his eyes. ... As the king passed by, the prophet called out to him, ‘Your servant went into the thick of the battle, and someone came to me with a captive and said, ‘Guard this man. If he is missing, it will be your life for his life, or you must pay a talent of silver.’ While your servant was busy here and there, the man disappeared.’ ‘That is your sentence,’ the king of Israel said. ‘You have pronounced it yourself.’ Then the prophet quickly removed the headband from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. He said to the king, ‘This is what the Lord says: You have set free a man I had determined should die. Therefore, it is your life for his life, your people for his people.’ Sullen and angry, the king of Israel went to his palace in Samaria.” (1 Kings 20:35, 39-43)

“Sometime later there was an incident involving a vineyard belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite. The vineyard was in Jezreel, close to the palace of Ahab. Ahab said to Naboth, ‘Let me have your vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard or, if you prefer, I will pay you whatever it is worth.’ But Naboth replied, ‘The Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers.’ So, Ahab went home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, ‘I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.’ He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat. His wife Jezebel came in and asked him, ‘Why are you so sullen? Why won't you eat?’ He answered her, ‘Because I said to Naboth the Jezreelite, Sell me your vineyard; or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard in its place.’ But he said, ‘I will not give you my vineyard.’ Jezebel his wife said, ‘Is this how you act as king over Israel? Get up and eat! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.’” (1 Kings 21:1-7)

“Jezebel had Naboth stone him to death. Then she said to Ahab, ‘Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite that he refused to sell you. He is no longer alive, but dead.’ ... When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard. Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite: ‘Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He is now in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to take

possession of it. Say to him, This is what the Lord says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property? Then say to him, This is what the Lord says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood — yes, yours!' You have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord. I am going to bring disaster on you. I will consume your descendants and cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel — slave or free. I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have provoked me to anger and have caused Israel to sin.' "And also concerning Jezebel the Lord says: Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' ... Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: 'Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son.'" (1 Kings 21:8, 16-23, 29-29)

Comment: God sees and takes notice of the vilest of men who repent.

"In the third year Jehoshaphat king of Judah went down to see the king of Israel. The king of Israel had said to his officials, 'Don't you know that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us and yet we are doing nothing to retake it from the king of Aram?' So, he asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight against Ramoth Gilead?" Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, 'I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.' But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, 'First seek the counsel of the Lord.'" (1 Kings 22:2-5)

"The king of Israel brought together the prophets — about four hundred men — and asked them, 'Shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?' 'Go,' they answered, 'for the Lord will give it into the king's hand.' But Jehoshaphat asked, 'Is there not a prophet of the Lord here whom we can inquire of?' ... Then Micaiah was summoned. They were sitting on their thrones with all the prophets prophesying before them. Now Zedekiah son of Kenaanah declared, 'This is what the Lord says: With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.' All the other prophets said 'Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious,' they said, 'for the Lord will give it into the king's hand.' The messenger sent to summon Micaiah said "the other prophets are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably." When he arrived, the king asked him, 'Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?' 'Attack and be victorious,' he answered, 'for the Lord will give it into the king's hand.' The king said to him, 'How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?' Then Micaiah answered, 'I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord said, These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.' ... 'Therefore, hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. And the Lord said, Who will entice Ahab into attacking and going to his death there? Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, I will entice him. ... by being a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets, The Lord. Go and do it.'" (1 Kings 22:6-7; 10-16)

Comment: Seek truth - not what you desire.

"The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'I will enter the battle in disguise, but you wear your royal robes.' So, the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle. Now the king of Aram had ordered, 'Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel.' When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, 'Surely this is the king of Israel.' So, they turned to attack him, but when Jehoshaphat cried out, the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel and stopped pursuing him. But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. ... The blood from his wound ran onto the floor of the chariot, and that evening he died and was brought to Samaria, and buried. They washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria (where the prostitutes bathed), and the dogs licked up his blood, as the word of the Lord had declared. ... Ahaziah his son succeeded him as king." (1 Kings 22:29-38)

"Jehoshaphat walked in the ways of his father Asa, as he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. ... He rid the land of the rest of the male shrine prostitutes who remained there even after the reign of his father Asa. Jehoshaphat died and Jehoram his son succeeded him. Ahaziah son of Ahab reigned over Israel two years. He did evil just as his father, Ahab, had done." (1 Kings 22:41-53)

Key Points

- Walk in God's ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements - seek righteousness.
- Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the statutes of his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. Making exceptions to God's commands is not pleasing to Him.
- Leaders have a great impact on their followers, whether kings, parents, teachers or spiritual leaders.
- The prophecies all came true about those who did evil and angered the Lord.

2 KINGS

“Moab rebelled against Israel. Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So, he sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury. But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, ‘Go to messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?’ Therefore, this is what the Lord says: ‘You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!’” Joram succeeded him as king. (2 Kings 1:1-4, 17)

Passing Elijah's Mantel to Elisha

“Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; the Lord has sent me to Bethel and Jericho. He refused. ... Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground. When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?’ ‘Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied. ‘You have asked a difficult thing,’ Elijah said, ‘yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours — otherwise not.’ As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out, ‘My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!’ And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart.” (2 Kings 2:1-2, 7-12)

“He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. ‘Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?’ he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over. ... Elisha went up to Bethel on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria.” (2 Kings 2:13-14, 23)

“Joram son of Ahab did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not as his father and mother had done. He got rid of the sacred stone of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless, he clung to the sins of Jeroboam which he had caused Israel to commit; he did not turn away from them.” (2 Kings 3:1-3)

“Again, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. So, King Joram set out from Samaria and mobilized all Israel. He also sent this message to Jehoshaphat king of Judah: Will you go with me to fight against Moab? ‘I will go with you,’ he replied. They chose to go through the Desert of Edom to attack but ran out of water.’ ... ‘The king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat king of Judah and the king of Edom went down to see Elisha. Elisha said, if I did not have respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat, I would not look at you or even notice you. Then he said make this valley full of ditches. ... For this is what the Lord says: You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this valley will be filled with water, and you, your cattle and your other animals will drink. This is an easy thing in the eyes of the Lord; he will also hand Moab over to you. You will overthrow every fortified city and every major town. You will cut down every good tree, stop up all the springs, and ruin every good field with stones.’ The next morning, about the time for offering the sacrifice, there it was — water flowing from the direction of Edom!” (2 Kings 3:4-7, 12-20)

“Now all the Moabites had heard that the kings had come to fight against them; so, every man, young and old, who could bear arms was called up and stationed on the border. When they got up early in the morning, the sun was shining on the

water. To the Moabites across the way, the water looked red — like blood. ‘That’s blood!’ they said. ‘Those kings must have fought and slaughtered each other. Now to the plunder, Moab!’ But when the Moabites came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and fought them until they fled. And the Israelites invaded the land and slaughtered the Moabites. When the king of Moab saw that the battle had gone against him offered his firstborn son as a sacrifice on the city wall. The fury against Israel was great; they withdrew and returned to their own land.” (2 Kings 3:21-26)

Comment: How often do we pray to God for guidance but fail to go to His word to find His answer?

Faith of the Shunammite Woman

“One day Elisha went to Shunem. A well-to-do woman urged him to stay for a meal. So, whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. She said to her husband, ‘I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. Let’s make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us.’ One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. He said to his servant Gehazi, ‘Call the Shunammite.’ ‘Tell her, You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you?’ She replied, ‘I have a home among my own people.’ Elisha asked Gehazi ‘What can be done for her?’ Gehazi said, ‘Well, she has no son and her husband is old.’ The woman was called and Elisha said ‘About this time next year,’ Elisha said, “you will hold a son in your arms.’ Next year a son was born. The child grew, one day he went out to his father, who was with the reapers. ‘My head! My head!’ he said. His father told a servant, ‘Carry him to his mother.’ After the servant had lifted him up and carried him to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon, and then he died. She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and went out. ... She set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. ... When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, ‘Leave her alone! She is in bitter distress, but the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me why.’ ‘Did I ask you for a son, my lord?’ she said. ‘Didn’t I tell you, Don’t raise my hopes?’ ... When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the Lord. ... The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. Elisha said to the Shunammite woman, ‘Take your son.’ She came in, fell at his feet and bowed to the ground. Then she took her son and went out.” (2 Kings 4:8-37)

Comment: Her faith in the Lord’s power through Elisha did not waiver.

Naaman of Aram

“Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy. Now a captive young girl from Israel, who served Naaman’s wife said to her mistress, ‘If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.’ Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. ‘By all means, go,’ the king of Aram replied. ‘I will send a letter to the king of Israel.’ So Naaman took the letter to the king of Israel read: With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy.” (2 Kings 5:1-6)

Comment: Aram was located in and near present day Syria, the country of the Armenians.

“As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, ‘Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!’ When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: ‘Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.’ So Naaman went to Elisha’s house. Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, ‘Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.’ But Naaman went away angry and said, ‘I thought (what but does God say) that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn’t I wash in them and be cleansed?’ So, he turned and went off in a rage.” (2 Kings 5:7-12)

Comment: Don’t get angry when God’s answer does not meet your expectations.

“Naaman's servants went to him and said, ‘My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, Wash and be cleansed!’ So, he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy. Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, ‘Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept now a gift from your servant.’ The prophet answered, ‘I will not accept a thing.’ And even though Naaman urged him, he refused. ... Then Naaman said ‘may the Lord forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down and he is leaning on my arm and I bow there also — when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord forgive your servant for this.’ ‘Go in peace,’ Elisha said. (2 Kings 5:13-19)

“After Naaman had traveled some distance, Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running toward him, he got down from the chariot to meet him. "Is everything all right?" he asked. Gehazi lied by saying. ‘My master sent me to say, Two young men from the company of the prophets have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim.’ Gehazi took two bags of silver and two sets of clothing and put them away in the house. When Elisha asked ‘Where have you been, Gehazi?’ Elisha asked. Gehazi lied again saying ‘Your servant didn't go anywhere,’ But Elisha said to him, ‘Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to accept gifts? Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever.’ Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence and he was leprous, as white as snow.” (2 Kings 5:20-27)

Comment: Greed results in much sorrow and is not of God.

“Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, ‘I will set up my camp in such and such a place.” But Elisha kept the King of Israel informed their every move. The enraged the king summoned his officers and demanded of them to know who among them was on the side of the king of Israel?’ “None of us, my lord the king,” said one of his officers, it is Elisha, the prophet, who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak. ... Then the king went with a strong force and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. ‘Oh, my lord, what shall we do?’ the servant asked. ‘Don't be afraid,’ the prophet answered. ‘Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.’ And Elisha prayed, ‘O Lord, open his eyes so he may see.’ Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, ‘Strike these people with blindness.’ So, he struck them with blindness. Elisha told them, ‘This is not the road and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for.’ After they entered the city of Samaria, the Lord, open the eyes of these men so they can see. The king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, Shall I kill them?’ NO! Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink. After they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master. So, the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel's territory.” (2 Kings 6:8-23)

Comment: Overcome evil with good and pray for those who persecute you.

“Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-Hadad king of Aram was ill. The king sent Hazael to ask Elisha will I recover from this illness? Elisha answered, ‘Go and say to him, You will certainly recover; but the Lord has revealed to me that he will in fact die.’ Then to Hazael he said ‘The Lord has shown me that you will become king of Aram.” (2 Kings 8:7-13)

Hazael - King of Aram

“Then Hazael left Elisha and returned to his master. When Ben-Hadad asked, ‘What did Elisha say to you?’ Hazael replied, ‘He told me that you would certainly recover.’ But the next day he took a thick cloth, soaked it in water and spread it over the king's face, so that he died. Then Hazael succeeded him as king.” (2 Kings 8:14-15)

“Jehoshaphat died and Jehoram reign as king of Judah, he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord. Nevertheless, for the sake of his servant David, the Lord was not willing to destroy Judah. Jehoram rested with his and Ahaziah his son succeeded him as king. He reigned in Jerusalem one year. ... Ahaziah went with Joram son of Ahab

to war against Hazael king of Aram. The Arameans wounded Joram so returned to Jezreel to recover.” (2 Kings 8:18-19, 28)

Jehu appointed King of Israel

“The prophet Elisha sent one of the prophets to appoint Jehu king of Israel. The prophet opened the door and ran. When Jehu went out to his fellow officers, one of them asked him, ‘Is everything all right?’ Jehu said, ‘he anointed me as king over Israel.’ Jehu conspired against Joram and went down to Jezreel. . . . Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah rode out, each in his own chariot, to meet Jehu. Then Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart and he slumped down in his chariot. Jehu said to Bidkar, his chariot officer, picked him up and throw him on the field that belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite in accordance with the word of the Lord. He also killed Ahaziah king of Judah. (2 Kings 9:1-27)

“Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she painted her eyes, arranged her hair and looked out of a window. As Jehu entered the gate, she asked, ‘Have you come in peace, Zimri, you murderer of your master?’ Jeru looked up at the window and called out, ‘Who is on my side? Who?’ Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. ‘Throw her down!’ Jehu said. They threw her down, and some of her blood splattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot. Jehu went in and ate and drank. ‘Take care of that cursed woman,’ he said, ‘and bury her, for she was a king’s daughter.’ But when they went out to bury her, they found nothing except her skull, her feet and her hands, just as Elijah prophesied.” (2 Kings 9:30-35)

Comment: Oh! The consciences of an evil and wicked life.

“Jehu had them killed seventy sons of the house of Ahab and all of Joram’s family, according to the word of the Lord spoken to Elijah. He then called all the prophets of Baal to assemble in the temple of Baal for a sacrifice whereupon he killed all of them and burned their temple. Yet Jehu was not careful to keep the law of the Lord, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, which he had caused Israel to commit. Jehu rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Jehoahaz his son succeeded him.” (2 Kings 10:15, 18-31, 35)

Joash To Become King

“When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah, king of Judah, saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family. But Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes, who were about to be murdered. She hid him with his nurse at the temple of the Lord for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.” (2 Kings 11:1-3)

“In the seventh year Jehoiada, the priest, sent for the commanders of units of a hundred, the Carites (executioners) and the guards and had them brought to him at the temple of the Lord. He made a covenant with them and put them under oath at the temple of the Lord. Jehoiada brought out the king’s son and put the crown on him; he presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and the people clapped their hands and shouted, ‘Long live the king!’ . . . Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders to bring Athaliah out between the ranks and put to the sword anyone who follows her.’ For the priest had said, ‘She must not be put to death in the temple of the Lord.’ They seized her and put to death.” (2 Kings 11:4-16)

“Then the commanders of hundreds, the Carites, the guards and all the people of the land brought the king down from the temple of the Lord and went into the palace, entering by way of the gate of the guards. The king then took his place on the royal throne, and all the people of the land rejoiced. And the city was quiet, because Athaliah had been slain with the sword at the palace. Joash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him.” (2 Kings 11:18-20; 12:1)

“Hazael went to attack Jerusalem. But Joash king of Judah took all the sacred objects dedicated by his fathers — Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah, the kings of Judah — and the gifts he himself had dedicated and all the gold found in the treasuries of the temple of the Lord and of the royal palace, and he sent them to Hazael king of Aram, who then withdrew from Jerusalem.” (2 Kings 12:17-21)

Comment: Joash did not inquire of the Lord what to do.

Kings Replacing Kings

- Joash was assassinated after a being king for forty years. Amaziah his son succeeded him as king.
- Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king of Israel. He did evil so the Lord's anger burned against Israel, and for a long time he kept them under the power of Hazael king of Aram and Ben-Hadad his son.
- Jehoash succeeded Jehoahaz as king.
- Amaziah king of Judah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. After the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, he executed the officials who had murdered his father the king. Yet he did not put the sons of the assassins to death, in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the Lord commanded: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins."
- Jehoash attacked and captured Jerusalem, broke down about six hundred feet the wall and took all the gold and silver and all the articles found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace. He also took hostages and returned to Samaria.
- Jeroboam succeeded Jehoash as king.
- Azariah succeeded Amaziah but the Lord afflicted him with leprosy
- Jotham Azariah's son governed the people during Azariah's lifetime and king afterwards.
- Zechariah became king of Israel and reigned six months before he was assassinated by Shallum.
- Shallum was king for one month before being assassinated by Menahem.
- Pul king of Assyria invaded the Israel and Menahem paid Pul ransom. So, he withdrew.
- Pekahiah, Menahem son succeeded him as king but was assassinated.
- Hoshea assassinated Pekah and succeeded him as king.
- Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria captured much of Israel and deported the people to Assyria.
- Jotham, the king of Judah, did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father Uzziah had done. Ahaz, Jotham's son, became king but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son in the fire.
- Rezin king of Aram and Pekah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem to besiege Ahaz, but they could not overpower him. Ahaz sent messengers to say to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria to come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Aram and of the king of Israel, who are attacking me. The king of Assyria complied by attacking Damascus and capturing it. He deported its inhabitants to Kir and put Rezin to death. Then King Ahaz saw an altar in Damascus and sent to Uriah the priest a sketch of the altar, with detailed plans for its construction. So, Uriah the priest built an altar in accordance with all the plans that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus and finished it before King Ahaz returned. When the king came back from Damascus and saw the altar, he approached it and presented offerings on it. Later when Ahaz died Hezekiah became king.
- Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up to attack Hoshea, seized him and put him in prison, invaded the entire land, deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in the towns of the Medes and brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites. They took over Samaria and lived in its towns. (2 Kings 13: - 17:3-6)

Hezekiah, King of Judah

"Hezekiah, King of Judah, did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done and the Lord was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against Sennacherib, the king of Assyria and did not serve him. So, Sennacherib attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. Hezekiah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: 'I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me.' Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace. At this time Hezekiah king of Judah stripped off the gold with which he had covered the doors and doorposts of the temple of the Lord, and gave it to the king of Assyria."

"The king of Assyria sent his commanders to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem who said 'On what are you basing this confidence of yours? ... If you say to me, "We are depending on the Lord our God' - isn't he the one whose high places

and altars Hezekiah removed, saying ‘You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem?’ ... Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said, ‘Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don’t speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall.’ ... Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand. Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord when he says, The Lord will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Make peace with me and come out to me. Choose life and not death! ... The people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, ‘Do not answer him.’” (2 Kings 18:17-36)

“With this Hezekiah tore his clothes and put-on sackcloth and went into the temple of the Lord. He sent for the prophet Isaiah who said "Tell your master, 'This is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard — those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. ... Hezekiah received the letter from the king’s messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: ‘O Lord, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, O Lord, and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God.’ ... Now, O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God.” (2 Kings 18:37; 19:2, 7, 14-16, 19)

“Then Isaiah sent a message to Hezekiah: ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your prayer concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria ... he will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here. I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant.’ That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning — there were all the dead bodies! So, Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there. One day, while Sennacherib was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer cut him down with the sword, and Esarhaddon his son succeeded him as king.” (2 Kings 19:20, 32-37)

“In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, ‘This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.’ Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, ‘Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.’ And Hezekiah wept bitterly. Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him: ‘Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the Lord. I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.’” (2 Kings 20:1-6)

“Merodach-Baladan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift, because he had heard of Hezekiah's illness. Hezekiah received the messengers and showed them all that was in his storehouses. Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, ‘What did those men say, and where did they come from?’ Hezekiah replied. ‘They came from Babylon.’ The prophet asked, ‘What did they see in your palace?’ Hezekiah said, Everything. Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, ‘Hear the word of the Lord: The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the Lord. And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood, that will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’ ... Hezekiah rested with his fathers. And Manasseh his son succeeded him as king.” (2 Kings 20:12-18, 20)

“Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord. He also shed much innocent blood. He died and Amon his son succeeded him. Amon was assassinated by his officials and Josiah his son king was appointed king by the people.” (2 Kings 20:21; 21:1, 3, 16-17; 19, 24)

Josiah the King who walked in the ways of David

“Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left. King Josiah sent the secretary, Shaphan to Hilkiah the high priest and have him give money to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple. Hilkiah said to Shaphan , ‘I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord.’ He gave it to Shaphan, who read it and went to the king to read from it in the presence of the king. When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes and said. ‘Great is the Lord's anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us.’ ... Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to speak to the prophetess Huldah. She said to them, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people. Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and provoked me to anger by all the idols their hands have made, my anger will burn against this place and will not be quenched. Tell the king of Judah. ... Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord and wept in my presence, I have heard you. Therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.’” (2 Kings 22:1-20)

“Then the king went up to the temple of the Lord with the men of Judah, the people of Jerusalem, the priests and the prophets — all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord. The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord—to follow the Lord and keep his commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.” (2 Kings 23:1-3)

“The king gave this order to all the people: ‘Celebrate the Passover to the Lord your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant.’ So, the Passover was celebrated to the Lord in Jerusalem. ... Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did — with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses.” (2 Kings 23:21,25)

Babylon Captivity Is Near

“While Josiah was king, Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria. King Josiah marched out to meet him in battle, but Neco faced him and killed him at Megiddo.

Jehoahaz son of Josiah was anointed king. He only reigned three months when Pharaoh Neco put him in chains, made Eliakim king in his father place and changed his name to Jehoiakim. Then he took Jehoahaz and carried him off to Egypt, and there he died. Jehoiakim did evil in the eyes of the Lord, just as his fathers had done. During Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. But he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. The Lord sent Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders to destroy Judah. Jehoiakim died and Jehoiachin became king for three months.” (2 Kings 23:29-35; 24:1-2, 4)

“At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem and laid siege to it, and Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city while his officers were besieging it and took Jehoiachin prisoner. Nebuchadnezzar removed all the treasures from the temple of the Lord and from the royal palace, and took away all the gold articles that Solomon king of Israel had made for the temple of the Lord. He carried into exile all Jerusalem: all the officers and fighting men, and all the craftsmen and artisans — a total of ten thousand. Only the poorest people of the land were left. He made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah.” (2 Kings 24:10-14)

“Now Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. Consequently, Nebuchadnezzar marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. The city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled at night through the gate between the two walls near the king's garden. Zedekiah was captured and taken to Babylon where sentence was pronounced on him -they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out his eyes, bound him with bronze shackles.” (2 Kings 25:1-2, 6-7)

“Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard came to Jerusalem, set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace, all the houses of Jerusalem and every important building. Then whole Babylonian army broke down the walls around Jerusalem and carried into exile the people who remained in the city, along with the rest of the populace and those who had gone over to the king of Babylon.” (2 Kings 25:9-11)

Key Point from 2 Kings

- Kings, leaders with power, have great influence over their citizens; some were good but most were evil and rebellious towards God’s commands. Likewise, on the spiritual kingdom church leaders; pastors, preachers, shepherds, exercise power and authority over those they are to shepherd, some for good but not all.
- A shepherd goes on ahead of his sheep and they follow him because they know his voice. (John 10:4)
- Sins of nations or individuals do not go unpunished but they can repent and return to God.
- Under the New Covenant each person is accountable for their own sins, not those of their parents, their children or their spiritual leaders.
- For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. (2 Cor 5:10)

1 & 2 CHRONICLES

1 & 2 Chronicles is
The Outlined Bible by Steve Flatt

Genealogy of Jesus, The Messiah

Creation to flood “ There were 10 generations inclusive from Adam through Noah. The Flood was 1656 years following beginning of time on earth (2348 BC). Time on Earth may have begun at creation or when man sinned and was driven from the presence of God and the garden of Eden.

Flood to Abraham “ Abraham was born 352 years after the flood. Noah died 2 years prior to the birth of Abraham. Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran and 150 years old when Noah's son Shem died, at the age of 600 years.

Abraham to Moses “ Abraham was born 2008 (1996 BC), and died 175 years later in 2183 [1821 BC or 527 years after the flood] 290 years before birth of Moses.

Moses to David “ Moses was born 2473 (1531 BC). "Then Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab, at the Lord's command. He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor, but no one knows his burial place to this day. Moses was one hundred twenty years old when he died." (Deut. 34:5)

David to Christ “ David was born in Bethlehem in 1085 BC and "died at the age of 70 according to Josephus." (Smith's Bible Dictionary p. 140)

Christ was born 4004 years after he along with the Father and the Spirit created man. (Ibid. p. 774)
thebiblewayonline.com/Genealogy/genealogy.htm

The following is adapted from The Outlined Bible by Steve Flatt

As you read through 1 & 2 Chronicles, you likely experienced deja vu. Well over half of the material in Chronicles is a duplication of information found in Samuel and Kings. Why is this data repeated? Chronicles offers a different perspective than Samuel or Kings (see "Main Message" section). It was written to complement the other two.

Purpose -1 & 2 Chronicles were written to strengthen the remnant of the nation that made it through Babylonian captivity.

They needed to be reminded that the Lord was still with them because they were His covenant people. The book also offered warnings against future apostasy and/or idolatry.

I. Background of the book.

A. In the ancient Hebrew Bible, 1 & 2 Chronicles, along with Ezra, were likely one volume.

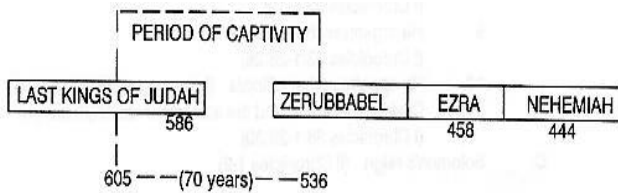
B. The Babylonian captivity.

1. The captivity of Judah officially lasted from 605-536 BC (a period of 70 years).
2. The reason for a 70-year exile is related in 2 Chronicles 36:21.

C. The return.

1. In 536 BC, Cyrus proclaimed that all the Jews could return to their homeland. (2 Chronicles 36:22-23)
2. Ezra returned to Jerusalem in the seventh year of the King. (i.e., Artaxerxes I who ruled Persia from 465 to 423 BC)
3. The Temple had been rebuilt between 520 and 515 BC, but the people were spiritually apathetic.
4. Under the leadership of Nehemiah (ca. 445 BC) there was a spiritual climate conducive to penning a book like Chronicles.

D. The following chart helps with the time line:



II. The Main Message of the book.

A. The main message of the book(s) was to remind the people of their covenant relationship with God and encourage them to act accordingly.

1. The exiles had come home from Babylon.
2. Though the Temple had been rebuilt, it had been neglected.
3. Revival in the land would not and could not occur until proper worship was restored there.

B. Chronicles is a history of the nation from a priestly perspective whereas Samuel and Kings provide a political perspective as compared in the table below.

1 & 2 SAMUEL 2 & 2 KINGS	CHRONICLES
-Viewed both North & South	-Viewed only the South
-Emphasis on the throne	-Emphasis on the Temple
-Civil/political history	-Sacred history
-Emphasis on the prophet	-Emphasis on the priest
-Wars prominent	-Wars less prominent
-Indictment of the 2 nations	-Remnant encouraged

III. Outline of the book.

A. Genealogies. (I Chronicles 1-9)

1. From Adam to Noah. (I Chronicles 1:1-4)
2. From Noah's sons to Jacob and Esau. (I Chronicles 1:5-54)
3. From Judah to David's descendants. (I Chronicles 2:1-4; 23)
4. The lineage of Jacob's other sons is given, with particular

attention to Levi.

5. A listing of those who resettled in Jerusalem following

6. Babylonian exile is given. (I Chronicles 9:1-44)

B. David's reign. (I Chronicles 10-29)

1. The stage for David's reign is set by details of King Saul's death. (10:1-14)

2. David is made king over all Israel and captures Jerusalem. (11:1-9)

3. David's loyal servants are named. (11:10-12:40)

4. David brings the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem. (13:1 -16:43)

5. David will not be allowed to build the Temple (17:1-2), but God establishes a special covenant with him. (17:3-27)

6. David strengthens Israel's forces. (18:1 - 20:8)

7. He takes an unauthorized census. (21:1-30)

8. David makes preparation for the construction of the Temple. (22:1-19)

9. He organizes the priests and Levites. (23:1-26:28)

10. He appoints other officials. (26:29 - 27:34)

11. David's final words and the account of his death are given. (28:1-29:30)

C. Solomon's reign. (II Chronicles 1-9)

1. Solomon is appointed king over Israel and receives a vision at Gibeon. (1:1-17)

2. Under his leadership, the Temple is built. (2:1 -5:1)

3. The ark of the covenant is brought to the Temple. (5:2-14)

a. The ark is dedicated to the Lord. (6:1-42)

b. The temple is dedicated to the Lord. (7:1-10)

4. Solomon's major victories and achievements are recorded. (8:1-9:31)

D. The kings of Judah. (II Chronicles 10-36)

1. After the kingdom divides under Rehoboam (Solomon's son), the northern kingdom is ignored, and a history of the kings of Judah is given.

a. Rehoboam. (10:1-12:16)

b. Abijah. (13:1-22)

c. Asa. (14:1-16:14)

d. Jehoshaphat. (17:1-20:37)

e. Jehoram. (21:1-20)

f. Ahaziah. (22:1-9)

g. Athaliah. (22:10-12)

h. Joash. (23:1-24:27)

i. Amaziah. (25:1-28)

j. Azariah. (26:1-23)

k. Jotham. (27:1-9)

l. Ahaz. (28:1-27)

m. Hezekiah. (29:1-32:33)

n. Manasseh. (33:1-20)

o. Amon. (33:21-25)

p. Josiah. (34:1-35:27)

q. Jehoahaz. (36:1-4)

r. Jehoiakim, (36:5-8)

s. Jehoiachin. (36:9-10)

t. Zedekiah. (36:11-21)

2. Greater space and attention is given to the good kings (i.e.-Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah) with little attention given to those characterized by evil.

IV. Key Themes of the book

A. Common characteristics of good spiritual leaders.

1. They sought the Lord.
 - a. Asa. (II Chronicles 14:11)
 - b. Jehoshaphat. (II Chronicles 17:4,6a; 18:6)
 - c. Hezekiah. (II Chronicles 30:6-9)
 - d. Josiah. (II Chronicles 34:3)
2. They turned from vile and detestable practices.
 - a. Asa. (II Chronicles 14:3-5)
 - b. Jehoshaphat. (II Chronicles 17:6b)
 - c. Hezekiah. (II Chronicles 29:6-10)
 - d. Josiah. (II Chronicles 34:4-7)
3. They desired to worship in spirit and truth.
 - a. Asa. (II Chronicles 15:11-12)
 - b. Jehoshaphat. (II Chronicles 20:18-21)
 - c. Hezekiah. (II Chronicles 29:3-5, 15-36)
 - d. Josiah. (II Chronicles 34:8-35:19)
4. They led the people to engage in prayer and a study of the Word.
 - a. Asa. (II Chronicles 14:4)
 - b. Jehoshaphat. (II Chronicles 20:5-12)
 - c. Josiah. (II Chronicles 34:29-31)
5. When threatened by adversaries, they relied upon the Lord.
 - a. Asa. (II Chronicles 14:11-12)
 - b. Jehoshaphat. (II Chronicles 20:5-12)
 - c. Hezekiah. (II Chronicles 32:20-23)
 - d. Josiah. (II Chronicles 34:19-21)
6. Each had an "Achilles heel".
 - a. Asa. (II Chronicles 16:7-10)
 - b. Jehoshaphat. (II Chronicles 20:35-37)
 - c. Hezekiah. (II Chronicles 32:24-25)
 - d. Josiah. (II Chronicles 35:20-25)

B. The role of worship.

1. The word worship comes to us from the concept of "worth ship" (i.e. - our God is worthy of our praise and adoration.)
2. It is to be reflected in all we do. (Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:17)
3. There are, however, collective worship times when God's people assemble for the purpose of glorifying God and building each other's faith. (Hebrews 10:25)
4. When the quality or regularity of that assembly time is ignored, spiritual apathy is always the result.

C. Jews and Samaritans.

1. Most Bible students know of the enmity that existed between the Jews and the Samaritans, (cf. John 4:9)
2. The origin of the Samaritans can be traced to the period when Chronicles was composed.
3. Assyria conquered Samaria in 721 BC under Sargon. (cf. 2 Kings 17:24-40)
 - a. He deported thousands of Israelites and repopulated the land with Gentiles.
 - b. Inter-marriage between the remaining Jews and the imported Gentiles produced a racially, culturally, and religiously mixed people.
 - c. When the Jews returned from Babylon, there was a strained relationship between the two groups. (cf. Ezra 4:1-3)
 - d. Eventually the Samaritans built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim.
4. Like the Jews, the Samaritans considered themselves the true heirs of Abraham.

EZRA

From Exile to Home

Israel had forsaken God by worshiping idols like the nations around them.

Each of their kings were more-evil than those before them. The prophets warned but they would not listen. Finally, God had enough. Nebuchadnezzar conquered them taking many into exile in Babylon.

Later, God delivered a message to Belshazzar, son of Nebuchadnezzar, by writing it on his wall. Daniel interpreted the message – God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

The time of their exile was drawing to an end. Cyrus king of Persia issued a proclamation “The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel— he is the God who is in Jerusalem. And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.” (Ezra 1:1-4)

There were 42,360, besides their male and female servants who went up from exile to Jerusalem.

Key points from Exile to Home

- God is never pleased when His people, Children of Israel or Christian, cease doing His will.
- The Lord told His Old Testament people the consequences of following other gods, idols was physical captivity.
- Christ tells His New Testament people the consequences of their unrepentant sins is eternal captivity with the Devil and His angels.

Rebuilding the Temple

Judah was carried away into captivity at three different times. After seventy years in captivity the first of three groups have returned and after seven months, they built an altar and offered burnt offerings to God. But the foundation for the temple had not been laid. So, they appointed workers and supervisors and when the foundation was laid, they sang praises and shouted greatly.

Doing God’s will always bring opposition so the adversaries of Judah attempted several ways to stop the rebuilding; making fun, bribing and making false statements and rumors. “Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build” so the work stopped. Discouragement is one of Satan’s most powerful tools.

Later Zerubbabel built the wall. He was challenged by the nearby governors which did not stop the rebuilding. The governors sent letters to King Darius for orders to cease rebuilding. His reply was not what they desired or expected “Let the work on this house of God alone. Let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its site. Moreover, I make a decree regarding what you shall do for these elders of the Jews for the rebuilding of this house of God. The cost is to be paid to these men in full and without delay from the royal revenue. . . . let it be done with diligence.”

They finished their building on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. At the dedication they offered sacrifices of sin for all Israel and set the priests and Levites in their divisions for the service of God at Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses.

Key points from Rebuilding the Temple

- It pleases God when people’s hearts are set on pleasing Him. Nothing can stop God’s will from being done. So, if we are not willing to do the work He desire, then someone else will do that work.

Returning to Rebuild the Wall

Zerubbabel had led the first group from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem. Ezra led the second group years later and restored the Temple but not the wall around Jerusalem. Some 10 to 15 years later Nehemiah wanted to go to Jerusalem because of a report he received. “In the month of Chisleu, in the twentieth year, while I was at the citadel of Shushan, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men ... They said to me, those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been burned with fire. When I heard those things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven.” (Nehemiah 1:1, 3, 4)

The king noticed Nehemiah’s sad countenance as he was being served wine and asked what was troubling him. As a result, Nehemiah was authorized to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall which the Lord had put into his heart to do. After inspecting the condition of the wall, he told all who were to do the work “You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision.” And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build. (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

Key Point from Returning to Rebuild the Wall

- One must recognize of the problem and the situation surrounding it.
- Have a willing heart that allows God to use you.
- Pray for guidance.
- Communicate God’s will to others.

Rebuilding the Wall

The king of Persia gave leave to his cupbearer to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. Nehemiah first surveyed the torn down walls and gates destroyed by the Babylonian fire that burned Jerusalem. He called the people together telling them now is the time to “Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision.”

So, they started rebuilding the wall. The non-Jews living in the area were angry, greatly enraged, jeered and said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, “What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?” But the rebuilding continued as “the people had a mind.”

Since ridicule did not work, they plotted to wage war. Neither did this work for one group stood guard while another laid the wall. Their faith was strong knowing “Our God will fight for us.” So, the wall was rebuilt.

All was not well as the nobles and officials took advantage of their brethren causing them to exist in poverty. Nehemiah became angry and brought charges against them stating we have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations. But you treat them as your slaves. Therefore, abandon this exacting of interest, return to them what has been wrongly exacting. The nobles and officials said “We will restore these and require nothing from them.” (Nehemiah 3 – 7)

Key Points from Rebuilding the Wall

- Do we really believe “Our God will fight for us?”
- God’s people, both Old and New Covenant people, will be mocked, ridiculed and threatened when they set their heart to do His will.

Rebuilding Spiritual Lives

The wall of Jerusalem had been rebuilt with much opposition. Oppression by their nobles and officials ceased and property restored. Spiritual awareness began to enter the hearts of the people.

The people gathered together in the square at the Water Gate. Ezra, a descendant of Aaron, began to read the Book of the Law of Moses. Then Nehemiah, Ezra and Levites taught the people. They wept as they heard God's Word. They declared it to be a holy day and sent away to eat and rejoice for they had heard and understood the words declared to them.

The next day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law. All the people began to confess their and their father's sins and to keep the commandments of the Law of Moses. They made a firm covenant in writing and enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law that was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord and his rules and his statutes. (Nehemiah 8 – 13)

Key Points from Rebuilding Spiritual Lives

- Respect God and His word - whether given by God through Moses or through Christ and His apostles.
- Confessed sins recognizing the faithfulness of God who is from everlasting to everlasting.
- Change your life by removing sin – repent.
- Begin doing His will.
- Plead for mercy.

ESTHER

King Xerxes held a seven-day banquet displaying his wealth. He ordered queen Vashti to display her beauty before his drunken guests. She refused and was banished. He then sought another queen among the beautiful girls who were brought to the citadel of Susa.

There was in the citadel of Susa a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. Mordecai had a cousin named Esther whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother.

Esther also was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. She did not reveal her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so. Every day Mordecai walked back and forth near the courtyard of the harem to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her.

When the turn came for Esther to go to the king, she won the favor of everyone who saw her. The king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor. So, he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

During the time Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. The two officials were hanged. All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.

After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor. When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead, Haman looked for a way to destroy all Jews. Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed and scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose customs are different from those of all other people and who do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them."

An edict was sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews — young and old, women and little children — on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. When Esther heard about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent Hathach out to Mordecai to find out the cause of his distress. Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him and gave him a copy of the edict for their annihilation to Esther and told him to urge her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people. She sent word to Mordecai saying, "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned by the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king." Mordecai sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

Esther asked Mordecai to gather all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law, saying if I perish, I perish.

So, Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter. Then the king asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request?" "If it pleases the king," replied Esther, "let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him." The king said bring Haman at once so that we may do what Esther asks. The king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. The king again asked Esther her request, but instead of answering she invited them to a second banquet them to come tomorrow to another banquet.

Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself but had gallows built, seventy-five feet high on which to hang Mordecai. That night the king could not sleep; so, he ordered the book of the chronicles and found that Mordecai had not been honored for exposing Bigthana and Teresh assassination plan. King Xerxes asked Haman what should be done for the one the delights to honor. Haman's reply was to have him put on a royal robe, have a royal crest placed on its head and led by a noble prince through the city streets on the king's horse proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!' Xerxes told Haman to get the robe and the horse for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. So, Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!"

At the second banquet as they were drinking wine the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition?" She answered, "If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life — this is my petition. Spare my people — for I and my people have been sold for destruction, slaughter and annihilation." King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is the man who has dared to do such a thing?" Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this vile Haman." The king left in a rage. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life. Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?" So, Haman was hung on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

The king issued another edict which granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves. Mordecai left the king's presence wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large crown of gold and a purple robe of fine linen. Mordecai was second in rank to King Xerxes, preeminent among the Jews, and held in high esteem by his many fellow Jews, because he and Esther allowed God to use them to save His people.

Key Points from Esther

- Mordecai confronted evil by speaking
- Mordecai and Esther allowed God to use them to save His people.
- Esther risked her life to do God's will.
- What do we risk to do God's will?

JOB

Tragedy Strikes Job

Job appears to have been one of the Patriarchs God talked with. Job offered burnt offerings to God just as Noah did. His time on earth is uncertain. He lived in the land of Uz possibly south and east of the sea later to be named Dead Sea. The time he lived could have been before, during or after Abraham from UR of the Chaldees or Melchizedek from Salem, possibly later to be Jerusalem.

Job was a righteous man according to what God said to Satan. Satan questioned the reason why Job was righteous. So, God allowed Job's righteousness to be tested. First his wealth, then family followed by his health. Added to all his misery Job's wife said "'Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.' But he said to her, 'You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?' In all this Job did not sin with his lips."

Some of Job's friends heard of his calamity and go to comfort and sympathize with him. They wept upon seeing him and for seven days nothing was said. Finally, Job feeling sorry for himself began a lament of his condition.

- "Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. He said: 'May the day of my birth perish, and the night it was said, 'A boy is born!'"
- "Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?"
- "Or why was I not hidden in the ground like a stillborn child, like an infant who never saw the light of day?"
- "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil." (Job 1 – 3)

Key Point from Tragedy Strikes

- God knows His righteous people.
- Satan also knows them and wishes to destroy the relationship between them and God.
- God's righteous people know that God knows them and how they live righteously among the unrighteous.
- The attitude of the righteous must be like that of Job - "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."

Eliphaz and Job

Eliphaz speaks

- If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? But who can keep from speaking? Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. Your words have supported those who stumbled; you have strengthened faltering knees. But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged; it strikes you, and you are dismayed. Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways your hope?
- Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. At the breath of God, they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger, they perish.
- Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more-pure than his Maker?
- Call if you will, but who will answer you? To which of the holy ones will you turn? Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple.

- Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so, do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.
- We have examined this, and it is true. So, hear it and apply it to yourself.

Job replies

- If only my anguish could be weighed and all my misery be placed on the scales! It would surely outweigh the sand of the seas — no wonder my words have been impetuous.
- Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant what I hope for, that God would be willing to crush me, to let loose his hand and cut me off! Then I would still have this consolation — my joy in unrelenting pain — that I had not denied the words of the Holy One.
- A despairing man should have the devotion of his friends, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty. But my brothers are as undependable as intermittent streams.
- Now you too have proved to be of no help; you see something dreadful and are afraid. Have I ever said, 'Give something on my behalf, pay a ransom for me from your wealth, deliver me from the hand of the enemy, ransom me from the clutches of the ruthless'?
- I have been allotted months of futility, and nights of misery have been assigned to me. When I lie down, I think, 'How long before I get up?' The night drags on, and I toss till dawn. My body is clothed with worms and scabs, my skin is broken and festering.
- What is man that you make so much of him, that you give him so much attention, that you examine him every morning and test him every moment?
- Will you never look away from me, or let me alone even for an instant?
- If I have sinned, what have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you made me your target? Have I become a burden to you? Why do you not pardon my offenses and forgive my sins? (Job 4-7)

Key Points from Eliphaz and Job

- People often accept life's tragedy as direct actions from God when in reality they are from Satan.
- Accusers base their condemnation on opinions rather than facts.
- Pain and anguish can cause despair resulting in doubt of God's love.
- Attitude in times of tragedy should be – my joy in unrelenting pain is I had not denied the words of the Holy One.

Bildad and Job

Bildad

- How long will you say such things? Your words are a blustering wind. Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right?
- If you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your rightful place.
- Surely God does not reject a blameless man or strengthen the hands of evildoers. He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. Your enemies will be clothed in shame, and the tents of the wicked will be no more."

Job

- I know that this is true. But how can a mortal be righteous before God? Though one wished to dispute with him, he could not answer him one time out of a thousand. His wisdom is profound, his power is vast. Who has resisted him and come out unscathed?
- How then can I dispute with him? How can I find words to argue with him?
- Though I were innocent, I could not answer him; I could only plead with my Judge for mercy.
- He is not a man like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court. If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both, someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot.
- I loathe my very life; therefore, I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul. I will say to God: Do not condemn me,
- Tell me what charges you have against me.

- Why then did you bring me out of the womb? I wish I had died before any eye saw me. If only I had never come into being, or had been carried straight from the womb to the grave! Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me so I can have a moment's joy before I go to the place of no return, to the land of gloom and deep shadow, to the land of deepest night, of deep shadow and disorder, where even the light is like darkness. (Job 8 – 10)

Key Points from Bildad and Job

- Harsh and condemning words especially from friends hurt.
- In despair one needs to remember God is just, righteous and merciful.
- Mortal man is unable to argue with God about his mortal life.
- God does not reject a blameless man ... But how can a mortal be righteous before God.

Zophar first speech

Zophar

- Are all these words to go unanswered? Is this talker to be vindicated? Will your idle talk reduce men to silence? Will no one rebuke you when you mock? You say to God, 'My beliefs are flawless and I am pure in your sight.' Oh, how I wish that God would speak, that he would open his lips against you and disclose to you the secrets of wisdom, for true wisdom has two sides. Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin.
- The eyes of the wicked will fail, and escape will elude them; their hope will become a dying gasp.

Job replied:

- But I have a mind as well as you; I am not inferior to you.
- Men at ease have contempt for misfortune as the fate of those whose feet are slipping.
- Ask the animals they will teach, the birds will tell you, the fish will inform you that the hand of the Lord is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.
- To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding. He silences the lips of trusted advisers and takes away the discernment of elders. He pours contempt on nobles and disarms the mighty.
- My eyes have seen all this, my ears have heard and understood it. What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you. But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God. You, however, smear me with lies.
- You are a worthless physician, all of you! If only you would be altogether silent!
- Keep silent and let me speak; then let come to me what may.
- Listen carefully to my words; let your ears take in what I say. Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated. Can anyone bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die.
- Only grant me these two things, O God. How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin. Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy?
- If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me! If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come. You will call and I will answer you; you will long for the creature your hands have made. Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin. My offenses will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin. (Job 11- 14)

Key Points from Zophar First Speech

- Acquisitions and praise of men are based on opinions and some facts.
- Defense of acquisitions should not condemn the accuser but confront the charges with truth and facts.
- Only God knows and understands man's trial and tribulations. He desires all to remain faithful to Him while being tested by Satan.
- Will we be able to plea our case before God as Job did? Thankfully Jesus Christ will do our pleading – we cannot.

Eliphaz 2nd Speech

Eliphaz

- Would a wise man answer with empty notions?
- You even undermine piety and hinder devotion to God. Your sin prompts your mouth; you adopt the tongue of the crafty. Your own mouth condemns you, not mine; your own lips testify against you.
- Why has your heart carried you away, and why do your eyes flash, so that you vent your rage against God and pour out such words from your mouth?
- Listen to me and I will explain to you; let me tell you what I have seen.
- All his days the wicked man suffers torment, the ruthless through all the years stored up for him. Terrifying sounds fill his ears; when all seems well, marauders attack him. He despairs of escaping the darkness; he is marked for the sword. He wanders about — food for vultures; he knows the day of darkness is at hand. Distress and anguish fill him with terror.
- Distress and anguish fill him with terror; they overwhelm him, like a king poised to attack, because he shakes his fist at God and vaunts himself against the Almighty, defiantly charging against him with a thick, strong shield.

Job replied:

- I have heard many things like these; miserable comforters are you all! Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing?
- Men open their mouths to jeer at me; they strike my cheek in scorn and unite together against me. God has turned me over to evil men and thrown me into the clutches of the wicked. I have sewed sackcloth over my skin and buried my brow in the dust. My face is red with weeping, deep shadows ring my eyes; yet my hands have been free of violence and my prayer is pure. "O earth, do not cover my blood; may my cry never be laid to rest! Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend.
- Only a few years will pass before I go on the journey of no return. (Job 15 – 17)

Key Point from Eliphaz 2nd Speech

- It is not how highly one thinks about their knowledge and wisdom, but how helpful it is to others.
- Comforting others in times of trouble is not achieved by statements that they are the cause of such problems.
- Life is short and often full of sorrow. But knowing Christ is interceding for us increases one's worship, honor and praise of Him.

Bildad 2nd Speech

Bildad

- When will you end these speeches? Be sensible, and then we can talk. Why are we regarded as cattle and considered stupid in your sight? You who tear yourself to pieces in your anger, is the earth to be abandoned for your sake? Or must the rocks be moved from their place?

Job replied:

- How long will you torment me and crush me with words? Ten times now you have reproached me; shamelessly you attack me. If it is true that I have gone astray, my error remains my concern alone. If indeed you would exalt yourselves above me and use my humiliation against me, then know that God has wronged me and drawn his net around me.
- He has alienated my brothers from me; my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. My kinsmen have gone away; my friends have forgotten me.
- Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me. Why do you pursue me as God does? Will you never get enough of my flesh?
- I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes — I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!
- If you say, 'How we will hound him, since the root of the trouble lies in him,' you should fear the sword yourselves; for wrath will bring punishment by the sword, and then you will know that there is judgment." (Job 18 – 19)

Key Points from Bildad 2nd Speech

- Insensitivity to pain and anguish of others is a tragedy often done by well-meaning friends.
- Know that your redeemer gives relief to suffering righteous souls.
- Do not blame God for tragedies of life as they are not from Him. They are from Satan. He wants to separate you from God.

Zophar 2nd Speech

Zophar

- My troubled thoughts prompt me to answer because I am greatly disturbed. I hear a rebuke that dishonors me, and my understanding inspires me to reply.
- Surely you know how it has been from of old, ever since man was placed on the earth, that the mirth of the wicked is brief.
- Though evil is sweet in his mouth and he hides it under his tongue, though he cannot bear to let it go and keeps it in his mouth.
- He has oppressed the poor and left them destitute; he has seized houses he did not build.
- The heavens will expose his guilt; the earth will rise up against him. A flood will carry off his house, rushing waters on the day of God's wrath. Such is the fate God allots the wicked, the heritage appointed for them by God.

Job replied:

- Listen carefully to my words; let this be the consolation you give me. Bear with me while I speak, and after I have spoken, mock on.
- Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power?
- Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him? What would we gain by praying to him?' But their prosperity is not in their own hands, so I stand aloof from the counsel of the wicked.
- Can anyone teach knowledge to God, since he judges even the highest?
- I know full well what you are thinking, the schemes by which you would wrong me. You say, 'Where now is the great man's house, the tents where wicked men lived?'
- So how can you console me with your nonsense? Nothing is left of your answers but falsehood! (Job 20 – 21)

Key Point from Zophar 2nd Speech

- Can anyone teach knowledge to God, since He judges even the highest?

Eliphaz and Bildad

Eliphaz

- Can a man be of benefit to God? Can even a wise man benefit him? What pleasure would it give the Almighty if you were righteous? What would he gain if your ways were blameless? Is it for your piety that he rebukes you and brings charges against you? Is not your wickedness great? Are not your sins endless? You demanded security from your brothers for no reason; you stripped men of their clothing, leaving them naked. You gave no water to the weary and you withheld food from the hungry, though you were a powerful man, owning land an honored man, living on it. And you sent widows away empty-handed and broke the strength of the fatherless. That is why snares are all around you, why sudden peril terrifies you, why it is so dark you cannot see, and why a flood of water covers you.
- Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you. Accept instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart. If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored: If you remove wickedness far from your tent.

Bildad

- Dominion and awe belong to God; he establishes order in the heights of heaven.
- How then can a man be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure?

Job replied:

- Even today my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy in spite of my groaning. If only I knew where to find him; if only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say. Would he oppose me with great power? No, he would not press charges against me. There an upright man could present his case before him, and I would be delivered forever from my judge.
- But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside. I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.
- For a little while they are exalted, and then they are gone; they are brought low and gathered up like all others; they are cut off like heads of grain.
- If this is not so, who can prove me false and reduce my words to nothing?" (Job 22 – 25)
- How you have helped the powerless! How you have saved the arm that is feeble! What advice you have offered to one without wisdom! And what great insight you have displayed! Who has helped you utter these words? And whose spirit spoke from your mouth?
- As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice, the Almighty, who has made me taste bitterness of soul, as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will utter no deceit. I will never admit you are in the right; till I die, I will not deny my integrity. I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live.
- I will teach you about the power of God; the ways of the Almighty I will not conceal. You have all seen this yourselves. Why then this meaningless talk?
- Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell? It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing.
- God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells, for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters, when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm, then he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he confirmed it and tested it. And he said to man, "The fear of the Lord — that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.
- How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me, when his lamp shone upon my head.
- When the Almighty was still with me and my children were around me, they listened to me expectantly, waiting in silence for my counsel.
But now they mock me, men younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs. Now my life ebbs away; days of suffering grip me. Night pierces my bones; my gnawing pains never rest. In his great power (God) becomes like clothing to me; he binds me like the neck of my garment.
- If I have denied justice to my menservants and maidservants when they had a grievance against me, what will I do when God confronts me? What will I answer when called to account?
- If I have put my trust in gold or said to pure gold, 'You are my security,' if I have rejoiced over my great wealth, the fortune my hands had gained.
- Then these also would be sins to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high. (Job 26 – 31)

Key Point from Eliphaz and Bildad

- Job wanted to find God to plead his case as he closely followed his steps and kept to his way without turning aside.
- Christ is the intercessor to plead the case for those who God has put into His Body through trust and obedience.
- As long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will utter no deceit.
- The fear of the Lord – that is wisdom.
- What will I do when God confronts me? What will I answer when called into account?

Elihu

Elihu became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. He was also angry with the three friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him.

- I am young in years, and you are old; that is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know. I thought, 'Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom.' But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding. It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right.
- I gave you my full attention. But not one of you has proved Job wrong; none of you has answered his arguments.
- You have said in my hearing — I heard the very words — 'I am pure and without sin; I am clean and free from guilt.
- I tell you, in this you are not right, for God is greater than man. Why do you complain to him that he answers none of man's words?
- For God does speak — now one way, now another — though man may not perceive it.

Job replied:

- I am innocent, but God denies me justice. Although I am right.
- I am considered a liar; although I am guiltless, his arrow inflicts an incurable wound.' What man is like Job, who drinks scorn like water? He keeps company with evildoers; he associates with wicked men. For he says, It profits a man nothing when he tries to please God.
- Suppose a man says to God, 'I am guilty but will offend no more. Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again.' Should God then reward you on your terms, when you refuse to repent? You must decide, not I; so tell me what you know.
- Job speaks without knowledge; his words lack insight.' Oh, that Job might be tested to the utmost for answering like a wicked man! To his sin he adds rebellion; scornfully he claps his hands among us and multiplies his words against God.
- But now you are laden with the judgment due the wicked; judgment and justice have taken hold of you. Be careful that no one entices you by riches; do not let a large bribe turn you aside. Would your wealth or even all your mighty efforts sustain you so you would not be in distress? (Job 32 – 37)

Key Point from Elihu

- Thinking too highly of one's knowledge and wisdom is a step toward sin and failure.
- Claiming to have the Spirit of God is not equivalent to having it.
- Anger prevents clear thinking and speaking. It makes it difficult for hearers to accept the intended message.

God Speaks

Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.

God began asking many unanswerable questions in several categories too many to list in this presentation, such as:

- Foundation of the cosmos
- Seas, waters and springs of the deep
- Darkness and light
- Weather -snow, hail, rain dew
- Starry heavens
- Living creatures – animals, birds, fish

Job's reply to God

- I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.
- Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge? Surely, I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

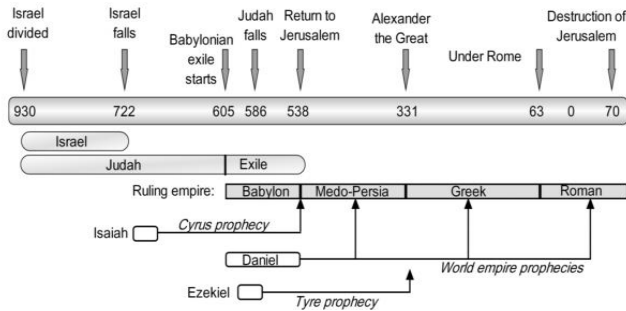
- Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me. My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.

In anger God speaks to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar for they were speaking about things they did not know. But because of righteous Job He forgave. (Job 38 – 42)

Key Point from God Speaks

- No mortal man has knowledge or wisdom to challenge or question God or his power, love, justice or mercy.

Time line from divided Kingdom to destruction of Jerusalem



ISAIAH

After the death of King Jehoshaphat, the kingdom of Judah entered into a long period of decline in religion and morality. Joram, the son of Jehoshaphat, married the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, rulers of Israel. The daughter's influence in the Southern Kingdom was similar to that of her mother in the north, and it could be summed up in two words, all bad.

Years later Judah continued its sinking into a state of moral degradation during the reign of Ahaz, but she was lifted from her quagmire of defeatism by Hezekiah, able and pious son of Ahaz. Isaiah aided Hezekiah's reform program with enthusiasm and good sense. (from Dickson Bible) Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Isaiah's Vision of Judah

I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. A sinful nation loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. Therefore, stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your hands are full of blood; so, wash and make yourselves clean. Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. The actions of Jerusalem and Judah are against the Lord, defying his glorious presence. The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. They have no regard or respect for Jehovah God. They have brought disaster upon themselves. Since they will not repent the Lord Almighty will take from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support: all supplies of food and all supplies of water.

Isaiah saw another vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem: In the last days (the time of Christ), the mountain of the Lord's house will be the highest of all—the most important place on earth. It will be raised above the other hills, and people from all over the world will stream there to worship. People from many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of Jacob's God. There he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths." For the Lord's teaching will go out from Zion; his word will go out from Jerusalem.

In the days of Uzziah Isaiah saw the Lord seated on His Throne and heard a voice asking who will warn all the nations of coming disaster? Isaiah answered, as all of God's children should answer, "Hear am I send me."

Isaiah Proclaiming God's Message

Judah

The king of Assyria will have plundered the wealth of Damascus and the riches of Samaria as a river in flood, bursting its banks, pouring into Judah, sweeping everything before it.

Babylon

Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms, like nations massing together! The Lord Almighty is mustering an army for war. The Medes, who do not care for silver and have no delight in gold will strike down the young men; they will have no mercy on infants nor will they look with compassion on children. Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory of the Babylonians' pride, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah. She will never be inhabited or lived in through all generations.

Moab

Moab will be destroyed at night. In love a throne will be established a man from the house of David will sit on it judging the cause of righteousness.

Damascus

Damascus, representing the Northern Kingdom, will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins. You have forgotten God your Savior; you have not remembered the Rock, your fortress.

Cush

Woe to the land of whirring wings along the rivers of Cush (probably Ethiopia), which sends envoys by sea in papyrus boats over the water. Before the harvest, when the blossom is gone and the flower becomes a ripening grape, he will cut off the shoots with pruning knives, and cut down and take away the spreading branches. They will all be left to the mountain birds of prey and to the wild animals.

Egypt

The Lord rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt. The idols of Egypt tremble before him, and the hearts of the Egyptians melt within them. "I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian — brother will fight against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. The Egyptians will lose heart, and I will bring their plans to nothing; they will consult the idols and the spirits of the dead, the mediums and the spiritists. I will hand the Egyptians over to the power of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them," declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty.

Tyre

Wail, O ships of Tarshish! For Tyre is destroyed and left without house or harbor. From the land of Cyprus word has come to them. The Lord has stretched out his hand over the sea and made its kingdoms tremble. He has given an order concerning Phoenicia that her fortresses be destroyed.

Jerusalem, the City of David

Your worship of me is nothing but made-up rules taught by men. You are full of revelry saying eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you may die. But you will all be captured and taken prisoner. The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the Lord. And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Comment: Israel's focus was on pleasure rather than on God.

Hope for Redemption

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

Comment: They will receive salvation from Babylon and then when the Messiah comes in the last days the Covenant God gave through Moses will end. A new covenant will be established by the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, the atoning sacrifice, with forgiveness of sins.

Speaking of the Messiah to come – “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope.” This is what God the Lord says “I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles.”

To people God chose to bring the Messiah into the world, Isaiah recants many of the things God had done for them in making them a nation, things they had forgotten. In all of Isaiah’s proclaiming God’s message, he constantly mentions the coming Messiah who would sit on David’s throne forever.

Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.

Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness. I am bringing my righteousness and salvation sometime in the future and it will not be delayed.

Comment: “My righteousness and Salvation” – The Messiah, Jesus, Christ, the Atoning Sacrifice - was to come in the future. Forgiveness and salvation would be offered to everyone including the Gentiles.

“I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best and directs you in the way you should go. Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord - The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.” (Isaiah 49)

My word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Isaiah’s Messianic Prophecies

Prophecy	Prophesied	Fulfilled
Was scourged and spit upon	Isa. 1:6	Mark 14:65; John 19:1
His law went forth from Zion and His word from Jerusalem	Isa 2:1-3	Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2:1-40
Born of a virgin	Isa. 7:14	Matt. 1:18; Luke 2:7
He was called Immanuel	Isa. 7:14	Matt. 1:22-23
A stone of stumbling and rock of offense	Isa. 8:14	Rom. 9:32; 1 Pet. 2:8
He is the light to Zebulun and Naphtali	Isa. 9:1-3	Matt. 4:12-16
The righteousness of His reign	Isa. 9:6-7	John 5:30; Rev.19:11
The Gentiles should be admitted into His service	Isa. 11:10; 42:1;	John 10:16; Acts 10:44-48; Rom. 15:9-12
He was extended upon the cross and His hands and His feet were nailed to the wood	Isa. 25:10-11	John 19:18; 20-25
Introduced by John the Baptist	Isa. 40:3;	Matt. 3:1-3; Luke 1:17
His compassion	Isa. 40:11; 42:3	Matt. 12:15-20; Heb. 4:15
He was sent as a deliverer to the people	Isa. 41:1-3	Luke 4:16-21; Luke 4:43
He was meek and with ostentation	Isa. 42:1-2	Phil. 2:7-9
Hated by the Jews	Isa. 49:7	John 15:24-25

He shall suffer, abuse	Isa. 50:6	Matt. 26:67
His visage was greatly marred	Isa. 52:14; 53:3	John 19:1-5
Rejected by His brethren	Isa. 53:3	John 1:11; John 7:5
He suffered that He might bear away our sins	Isa. 53:4	Matt.20:28; 26:28
He shall be whipped	Isa. 53:5	Matt. 27:26,29
He was patient and silent in all His sufferings	Isa. 53:7	Matt.26:63; 27:12-14
Was without guile	Isa. 53:9	Pet. 2:22
He was buried with the rich	Isa. 53:9	Matt. 27:57-60
He made intercession for the murderers	Isa. 53:12	Luke 23:24
This agony was increased by being numbered among thieves	Isa. 53:12	Mark 15:28
He suffered alone; even the Father's presence was withdrawn	Isa. 63:1-3	Matt. 27:46

D. R. Duncan; Hermeneutics Cincinnati, n.d. pp. 395-99 and Dr. Hawley O. Taylor; Modern Science and Christian Faith pp. 179-183

Key points from Isaiah

- God expects reverence, respect, honor and obedience because of your love of Him.
- There is always disappointment and consequences as a result of sin and rebellion.
- Following sin, God is always ready to forgive after one's recognition of sin, repentance evidence by a change in lifestyle and a return to His loving care. It is man's choice.
- To those under the covenant given by God through Moses there was a promise of forgiveness. Forgiveness is in Christ.
- To those in the covenant of Christ, He offers forgiveness to those who put their trust and obedience in Him.

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah was the young son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. The kings following Josiah were all evil by atrocious deeds and worshiping idols. Their time as a nation was coming to an end when God called Jeremiah to speak to the kings and people of Judah telling them that He would fight against them. Countless times for over forty years he delivered God's message - repent and return or destruction would come to Judah - but most of the time they rejected God's message. Only a few of Jeremiah's messages are presented below. Sometime a ray of hope was proclaimed if only they would repent and return. Finally, God allowed them to be taken into Babylon captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. But His message was repent and return or face certain destruction.

Judah

“Return, faithless Israel,’ declares the Lord, ‘I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful,’ declares the Lord, ‘I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your guilt — you have rebelled against the Lord your God, you have scattered your favors to foreign gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me,’” declares the Lord. (Jer 3:12-13)

“If you will return, O Israel, return to me,” declares the Lord. “If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray, and if in a truthful, just and righteous way you swear, ‘As surely as the Lord lives,’ then the nations will be blessed by him and in him they will glory.” (Jer 4:1-2)

“Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, look around and consider, search through her squares. If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city.” (Jer 5:1)

“Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’” (Jer 6:16)

“Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words and say, ‘This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!’ If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever.” (Jer 7:3-7)

“But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless. ... My anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, on man and beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground, and it will burn and not be quenched. ... So beware, the days are coming, the land will become desolate. ... But my people do not know the requirements of the Lord.” (Jer 7:8, 20, 32, 34, 8:7)

“Listen to the terms of this covenant and tell them to the people of Judah and to those who live in Jerusalem. Tell them that this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Cursed is the man who does not obey the terms of this covenant. ... I warned them again and again, saying, ‘Obey me.’ But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubbornness of their evil hearts.” (Jer 11:2-3; 7-8)

Prayer of Jeremiah

“I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps. Correct me, Lord, but only with justice — not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing. Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the peoples who do not call on your name. For they have devoured Jacob; they have devoured him completely and destroyed his homeland.” (Jer 10:23-25)

“Do not pray for the well-being of this people. Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague. ... The prophets are prophesying lies in my name.” (Jer 14:11-12; 14)

“If you repent, I will restore you, if you utter worthy, not worthless, words. ... When they ask you, ‘Why has the Lord decreed such a great disaster against us? What wrong have we done? What sin have we committed against the Lord our God?’ Then say to them, ‘It is because your fathers forsook me,’ declares the Lord, ‘and followed other gods and served and worshiped them. They forsook me and did not keep my law. But you have behaved more wickedly than your fathers.’” (Jer 15:19; 16:10-12)

Plots Against Jeremiah

“The men of Anathoth said ‘Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord or you will die by our hands’. But God said - I will punish them. Their young men will die by the sword, their sons and daughters by famine. Not even a remnant will be left to them, because I will bring disaster on the men of Anathoth in the year of their punishment.” (Jer 11:21-23)

“The priest Pashhur heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the Lord's temple. ... Pashhur, and all who live in your house will go into exile to Babylon. There you will die and be buried, you and all your friends.” (Jer 20:1-3; 6)

“Speak to all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship in the house of the Lord. ... This is what the Lord says: If you do not listen to me and follow my law, which I have set before you, and if you do not listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I have sent to you again and again (though you have not listened), then I will make this

house like Shiloh and this city an object of cursing among all the nations of the earth. When the priests, the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speak they seized him and said “you must die!” (Jer 26:2, 4-9)

“The captain of the guard, whose name was Irijah son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah, arrested him, brought him to the officials and said, ‘You are deserting to the Babylonians!’ They were angry with Jeremiah and had him beaten and imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the secretary, which they had made into a prison. Jeremiah was put into a vaulted cell in a dungeon, where he remained a long time. ... The officials said to the king, ‘This man should be put to death. He is discouraging the soldiers who are left in this city, as well as all the people, by the things he is saying to them. This man is not seeking the good of these people but their ruin.’ ‘He is in your hands,’ King Zedekiah answered. ‘The king can do nothing to oppose you.’ So, they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern. ... This is what the Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, your life will be spared and this city will not be burned down; you and your family will live. But if you will not surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be handed over to the Babylonians and they will burn it down; you yourself will not escape from their hands.’ ... Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard until the day Jerusalem was captured.” (Jer 37:13-16; 38:4-6; 17-18; 28)

When Babylon captured Jerusalem Jeremiah was found a prisoner of Judah chained in the court yard. He was released and given a choice to go to Babylon or stay at his home. He chose to stay.

A Worried King

“King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur to ‘Inquire now of the Lord for us because Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is attacking us. Perhaps the Lord will perform wonders for us as in times past so that he will withdraw from us.’ ... God of Israel, says: I am about to turn against you the weapons of war that are in your hands, which you are using to fight the king of Babylon and the Babylonians who are outside the wall besieging you. ... I will strike down those who live in this city.” (Jer 21:1-2; 4, 6)

Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David's throne. (Jer 22:3-4)

Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. (Jer 23:16)

God Is Faithful- He Keeps His Word

Destruction A Certainty

“I will give their wives to other men and their fields to new owners. From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit. ... ‘See, I will refine and test them, for what else can I do because of the sin of my people? ... I will make this people eat bitter food and drink poisoned water. I will scatter them among nations that neither they nor their fathers have known, and I will pursue them with the sword until I have destroyed them.’” (Jer 8:10, 9:7, 9:15-16)

“I will bring on them a disaster they cannot escape. Although they cry out to me, I will not listen to them.” (Jer 11:11)

“I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them.” (Jer 13:9-10)

“I will send four kinds of destroyers against them,” declares the Lord, “the sword to kill and the dogs to drag away and the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. I am going to bring a disaster on this place that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. For they have forsaken me.” (Jer 15:3-4)

“I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live; he will escape with his life.” (Jer 21:8-10)

“I deal with Zedekiah king of Judah, his officials and the survivors from Jerusalem, whether they remain in this land or live in Egypt. I will make them abhorrent and an offense to all the kingdoms of the earth, a reproach and a byword, an object of ridicule and cursing.” (Jer 24:8-9)

“This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Go to Zedekiah king of Judah and tell him, 'This is what the Lord says: I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylon, and he will burn it down. You will not escape from his grasp but will surely be captured and handed over to him. You will see the king of Babylon with your own eyes, and he will speak with you face to face. And you will go to Babylon. You will not die by the sword; you will die peacefully.’” (Jer 34:2-5)

“This is what the Lord says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on the throne of David; his body will be thrown out and exposed to the heat by day and the frost by night. I will punish him and his children and his attendants for their wickedness; I will bring on them and those living in Jerusalem and the people of Judah every disaster I pronounced against them, because they have not listened.” (Jer 36:30-31)

“The God of Israel, says: Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of me, 'Pharaoh's army, which has marched out to support you, will go back to its own land, to Egypt. When the Babylonians will return and attack this city; they will capture it and burn it down.’” (Jer 37:7-8)

After the Babylonian army had withdrawn from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's army, Jeremiah started to leave the city to go to the territory of Benjamin to get his share of the property. (Jer 37:11-12)

When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled; they left the city at night by way of the king's garden, through the gate between the two walls, and headed toward the Arabah. But the Babylonian army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They captured him and took him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him. There at Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and also killed all the nobles of Judah. Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon. (Jer 39:4-7)

Destruction of Surrounding Nations

“As for all my wicked neighbors who seize the inheritance, I gave my people Israel, I will uproot them from their lands and I will uproot the house of Judah from among them. But after I uproot them, I will again have compassion and will bring each of them back to his own inheritance and his own country. And if they learn well the ways of my people and swear by my name, saying, 'As surely as the Lord lives' — even as they once taught my people to swear by Baal — then they will be established among my people. But if any nation does not listen, I will completely uproot and destroy it.” (Jer 12:14-17)

“Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” (Jer 25:8-11)

“Send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon through the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. Give them a message for their masters and say, 'This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will hand all your countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.’” (Jer 27:3-6)

Egypt, Philistines, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Kedar, Hazor, were all destroyed as Jerimiah had prophesied. (Jer 46-49)

Babylon

“This is the word the Lord spoke through Jeremiah the prophet concerning Babylon and the land of the Babylonians. ... I will stir up and bring against Babylon an alliance of great nations from the land of the north. They will take up their positions against her, and from the north she will be captured. ... The Lord has stirred up the kings of the Medes, because his purpose is to destroy Babylon. The Lord will take vengeance, vengeance for his temple.” (Jer 50:1, 9; 51:11)

For the Lord is a God of retribution; he will repay in full. (Jer 51:56)

False Prophets

“Some of the elders said "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah ‘Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill, a mound overgrown with thickets.’” (Jer 26:17)

“Do not listen to the prophets who say, 'Very soon now the articles from the Lord's house will be brought back from Babylon.' They are prophesying lies to you. Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon, and you will live.” (Jer 27:16-17)

“Hananiah the prophet falsely prophesied ‘I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place all the articles of the Lord's house.’ ... ‘Listen, Hananiah! The Lord has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. Therefore, this is what the Lord says: I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die.’” (Jer 28:2-3; 15-16)

To Babylon Captives

“I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Babylonians. My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. ... But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians.” (Jer 24:5; 25:12)

“To all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ‘Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.’ ... ‘Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you.’ ... ‘When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place.’” (Jer 29:4-5; 8; 10-11)

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.’” (Jer 29:11-13)

Plans for Distant Future

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? ‘I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.’” (Jer 17:9-10)

“‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.’” (Jer 23:5-6)

“‘The time is coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the Lord. “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’ declares the Lord. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother,

saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,' declares the Lord. 'For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.'" (Jer 31:31-34)

Key Points from Jeremiah

- Jehovah God wants all His people to be faithful to His covenant by doing His will.
- God is patient with those who rebel by disobedience and sin.
- Prove religious leader's opinions and interpretations by searching the Scriptures, Bible, to prove God's will.
- Many opportunities are present if one is looking to repent, return and be restored to God.
- God always forgive those who whole heartily seek to do His will.
- Weep for those who cannot or will not return to God.

LAMENTATIONS

Jeremiah pleaded with the Kings and people to repent, return and obey the commands of the covenant given by God through Moses. But they refused, threatened him with death, put him on dungeons and cisterns. He was found by the Babylon army chained in the courtyard in Jerusalem when they conquered and destroyed it.

Judgment has Come to Jerusalem and Judah

Chapter 1

- Look how deserted Jerusalem is! Once the city was crowded with people. Once it was important among the nations.
- Judah has been exiled after much suffering and harsh treatment.
- The roads to Zion are deserted. No one comes to the annual festivals. No one passes through any of its gates.
- Her foes have become her masters; her enemies are at ease. The Lord has brought her grief because of her many sins.
- All the splendor has departed.
- Jerusalem has sinned greatly and has become unclean. All who honored her now despise her,
- My sins have been bound into a yoke; by his hands they were woven together. They have come upon my neck and the Lord has sapped my strength. He has handed me over to those I cannot withstand.
- The Lord is righteous, yet I rebelled against his command.

Chapter 2

- How the Lord has covered the Daughter of Zion with the cloud of his anger!
- Without pity the Lord has swallowed up all the dwellings of Jacob; in his wrath he has torn down the strongholds of the Daughter of Judah. He has brought her kingdom and its princes down to the ground in dishonor.
- The Lord is like an enemy; he has swallowed up Israel. He has swallowed up all her palaces and destroyed her strongholds. He has multiplied mourning and lamentation.
- The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; they did not expose your sin to ward off your captivity.
- The oracles they gave you were false and misleading.
- The Lord has done what he planned; he has fulfilled his word, which he decreed long ago.

Chapter 3

- I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light; indeed, he has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long.
- He has barred my way with blocks of stone; he has made my paths crooked.
- I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope.
- Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

- The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.
- Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love.
- Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins?
- Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven, and say: "We have sinned and rebelled and you have not forgiven.
- I called on your name, O Lord, from the depths of the pit. You heard my plea: "Do not close your ears to my cry for relief." You came near when I called you, and you said, "Do not fear."

Chapter 4

- The punishment of my people is greater than that of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment without a hand turned to help her.
- Those killed by the sword are better off than those who die of famine; racked with hunger, they waste away for lack of food from the field.
- With their own hands compassionate women have cooked their own children, who became their food when my people were destroyed.
- The priests are shown no honor, the elders no favor.
- Our end was near, our days were numbered, for our end had come.
- Daughter of Zion, your punishment will end; he will not prolong your exile.

Chapter 5

- Our fathers sinned and are no more, and we bear their punishment.
- Slaves rule over us, and there is none to free us from their hands.
- Woe to us, for we have sinned! Because of this our hearts are faint because of these things our eyes grow dim for Mount Zion, which lies desolate.
- Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may return; renew our days as of old.

Key Point from Lamentations.

- The Lord is faithful, He prophesied destruction without pity unless they repent and return to Him. But the Lord is good and compassionate to those in the Old and New Covenants who trust and obey Him by doing His will. Their hope is in Him as He will not cast them off forever but will show compassion.

EZEKIEL

Ezekiel was one of many captives taken to Babylon during the second stage of the captivity in Jehoiachin's reign (597 BC). This was about eight years after Daniel had been carried to Babylon. (Dickson Bible)

Prophecies

In the first nine chapters Ezekiel sees many visions, some simple others very elaborate but all relate to the destruction of Jerusalem with captives being taken to Babylon three stages. All or most of the visions referred to the total destruction of Jerusalem. Such as:

- The first is the four beings having appearance of man but each with faces of a man, lion, eagle and ox and also wheels, legs, wings, burning coals and fire.
- Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. (Ezek 4:2)
- I will inflict punishment on you in the sight of the nations. Because of all your detestable idols, I will do to you what I have never done before and will never do again. Therefore, in your midst fathers will eat their children, and children will eat their fathers. (Ezek 5:8-10)

- I will send famine and wild beasts against you, and they will leave you childless. Plague and bloodshed will sweep through you, and I will bring the sword against you. I the Lord have spoken. (Ezek 5:17)
- Because of all the wicked and detestable practices of the house of Israel, they will fall by the sword, famine and plague. (Ezek 6:11)
- I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices. I will not look on you with pity or spare you. (Ezek 7:3-4)
- Doom has come upon you — you who dwell in the land. The time has come, the day is near. (Ezek 7:7)
- I will bring the most wicked of the nations to take possession of their houses; I will put an end to the pride of the mighty, and their sanctuaries will be desecrated. When terror comes, they will seek peace, but there will be none. Calamity upon calamity will come, and rumor upon rumor. (Ezek 7:24-26)
- I will deal with them in anger; I will not look on them with pity or spare them. Although they shout in my ears, I will not listen to them. (Ezek 8:18)
- Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it. Slaughter old men, young men and maidens, women and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark. (Ezek 9:4; 6)

Destruction

In chapter 10 a significant event is prophesied - the glory of the Lord will depart from over the threshold of the temple and stop above the cherubim. God has departed from the Temple. Time for destruction of Jerusalem is near. God has promised death by plagues, famine and sword. “In the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem and laid siege to it. And they built siege works all around it. So, the city was besieged till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.” (2 Kings 25:1-3)

1. The first siege by Babylon took place in 606 BC. Daniel and others were taken captive in this group.
2. The second deportation occurred in 597 BC. Ezekiel was in this group and prophesied to the 10,000 captives-taken— during this conquest.
3. In the third siege (586 BC) Jerusalem is sacked, the Temple destroyed, and most of the population taken captive.
4. Through all of the above, Jeremiah was preaching in Jerusalem.
(from The Outlined Bible by Steve Flatt)

Judah was not the only nation God promised to punish, Ezekiel specifically mentions:

1. Ammon
“Behold, I am handing you over to the people of the East for a possession, and they shall set their encampments among you and make their dwellings in your midst. They shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk. I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels and Ammon a fold for flocks. Then you will know that I am the Lord. For thus says the Lord God: Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet and rejoiced with all the malice within your soul against the land of Israel.” (Ezek 25:1-7)
2. Moab
“I will give it along with the Ammonites to the people of the East as a possession.” (Ezek 25:8-11)
3. Edom
“I will stretch out my hand against Edom and cut off from it man and beast. And I will make it desolate. (Ezek 25:12-14)
4. Philistia
I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes. Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I lay my vengeance upon them.” (Ezek 25:15-17)
5. Tyre

“Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves. They shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers, and I will scrape her soil from her and make her a bare rock.” (Ezek 26:1-28:19)

6. Sidon

“I will send pestilence into her, and blood into her streets; and the slain shall fall in her midst, by the sword that is against her on every side. Then they will know that I am the Lord.” (Ezek 28:20-26)

7. Egypt

“I will bring a sword upon you, and will cut off from you man and beast, and the land of Egypt shall be a desolation and a waste.” (Ezek 29:1-32:32)

Watchman

Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so, hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man to turn from his ways and he does not do so, he will die for his sin, but you will have saved yourself. ... I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek 33:7-9)

“Therefore, son of man, say to your countrymen, 'The righteousness of the righteous man will not save him when he disobeys, and the wickedness of the wicked man will not cause him to fall when he turns from it. The righteous man, if he sins, will not be allowed to live because of his former righteousness.' If I tell the righteous man that he will surely live, but then he trusts in his righteousness and does evil, none of the righteous things he has done will be remembered; he will die for the evil he has done. And if I say to the wicked man, 'You will surely die,' but he then turns away from his sin and does what is just and right— if he gives back what he took in pledge for a loan, returns what he has stolen, follows the decrees that give life, and does no evil, he will surely live; he will not die. None of the sins he has committed will be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he will surely live. ... I will judge each of you according to his own ways.” (Ezek 33:11-16; 20)

Comment: God’s nature is love, justice and mercy. He does not want any to perish. He is always ready to forgive whenever one returns to Him. The function of a watchman is basically that of a shepherd. A shepherd watches for predators; such as, wolves and thieves. A good shepherd goes after a sheep that has wandered away. He builds a fence to protect them at night. This appears to be the functions of leaders of those in Christ Body, His church.

Vision of the Future

Beginning in Chapter 37 visions are given. The following are personal interpretation of these visions. They may be right, partially right or totally wrong.

1. Valley of Dry Bones

Dry bones scattered may represent lives of soldiers and residence lost during their captivity of the Babylonians. Their coming to life then would be their release from captivity and returning to the Promised Land. If applied to the New Covenant, people dead in sin given a new life, forgiven of sin, on their way to a new and better Promised land, Heaven. (Ezekiel 37:1-14)

2. Two Sticks

Ephraim, probably the Northern kingdom, the rebellious ones who left God for idols. They represent all people who do not belong to God, whereas Judah represents those still loyal to God. So, I will make a new covenant with them, cleanse them of their sins establish one kingdom, Christ Church. Jesus of the lineage of David will be their king and my dwelling place will be with them. (Ezekiel 37:15-28)

3. Gog

Gog is the king of Magog north of Israel. Josephus identifies the Magogites with the Scythians. (Ant, I, vi, 1 - International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia) They were an ancient nomadic people of Eurasia. (www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=Scythians+) Some scholars believe Atilla was of the *Scythians*.

God and Magog are also mentioned in Revelation 29:8 “The Adversary shall be loosed out of his prison, and he shall go forth to lead the nations astray, that are in the four corners of the earth — Gog and Magog — to gather them together to war.” Therefore, the prophecy represents all who are against God. (Ezekiel 38)

4. Measurement

Those in exile probably thought when they returned to “their Promised Land” the Temple would be a most splendid and beautiful place with God returning and residing therein. But the measurement would appear to related it to the eternal dwelling place of God.

Key Points from Ezekiel

- Because of all the wicked and detestable practices, Israel will fall by the sword, famine and plague.
- God will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices.
- The glory of the Lord will depart from over the threshold of the temple and stop above the cherubim. When God departs from the Temple, time for destruction is near.
- As a watchman, you are hear the word of God and warn those who practice evil to turn back to God.
- The righteousness of the righteous man will not save him when he disobeys, and the wickedness of the wicked man will not cause him to fall when he turns from it. Therefore, one can abandon God.
- I will judge each of you according to his own ways.

DANIEL

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. ... Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine. Therefore, he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. ... As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.” (Dan 1:1-6; 8; 17)

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream of Stature

“Now Nebuchadnezzar had a dream he did not remember. So, he called his wise men to tell him what his dream was and interpret it. The astrologers answered the king, "There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men." This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. The decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death. But Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him. The following day Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

The dream

“The king asked Daniel ‘Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?’ Daniel replied, ‘No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.’ ‘You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue — an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were watching, a rock was cut out,

but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.”

The interpretation

“You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold. After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron — for iron breaks and smashes everything — and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.” (Daniel 2)

Thus, the gold head represented Babylonian empire, silver chest represented the empire of the Meds and Persians, bronze belly stood for mighty Greek nation and legs and feet of iron and clay represented the Roman Empire. The Rock not made with human hands would be the Messiah, the Son of God and His Kingdom on earth, His Church.

Image of Gold

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. He stated Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace. However, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused. Nebuchadnezzar was furious with rage but gave them another opportunity to worship the golden image. They refused again stating, “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king.” He was more furious, his attitude toward them changed and he ordered them to be cast into the fire. Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, “Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire? I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.” Nebuchadnezzar shouted “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most-High God, come out! Come here!” They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants!” (Daniel 3)

Dream of the Tree

“I had a dream that made me afraid. These are the visions I saw while lying in my bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. Before me was a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal. Daniel was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So, the king said, ‘Belteshazzar (also known as Daniel), do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.’

Interpretation

“O king, you are that tree! This is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most-High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes. The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.” He did not humble himself or renounce his sins.

Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.”

“At the end of that time (seven years) I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most- High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.” (Daniel 4)

Human Hand Writing on the Wall

“Belchazzar now the king gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. They brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way. The king called out for the enchanters, astrologers and diviners to be brought and said to these wise men of Babylon. They could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. So, King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more-pale. His nobles were baffled. Daniel was brought before the king, and the king I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. O king, the Most-High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. Because of the high position he gave him, all the peoples and nations and men of every language dreaded and feared him. But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like cattle; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most-High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes. But you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. You did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. Therefore, he sent the hand that wrote the inscription a) God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end b) You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting and c) Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom.” (Daniel 5)

Daniel Cast into a Den of Lions

“Darius to appointed 120 satraps (provincial governors) to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. The other satraps requested the king to issue an edict that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den. The king issued the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered — in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians.

When Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. The satraps said to the king, ‘Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day.’ When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, ‘Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?’ Daniel answered, ‘O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king.’” (Chapter 6)

Daniel's Dream of Four Beast

“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea. ‘The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it. And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, Get up and eat your fill of flesh!’ ‘After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back, it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule. After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast — terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. Then there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.”

“As I looked, ‘thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days (the Eternal God) took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. There before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

Interpretation

“The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. But the saints of the Most-High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever — yes, for ever and ever. ‘Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws — the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell — the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most-High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most-High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.”

“But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most-High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.” (Daniel 7)

Daniel's Vision of a Ram

“I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great. As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. He came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great rage. I saw him attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering his two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against him; the goat knocked him to the ground and trampled on him, and none could rescue the ram from his power. The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven. Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. Because of rebellion, the host (of the saints) and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. ‘How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled — the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?’ He said to me, ‘It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be re-consecrated.’ He said: “I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end. The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. A stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power. ‘The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.’” (Daniel 8)

Daniel’s Prayer

“Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. So, I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. The Lord did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him. Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

“While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill—while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, ‘Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness.’”

“From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing (of the temple) he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.” (Daniel 9)

Vision of Man in Linen

“When Cyrus was king, I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. Its message was true and it concerned a great war. ‘Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.’ My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe. Do not be afraid, O man highly esteemed, I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece. Then a mighty king will appear, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases. After he has appeared, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others.” (Daniel 10 & 11)

Comment: Daniel’s dream occurred “in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia (10:1). Or 534 B.C., when he had yet four years to reign, and must have been the first of the three. The two following him would be Cambyses II (530-522 B.C.) and Darius Hystaspes (522-486 B.C.). The fourth would be Xerxes I (486-465 B.C.), the richest and most powerful of the Persian kings -- likely the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther. He invaded Greece, but was defeated at Salamis (480 B.C.). This was by no means the end of the Persian Empire, but put it in decline and Greece in the ascendancy, until finally Persia fell to the Grecian king Alexander the Great in 330 B.C.” The Book of Daniel by Cecil Wright

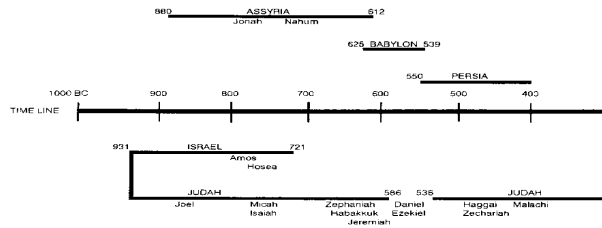
End of Times

“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people — everyone whose name is found written in the book — will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, ‘How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?’ ‘It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.’ I heard, but I did not understand. So, I asked, ‘My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?’ He replied, ‘Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.’” (Daniel 12)

Key Points from Daniel

- Daniel resolved not to defile himself.
- The God of Heaven revealed to the king that there would be four earthly kingdoms, beginning with Babylon. During the fourth kingdom, the God of Heaven will set up His kingdom that will never be destroyed - a spiritual kingdom.
- One cannot always be able to defend or protect himself, but God is able to do so.
- Humble yourself - Renounce your sins by doing what is right.
- If you do not humble yourself or honor God, you will be found wanting and suffer the consequences of your actions.
- You must not yield to man’s laws that violate God or His commands.
- The Son of Man has been given authority, glory, and sovereign power and His kingdom will last forever.
- Our Lord is righteous in everything He does.
- When one of God’s children sets his mind to gain understanding and humbles himself before God, he will be heard.
- Everyone whose name is found written in the book (book of life) will be delivered, including the dead.
- Those not written in the book will be delivered to everlasting shame and contempt.
- Again, when one sets his mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard.

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF THE PROPHETS



HOSEA

Hosea prophesied in Israel (Northern Kingdom) at or about the same time Isaiah prophesied in Judah (Southern Kingdom). They both declared destruction if the people did not cease worshipping idols and return to God.

Hosea use whoredom, prostitute and adultery many times to describe the situation between Israel and God. Whoredom, prostitution, in the physical life is the disregard of morality especially in regard to one's sexual conduct. Whereas in the spiritual life it is the disregard of one's covenant relationship with God by not living righteously. Adultery in the physical sense, is the breaking of one's covenant of marriage; having sexual relations with anyone other than spouse or not fulfilling the marriage covenant. Whereas in the Spiritual sense, it is having any worship relationship with anything other than with God, of which one is idol worship.

"The Lord said to Hosea, 'Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord.' So, he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. And the Lord said to him, 'Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.' ... She conceived again and bore a son. And the Lord said, 'Call his name Lo-Ammi, (meaning not my people) for you are not my people, and I am not your God.'" (Hos 1:2-4; 8-9)

"Say to your brothers and sisters, 'You have received mercy. Plead with your mother (referring to Israel), plead—for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband—that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts; lest I strip her naked.' ... I will punish her for the feast days of the Baals when she burned offerings to them and adorned herself with her ring and jewelry, and went after her lovers and forgot me, declares the Lord." (Hos 2:1-3; 13)

"There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed." (Hos 4:1-2)

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." (Hos 4:6)

"My people inquire of a piece of wood, and their walking staff gives them oracles. For a spirit of whoredom has led them astray, and they have left their God to play the whore. They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains and burn offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, because their shade is good." (Hos 4:12-13)

"Hear this, O priests! Pay attention, O house of Israel! Give ear, O house of the king! For the judgment is for you; ... They have dealt faithlessly with the Lord; for they have borne alien children." (Hos 5:1, 7)

"I will carry off, and no one shall rescue. I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress earnestly seek me." (Hos 5:14-15)

“Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn us, that he may heal us. ... Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away. ... For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” (Hos 6:1; 4, 6)

“Israel has spurned the good; the enemy shall pursue him. They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not. ... With their silver and gold, they made idols for their own destruction. I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence? For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.” (Hos 8:3-5, 7)

“Their heart is false; now they must bear their guilt.” (Hos 10:2)

“They utter mere words; with empty oaths they make covenants.” (Hos 10:4)

“You have plowed iniquity; you have reaped injustice; you have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your own way and in the multitude of your warriors.” (Hos 10:13)

“God once let loose against Ephraim a terrifying sentence against Israel: Caught and convicted in the lewd sex-worship of Baal — they died! And now they're back in the sin business again, manufacturing god-images they can use, Religion customized to taste. Professionals see to it: Anything you want in a god you can get. Can you believe it? They sacrifice live babies to these dead gods — kill living babies and kiss golden calves! And now there's nothing left to these people: hollow men, desiccated women.” (Hos 13:1-3)

“When Ephraim spoke, men trembled; he was exalted in Israel. But he became guilty of Baal worship and died. Now they sin more and more; they make idols for themselves from their silver, cleverly fashioned images, all of them the work of craftsmen. It is said of these people, ‘They offer human sacrifice and kiss the calf-idols.’” (Hos 13:1-2)

“Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.” (Hos 14:9)

Key Points from Hosea

- The Israelites were at one time God’s chosen people. They forsook and abandoned Him, first by ceasing to worship in Jerusalem, then by worshiping the idols of their neighbors. Therefore, they broke the covenant made between them and God, becoming adulterous people.
- God is faithful, loving, merciful and forgiving to any of His covenant people who repent, return begin to live righteously.
- Heart-felt love was and is greater than any ritual worship.

JOEL

Not much is known about Joel. The time he prophesied appears to have been before invasion by Babylon as he mentions “the army of the north”. Hosea appears to have quoted or referred to statements of Joel. So, Joel probably prophesied to Judah and Jerusalem before Hosea and Isaiah.

“Wake up, you drunkards, and weep! Wail, all you drinkers of wine; wail because of the new wine, for it has been snatched from your lips. A nation has invaded my land, powerful and without number; it has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness.” (Joel 1:5-6)

“Put on sackcloth, O priests, and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God; for the grain offerings and drink offerings are withheld from the house of your God. Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your

God, and cry out to the Lord. Alas for that day! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.” (Joel 1:13-15)

“Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming.”

“It is close at hand a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come.” (Joel 2:1-2)

“Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity. Then the Lord will be jealous for his land and take pity on his people.” (Joel 2:13-14; 18)

The Coming Messiah

“I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls.” (Joel 2:28-32)

Key Points from Joel

- The Old Testament children, Israel and Judah, ceased worshiping and serving God. Many of God’s New Testament children also, have from the first century until now, ceased worshiping Him.
- There is hope for salvation since God poured out His Spirit on all people when by obedience, they put their trust in Christ.

AMOS

Amos was not of the school of prophets. He was a shepherd and dresser of sycamore fig trees from the countryside of Judah. He prophesied in the northern Kingdom of Israel where Jeroboam was King.

Amos records that the Lord said for sins of – Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, Israel I will not turn back my wrath. He then names the countries or cities stating I will destroy them and their kings. “Therefore, this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel.” (Amos 1)

The Lord shows his mercy begging Israel to “Seek me and live; do not seek Bethel, do not go to Gilgal, do not journey to Beersheba. For Gilgal will surely go into exile, and Bethel will be reduced to nothing. Seek the Lord and live, or he will sweep through the house of Joseph like a fire; it will devour, and Bethel will have no one to quench it.” (Amos 5:4-6)

“Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is. Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph.” (Amos 5:14-15)

“I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.” (Amos 5:21-22)

“Therefore, your land will be measured and divided up, and you yourself will die in a pagan country. And Israel will certainly go into exile, away from their native land.” (Amos 7:17)

“‘The days are coming,’ declares the Sovereign Lord, ‘when I will send a famine through the land — not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the Lord, but they will not find it.’” (Amos 8:11-12)

“For I will give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground. All the sinners among my people will die by the sword, all those who say, Disaster will not overtake or meet us.” (Amos 9:9-10)

Key Points from Amos

- To be one of God’s servants does not require special training.
- Seek the Lord and live.
- Israel was not prepared to meet their God. Are we?
- God does not accept worship when one’s heart and actions of their daily life are not pleasing to Him.

OBADIAH

The prophet Obadiah, who according to tradition, lived in the Assyrian period. His name means "servant of Yahweh". In 597 BC, Nebuchadnezzar II sacked Jerusalem, carted away the King of Judah, and installed a puppet ruler. The Edomites helped the Babylonians loot the city. Obadiah, prophesied around 580 BC. (ESV Study Bible) The Edomites were descendants of Esau the twin brother of Jacob.

This is what the Sovereign Lord says about Edom —

- I will make you small among the nations; you will be utterly despised. The pride of your heart has deceived you. (Ob. 1:1-2)
- In that day the Lord, will I not destroy the wise men of Edom, men of understanding in the mountains of Esau? (Ob 1:8)
- You will be cut down in the slaughter. Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever. (Ob 1:10)
- The house of Jacob will be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame; the house of Esau will be stubble. (Ob 1:18)
- You will be set it on fire and consume it. There will be no survivors from the house of Esau. (Ob 1:18)

Key Point from Obadiah

- God’s people who do not remain faithfully will also suffer unless they return to Him and live righteously.
- In both the Old and New Covenants those, including His children, who do evil against God’s people will suffer either in this physical world or eternally in the spiritual life or both.

JONAH

“The word of the Lord came to Jonah ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.’ But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish where he found a ship bound for that port. Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. The captain went to him and said, ‘How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish.’”

“The sailors said to each other, ‘Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity’ and the lot fell on Jonah. So, they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?’ Jonah answered, ‘I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land.’ This terrified them and they asked, ‘What have you done?’ (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

“The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So, they asked him, ‘What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?’ Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.” (Jonah 1:1-11, 15-16)

“The Lord provided a great fish to swallow Jonah where he was for three days and three nights. Then he prayed to the Lord his God. He said: In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. I called for help and He listened to my cry. ... When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. ... Salvation comes from the Lord.” (Jonah 1:17- 2:1-2, 7, 9)

Comment: Jesus was in the grave three days and nights. (Matt 12:40)

“Now that the Lord has his attention, He again says ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.’ Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. He proclaimed: in ‘Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.’ The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. The king took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust and issued a proclamation in Nineveh: Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.” (Jonah 3:2-9)

“When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened. But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He prayed to the Lord, ‘O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.’”

Comment: Jonah’s attitude was not of love but hate, probably because they were not Jews.

“Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the Lord God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, ‘It would be better for me to die than to live.’ But God said to Jonah, ‘Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?’ ‘I do,’ he said. ‘I am angry enough to die.’ But the Lord said, ‘You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?’” (Jonah 4:5-11)

Key Points from Jonah

- God said to Jonah and to us go preach against sin and wickedness.
- Jonah refused to go and attempted to hide from God.
- Again, God said go, Job reluctantly went and preached God’s message.
- The people heard God’s message, believed it and repented.
- Jonah was not concerned about physical or spiritual wellbeing of the Ninevites. He did not want them spared.
- God is compassionate and merciful about those who hear, believe and repent.
- God’s message under the covenant given through Moses was to the Jews, now under Christ’s message, salvation is offered to all mankind.
- All God’s servants are to proclaim His message to repent and obey Him before it is too late for them.

MICAH

Micah and Isaiah prophesied about the same time. Isaiah was of royalty and prophesied to kings and nobles whereas Micah was among the people and prophesied to the masses.

“The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah — the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. Hear, O peoples, all of you, listen, O earth and all who are in it, that the Sovereign Lord may witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple. ... All this is because of Jacob's transgression, because of the sins of the house of Israel. What is Jacob's transgression? Is it not Samaria? ‘Therefore, I will make Samaria a heap of rubble. All her idols will be broken to pieces; all her temple gifts will be burned with fire; I will destroy all her images.’” (Mic. 1:1-2, 5-7)

“Hear this, you leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right; who build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness. Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they lean upon the Lord and say, ‘Is not the Lord among us? No disaster will come upon us.’ Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field and Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.” (Mic 3:9-12)

“In that day, declares the Lord, you will go to Babylon; there you will be rescued. There the Lord will redeem you out of the hand of your enemies.” (Mic 4:10)

“For the Lord has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel. ... With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? ... Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Mic 6:2; 6-8)

“I will give you over to ruin and your people to derision; you will bear the scorn of the nations.” (Mic 6:16)

“The godly have been swept from the land; not one upright man remains. All men lie in wait to shed blood; each hunts his brother with a net. Both hands are skilled in doing evil; the ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire — they all conspire together.” (Mic 7:2-3)

In the Last Days (time after the Messiah had come)

“Many nations will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.’ The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Mic 4:2)

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” (Mic 5:2)

Comment: Recall Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Key Point from Micah

- Kings and the people of Israel had turned away from God in their daily living and worship.
- No matter how one tries to worship, either under the old covenant or the one Christ gave, their worship will not be accepted without a heart and mind set on living righteously and doing God's will.

- Since God is righteous, He has always wanted His creation to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly.

NAHUM

Background of Nineveh

“An oracle concerning Nineveh. Because of their wickedness, God sent Jonah to preach to Nineveh saying, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.’” They heard, repented, and were spared. Neither the time of Jonah’s preaching nor the time of the repentant king of Nineveh’s reign, are known. Some believe it was shortly before Isaiah.

Nineveh was the home of King Sennacherib, King of Assyria, during the reign of King Hezekiah and the lifetime of Judean prophet Isaiah.

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. (2 Kings 18:13)

Nahum Oracle

“The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath, but slow to anger and great in power. He will not leave the guilty unpunished. The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.” (Nahum 1:2-3, 7)

“You, O Nineveh, will have no descendants to bear your name. I will destroy the carved images and cast idols that are in the temple of your gods. I will prepare your grave, for you are vile.” (Nahum 1:14)

“All who see you will flee from you and say, ‘Nineveh is in ruins, — who will mourn for her?’ Where can I find anyone to comfort you?” (Nahum 3:7)

“All your fortresses are like fig trees with their first ripe fruit; when they are shaken, the figs fall into the mouth of the eater. Look at your troops — they are all women! The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies.” (Nahum 3:12-13)

“Your shepherds slumber; your nobles lie down to rest. Your people are scattered on the mountains with no one to gather them. Nothing can heal your wound; your injury is fatal.” (Nahum 3:18-19)

“...Everyone who hears the news about you claps his hands at your fall and rejoice...” (Nahum 3:19)

Nineveh appears to have been destroyed over 100 years later. “In 612 BCE the city of Nineveh was sacked and burned by the allied forces of the Persians, Medes, Babylonians.”

Key Points from Nahum

- The Lord is an avenging God.
- The Lord is slow to anger but with great in power.
- He will not leave the guilty unpunished.
- He is a refuge in troublesome times, taking care of those who trust in Him.

HABAKKUK

Habakkuk asked God. How long shall I cry for help? Why do you make me see iniquity? Why must I look at injustice? (Hab. 1:1)

The Lord answered I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people

- they are a feared and dreaded people.
- they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.
- they are never satisfied, gathering unto themselves all the nations and take captive all the peoples.

After Babylon has done the Lord's work, nations and people nearby will taunt Israel saying: (Hab. 2:6-19)

- Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion.
- Woe to him who builds his realm by unjust gain to set his nest on high, to escape the clutches of ruin!
- Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by crime!
- Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors till they are drunk to gaze on their naked bodies.
- Woe to him who says to wood, 'Come to life!' Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up! 'Can it give guidance? "Of what value is an idol, since a man has carved it? Or an image that teaches lies? For he who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak.

But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him." (Hab. 2:20)

Habakkuk prays again; "Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy." (Hab. 3:2)

Key Point from Habakkuk

- The righteous seek justice.
- God uses evil nations to accomplish His purposes.
- People outside God's kingdom recognizes sins of His people and ridicule them.
- God is always merciful even when chastising His people to encourage them to repent and return.

ZEPHANIAH

During the reigns of Manasseh (695 - 642 BC) and Amon (642 - 640 BC) the southern kingdom of Judah sank to astounding moral and spiritual depths. These two kings remained loyal vassals to Assyria, and sought to undo all the good that King Hezekiah had accomplished. However, in the year 640 BC --- at the age of only 24 --- King Amon was assassinated by his servants (II Kings 21:23; II Chron. 33:24), and his 8 year old son, Josiah, was made king (II Kings 21:24 - 22:2; II Chron. 33:25 - 34:2). Josiah was the last good king to reign over Judah. When he died in 609 BC --- at the age of only 39 --- Judah would have only 23 years left before her destruction and Babylonian Captivity (586 BC). (From The Outlined Bible by Steve Flatt which is available on the BibleWay website.)

Judah and outlying nations around Judah were depleted spiritually as evidenced of idol worship. Zephaniah began his prophesying by addressing all these nations, beginning with Judah.

To Judah

"I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all who live in Jerusalem. I will cut off from this place every remnant of Baal, the names of the pagan and the idolatrous priests— those who turn back from following the Lord and neither seek the Lord nor inquire of him. ... I will punish the princes and the king's sons and all those clad in foreign clothes. On that day I will punish all who avoid stepping on the threshold, who fill the temple of their gods with violence and deceit." (Zeph 1:4; 6; 8-9)

“Listen! The cry on the day of the Lord will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the corner towers. I will bring distress on the people and they will walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord.” (Zeph 1:14-17)

To the Philistines

“Woe to you who live by the sea, O Kerethite people; the word of the Lord is against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines. ‘I will destroy you, and none will be left.’ ... It will belong to the remnant of the house of Judah; there they will find pasture.” (Zeph 2:5; 7)

To the Moab

“I have heard the insults of Moab and the taunts of the Ammonites, who insulted my people and made threats against their land. ... surely Moab will become like Sodom, the Ammonites like Gomorrah.” (Zeph 2:8; 9)

To the Cushites

“You too, O Cushites, will be slain by my sword.” (Zeph 2:12)

To the Assyria

“He will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, leaving Nineveh utterly desolate and dry as the desert.” (Zeph 2:13)

To those in Jerusalem

“Woe to the city of oppressors, rebellious and defiled! She obeys no one, she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the Lord, she does not draw near to her God.” (Zeph 3:1-2)

“I said to the city, ‘Surely you will fear me and accept correction!’ Then her dwelling would not be cut off, nor all my punishments come upon her. But they were still eager to act corruptly in all they did.” (Zeph 3:7)

“I will remove from this city those who rejoice in their pride. Never again will you be haughty on my holy hill. But I will leave within you the meek and humble, who trust in the name of the Lord.” (Zeph 3:11-12)

Key Point from Zephaniah

➤ When people cease being faithful to God and His commands, only eternal destruction awaits, unless they become aware of their spiritual condition and repent, return, plead for forgiveness and mercy and begin living righteously.

HAGGAI

The long years of exile have run their course. The edict of Cyrus had released the captives. They were now at liberty to return to their own land. They were urged to do so, to reestablish their national institutions and rebuild the temple, the central fact in their religious life. ... Sixteen years after they were released by Cyrus, Haggai stirred them out of their indifference and the work on the Temple was resumed. (from Dickson Bible)

“These people say, ‘The time has not yet come for the Lord's house to be built.’ But Haggai as directed by the Lord said ‘Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?’ ... Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored, says the Lord.” (Hag 1:2, 3-4; 7-8)

“Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord. ... They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God.” (Hag 1:12; 14)

“‘Be strong, O Zerubbabel,’ declares the Lord. ‘Be strong, O Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the Lord, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the Lord Almighty. ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’” (Hag 2:4-5)

Key Point from Haggai

➤ The Lord is not pleased when His people put themselves first rather than Him.

ZECHARIAH

Zechariah was likely born in Babylon and a priest who returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. He prophesied to those who had returned. Zechariah begins with a reminder of the sins of their forefathers. “The Lord was very angry with your fathers. Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.’ But they did not hear or pay attention to me, declares the Lord.”

“Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? So, they repented and said, As the Lord of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us.” (Zech 1:2-6)

Zechariah Visions

Man riding red horse

“A man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees. These are they whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth. And they answered the angel of the Lord who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, ‘We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.’ ... Therefore, thus says the Lord, ‘I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy; my house shall be built in it, declares the Lord of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.’ Cry out again, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.’” (Zech 1:10-11; 16-17)

Horns and Craftsmen

“These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one raised his head. And these craftsmen have come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it.” (Zech 1:21)

A man with a measuring line to measure Jerusalem

“Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, because of the multitude of people and livestock in it. And I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the Lord, and I will be the glory in her midst.” (Zech 2:4-5)

Satan Rebuked

“Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, ‘Take off his filthy clothes.’ Then he said to Joshua, ‘See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.’” (Zech 3:3-4)

Comment: Filthy garments probably represent people stained with sin and pure vestments are garments without the stains of sins.

Lampstand and Two Olive Trees

“This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.” (Zech 4:6-7)

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you.” (Zech 4:9-10)

Flying Scroll

“This is the curse that is going out over the whole land; for according to what it says on one side, every thief will be banished, and according to what it says on the other, everyone who swears falsely will be banished.” (Zech 5:3)

Four Chariots

“The four chariots are the four spirits of heaven. ... Those going toward the north country have given my Spirit rest in the land of the north.” (Zech 6:1, 8)

“Zechariah was to ask all the people of the land and the priests, ‘When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted? And when you were eating and drinking, were you not just feasting for yourselves?’ ... This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other.’ But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So, the Lord Almighty was very angry.” (Zech 7:5-6; 9-12)

“Do not be afraid. These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,’ declares the Lord. ... Therefore, love truth and peace.” (Zech 8:16-17, 19)

City of Truth

“Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, Let us go at once to entreat the Lord and seek the Lord Almighty.” (Zech 8:20-21)

“In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.” (Zech 8:23)

“Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zech 9:9-11)

Comment: Jesus entered Jerusalem this way “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” (Matt 21:2-3) ... He will proclaim peace to the nations. ... I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. The waterless pit is the grave.

“The people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd. My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the Lord Almighty will care for his flock, the house of Judah, and make them like a proud horse in battle. From Judah will come the cornerstone.” (Zech 10:2-4)

Comment: So, then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone. (Eph 2:19-20)

“I took my staff called Favor and broke it, revoking the covenant I had made with all the nations. It was revoked on that day, and so the afflicted of the flock who were watching me knew it was the word of the Lord. I told them, If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.” So, they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, Throw it to the potter’-the handsome price at which they priced me! So, I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter. Then I broke my second staff called Union, breaking the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. Then the Lord said to me, ‘Take again the equipment of a foolish shepherd. For I am going to raise up a shepherd over the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the

meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hoofs.’ Woe to the worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock!” (Zech 11:10-17)

Comment: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers. I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” (Heb 8:8-12)

“I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced.” (Zech 12:10)

Comment: “One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness.” (John 19:34-35)

On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity” (Zech 13:1)

Key Points from Zechariah

- Time has come for repentance, return to the Lord and to do His work.
- Satan stains with sins. The Lord cleanses.
- **Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another.**
- **Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor.**
- **Do not think evil of each other.**
- **Speak the truth. render true and sound judgment.**
- **Do not plot evil.**
- **Do not swear falsely.**

MALACHI

Malachi has no introductory information about him. It begins with “The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel” and then proceeds to speak against the evil practices of those who had returned from Babylon. (Mal 1:1)

“It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. But you ask, ‘How have we shown contempt for your name? You place defiled food on my altar. But you ask, How have we defiled you? By saying that the Lord’s table is contemptible. When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? ... I will accept no offering from your hands.” (Mal 1: 6-8, 10)

“Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord.”

“This admonition is for you, O priests. If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name, I will send a curse among you.” (Mal 2:1-2)

“My covenant was with him Tribe of Levi, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.” (Mal 2:5-6)

“But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi ... because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law.” (Mal 2:8-9)

“Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god.” (Mal 2:11-12)

Comment: The Law of Moses prohibited marrying pagan idol worshippers “When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than yourselves, and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods.” (Deut. 7:1-4)

Comment: The promise that all nations would be blessed by the promised Messiah, Christ, was given to Abraham thus to the twelve tribes of Israel. Therefore, marrying within the twelve tribes ensured He would be an Israelite from lineage of David.

“As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the Lord cut him off from the tents of Jacob - even though he brings offerings to the Lord Almighty. Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.” (Mal 2:12-14)

“So, I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says the Lord Almighty.” (Mal 3:5)

“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, How do we rob you? In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse — the whole nation of you — because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe (not part or blemished offerings) into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.” (Mal 3:8-10)

“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the Lord Almighty.” (Mal 4:1)

Key Points from Malachi

- Contempt for God is revealed by keeping the best for self.
- Walking with the Lord in uprightness produces a life of peace.
- Forsaking one’s covenant relationship with God, spouse or anyone else is detestable as it is adultery, the breaking of a covenant.
- Arrogant and evildoers will be consumed by fire at the end of time.

Adapted from The Outlined Bible by Steve Flatt

From the time we leave Malachi, approximately 400 years pass before the opening lines of the New Testament. In that time many important historical events and transitions occur. Combined, these conditions constitute the "just the right time" for the coming of Jesus Christ. (cf. Roman 5:6)

I. The Babylonian Empire

During the seventy years of Babylonian captivity, several permanent, significant changes took place in Judaism.

1. The synagogue became the dominant place of worship and instruction.
2. The scribe replaced the priest as the men of greatest spiritual influence. (Bible scholars replaced God's servants.)
3. The exile to Babylon also created the Diaspora, scattered Jew as many of the Jews never returned to Palestine.

II. The Medo-Persian Empire

King Cyrus Persia conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

III. The Greek Empire

- A. While the Greek empire had been predicted by the prophet Daniel (cf. Daniel 2) the time of its domination was not reflected in the scripture.
- B. Greece came to power as Philip of Macedon was successful in unifying the Greek city states under one rule. He reigned from 359 BC to 306 BC.
- C. Alexander the Great succeeded his father in 336 BC and ruled for thirteen years.
 1. Alexander was a military genius.
 2. Tutored by Aristotle he was consumed with the idea of conquering and unifying the world under the Greek culture.
 3. As nation after nation fell, Greek architecture, Greek sports, the Greek language, Greek customs, etc. spread through the Mediterranean world.
 4. Alexander and his troops conquered Palestine in 332 BC.
 - a. The Jews offered no military resistance.
 - b. Like the Persians, the Greeks allowed the Jews religious freedom.
- D. After Alexander's death, the world-wide Greek influence continued, but fighting broke out among his generals, and the empire fragmented into four parts:
 1. Ptolemy controlled Egypt.
 2. Antipater controlled Greece and Macedonia.
 3. Seleucus ruled Babylonia.
 4. Lysimachus ruled Thrace.
- E. Eventually, two powers, Ptolemy and Seleucus, prevailed.

IV. The Post-Greek/Pre-Roman Years

- A. The Ptolemies had political and military control over Palestine from 323BC to 198 BC.
 1. Under their rule, Greek influence continued to grow stronger.
 2. The "Scriptures" were translated about 250 BC. into the Greek - The Septuagint (LXX)
- B. Antiochus III gained control of Palestine in 198 BC. (cf. I Maccabees 1:15)
 1. Thirty years later, his son Antiochus IV Epiphanies was on the throne.
 2. Antiochus Epiphanies tried to conquer the Ptolemies of Egypt but was forced out by upstart Rome.
 3. He retreated through Palestine and vented his anger upon the Jews. (I Maccabees 1:20-53)
 4. He desecrated the temple, stripping it of her treasures. On December 16, 167 BC,
 5. Antiochus Epiphanies even offered a pig on the holy altar. (I Maccabees 1:54-64)
- C. A Jewish priest named Matthias and his five sons led a revolt against the Seleucids in 166 BC.

1. From the hill country, they organized guerilla fighters. (I Maccabees 2:1-70)
2. Matthias died the following year and the leadership of the revolt passed to his son Judas.
3. Judas Maccabeus took control of Jerusalem.
 - a. He constructed a new altar and refurbished the temple.
 - b. He rededicated the temple to the Lord on December 14, 164 BC.
 - c. Hanukkah (Feast of Lights) is the annual Jewish holiday season that celebrates this event.
4. Under Maccabean leadership, Palestine ridded itself of Syrian (i.e. - Seleucid) influence, particularly through a treaty made with Rome in 139 BC.
5. During the Maccabean reign, two groups came to prominence
 - a. The Hasidim became the Pharisees.
 - b. The Hellenists became the Sadducees.

V. The Roman Empire

A. Rome took control of Palestine under Pompey in 63 BC.

B. While Roman power dominated the civilized world throughout the period of time covered by New Testament literature, Rome basically allowed conquered territories to govern themselves.

C. After Pompey's conquest of Palestine, the rule of Palestine was given to Antipater. He was the beginning of the Herodian dynasty

D. After Antipater, Herod the Great, a cruel and ruthless man, reigned the Jews from 37 BC to 4 AD.

E. After Herod's death, Palestine was divided between his sons - Philip, Antipas, and Archileus.

F. Under the Roman empire, several things were in place for the "fullness of time."

1. A common language.
2. General worldwide peace.
3. Widespread poverty among conquered peoples.
4. Slavery was enforced.

thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/Outlined Bible/Out-35Between.html

Some 400 years before Matthew wrote about Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, Zechariah wrote “I took my staff called Favor and broke it, revoking the covenant (covenant God made through Moses) I had made with all the nations. It was revoked on that day, and so the afflicted of the flock who were watching me knew it was the Word of the Lord.” (Zechariah 11:10) “I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication (Christ, the atoning sacrifice). They will look on me, the one they have pierced (a Roman soldier pierced Jesus while on the cross).” (Zechariah 12:10) On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity. (Zechariah 13:1)

Genealogy of Jesus

Therefore, Matthew begins his book about the coming Messiah with “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” A little later in verses 16-17 he states “Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So, all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Jesus was born to Mary in Bethlehem as prophesied in Micah 5:2 – “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.” Because of Herod’s edict an angel instructed Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt. Following Herod’s death, they returned to Nazareth where he lived until he began His ministry. A chart of Jesus’ Genealogy can be found in

<http://www.thebiblewayonline.com/Genealogy/genealogy.htm>.

Message of John the Baptist

“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.”... “All the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ... Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have stopped him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” (Matt 3:1-3; 5-6; 13-15)

Comment: The long-awaited Messiah is here, get ready to hear Him.

Devil’s Temptations of Jesus

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil in three different approaches. These are the same approaches he uses today against those who are in Christ – His Church.

- a) Desire for food - lust of the flesh.
- b) Desire for power - pride of life
- c) Desire for things - lust of the eye.

With each temptation Jesus reply with “It is Written” so the devil left for a more opportune time.

“When he (Jesus) heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: ‘The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.’ ... He then went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. His fame spread and “great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.” (Matt 4:12-15; 23-25)

Comment: The devil will use these three human vulnerable weaknesses to tempt.

Jesus Taught How to Live Pleasing to God

Beatitudes

- The Poor in Spirit – those recognizing their own sinfulness and God’s righteousness. (Matt 5:3)
- Those who Mourn – those unhappy about their spiritual weakness rather than with their physical plight in life. (Matt 5:4)
- The Gentle – those not proud, arrogant or haughty. (Matt 5:5)
- Those who Hunger and Thirst for righteousness, – those constantly seeking to do what is right and pleasing to God. (Matt 5:6)
- The Merciful – those not judgmental or condemning. (Matt 5:7)
- The Pure in Heart –sincere people, free from what is false, free from anything that soils, adulterates, corrupts. (Matt 5:8)
- The Peacemakers – those living at peace with their fellowman and helping others to do the same. (Matt 5:9)
- The Faithful/Righteous – Living true to Christ regardless of persecution, pressure, temptations or desires. (Matt 5:10)

Salt and Light

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.” (Matt 5:13-15)

Comment: When you do good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven it is observed by others.

Fulfill the Law

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 5:17-18)

Comment: Time is near for a change from the covenant God made through Moses to a covenant Christ will make.

Comment: To the Pharisees righteousness as a way of life is something to be seen of men; e.g., look at me how good I am.

Resolve and Reconcile Differences

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry (a desire to kill) with his brother will be liable to judgment. If you have something against your brother be reconciled immediately. Come to terms quickly with your accuser.” (Matt 5:21-22; 24-25)

Comment: “You have heard it said” is probably a rabbinical a teaching.

Comment: It is harmful to harbor ill will or grudges.

Actions Detrimental to Eternal Life

“You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matt 5:27-28)

Comment: One who desires another’s spouse is not true to marriage covenant – an adulterer.

Divorce or Putting Away

“It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.” (Matt 5:31-32)

Comment: Breaking a covenant is a sin.

[thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/Marriage and Divorce.html](http://thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/Marriage%20and%20Divorce.html).

False Swearing and Oaths

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely (commit perjury - Strong's Concordance), but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, do not take an oath at all.” (Matt 5:33)

Comment: “you have heard it” strongly suggest making an oath, calling of God as your witness, was a common practice.
Comment: Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil intent.

Getting Even by Doing Good

“You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' (Getting even) If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.” (Matt 5:38)

Comment: God is love. Christ gave His life. Do good - not evil.

Love and Hate

“You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?” (Matt 5:43-47)

Comment: God loves. The devil hates. It is your choice which to follow.

Seeking Personal Recognition and Attention

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. But when you give to the needy do not seek recognition allow God to receive the glory.” (Matt 6:1-2) “When you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites for they love to be seen by others, pray privately and not for your many words.” (Matt 6:5-6) “When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, to be seen by others. But when you fast do it privately without bringing attention of self.” (Matt 6:16)

Comment: Desire for personal recognition rather than glorifying God is not righteous living.

Treasures in Heaven

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven as your heart is there.” (Matt 6:19-20) “The eye is the lamp of the body. Be careful what it lingers on.” (Matt 6:22) “No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and set your heart on getting rich.” (Matt 6:24)

Comment: – Our actions show the focus of our heart’s desire.

Anxious

“Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all things you are anxious about will be added to you.” (Matt 6:25, 33)

Judging

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment, you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.” (Matt 7:1-2)

Ask For The Will Of God To Be Done

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you (things that conform to the will of God.) ... for your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (Matt 7:7, 11)

Golden Rule

“Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.” (Matt 7:12)

Heaven’s Entry Way

“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” (Matt 7:13-14)

Being Recognized By Your Fruit / Actions

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits (their actions). Recognition requires knowing God's word which requires diligent study, not just listening to others opinions and interpretations.” (Matt 7:15)

I Never Knew You

“Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” (Matt 7:21-23)

Build Your House on the Rock

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock (solid foundation). Those who hear these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand (not solid foundation) and great was the fall of it." The crowds were astonished at his teaching. While continuing His teachings He then began demonstrating His teaching through miraculous healings.” (Matt 7:24-28)

Teachings Demonstrated by Actions

Cleanses a Leper

“When he (Jesus) came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, ‘Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.’ And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, ‘I will; be clean.’ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.’” (Matt 8:1-4)

Calms a Storm

“When he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying, ‘Save us, Lord; we are perishing.’ And he said to them, ‘Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?’ Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, ‘What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?’” (Matt 8:23-26)

Demon-Possessed Healed

“When he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged him, saying, ‘If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs.’ And he said to them, ‘Go.’ So, they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.” (Matt 8:28-34)

Paralytic Healed

“Getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.’ And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, ‘This man is blaspheming.’ But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, ‘Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—he then said to the paralytic—'Rise, pick up your bed and go home.’ And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.” (Matt 9:1-8)

Restored Life

“While he was saying these things to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before him, saying, ‘My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.’ And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples.” (Matt 9:18-19)

Woman Healed

“Behold, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, for she said to herself, ‘If I only touch his garment, I will be made well.’ Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, ‘Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.’ And instantly the woman was made well. And when Jesus came to the ruler’s house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, ‘Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.’ And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. And the report of this went through all that district.” (Matt 9:20-26)

Blind Men Healed

“As Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, ‘Have mercy on us, Son of David.’ When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, ‘Do you believe that I am able to do this?’ They said to him, ‘Yes, Lord.’ Then he touched their eyes, saying, ‘According to your faith be it done to you.’ And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, ‘See that no one knows about it.’ But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.” (Matt 9:27-31)

A Mute Healed

“A demon-oppressed man who was mute was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke. And the crowds marveled, saying, ‘Never was anything like this seen in Israel.’ But the Pharisees said, ‘He casts out demons by the prince of demons.’” (Matt 9:32-34)

Pharisees

“The Pharisees said, ‘It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.’” (Matt 9:34)

Comment: The Pharisees and leaders saw miracles but refused to glorify God even though they were leaders of the “Children of Israel.”

Comment: Jesus’ healings were proof He was more than mortal man. He was God in human body glorifying “The Father.” Some recognized His deity other refused. See Deity of Jesus at thebiblewayonline.com/html/DeityJesusEmptied.html

Parables

“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.” (Matt. 13:3-8)

Explanation:

“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.” (Matt. 13:18-23)

“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds

also appeared. ‘The owner's servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field?’ ‘Where then did the weeds come from?’ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time, I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’” (Matt. 13:24-30)

Explanation

“The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.” (Matt 13:37-43)

“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.” (Matt 13:31-32)

“The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.” (Matt 13:33)

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.” (Matt 13:44)

“The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.” (Matt 13:45-46)

“Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt 13:47-50)

“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.” (Matt 18:12-14)

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ‘The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. ‘His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’”

“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. ‘Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.’ This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.” (Matt 18:21-35)

“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So, they went. ‘He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ ‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. ‘He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first. The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. So, when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. These men who were hired last worked only one hour, they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’ But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So, the last will be first, and the first will be last.” (Matt 20:1-16)

“There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ ‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did what his father wanted?” (Matt 21:28-31)

“Tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.” (Matt 21:31-32)

“There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.’ So, they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants? He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, they replied, and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.” (Matt 21:33-41)

“The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore, I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.” (Matt 21:42-46)

“The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ But they paid no attention and went off — one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ‘Then he said to his servants, the wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find. So, the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless. ‘Then the king

told the attendants, 'Tie his hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are invited, but few are chosen." (Matt 22:2-14)

Entrapment and Hypocrisy

"Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.'" (Matt 22:34-40)

"Then Jesus said "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So, you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ... 'Everything they do is done for men to see.' ... 'you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.'" (Matt 23:1-3; 5; 8-12 ESV)

Woes

"Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.' You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it." (Matt 23:16-22)

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to." (Matt 23:13)

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are." (Matt 23:15)

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices — mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law — justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel." (Matt 23:23-24)

Comment: They focused on the obscure and failed to see the important. Do we?

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean." (Matt 23:25-26)

Comment: People may appear to be righteous but are often evil. It is one's actions not one's appearance.

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside, you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness." (Matt 23:27-28)

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So, you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!" (Matt 23:29-32)

“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore, I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so, upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.” (Matt 24:33-36)

Comment: The prophets, wise men and teachers that Jesus sent were probably the apostles and evangelists.

Comment: The persecution by the Jews began with the stoning death of Stephen.

End of Age is near

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you ... your house is left to you desolate.” (Matt 23:37-39)

Comment: The temple, would be destroyed and the Covenant given through Moses will be fulfilled.

“I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down.” (Matt 24:2)

Comment: This occurred in AD 70 by the Roman siege of Jerusalem with all their precious genealogical records destroyed. Thus, the Jews will never be able to have irrefutable proof to set forth another Messiah of the lineage of David or identify an Old Covenant high priest as Christ now the High Priest.

“For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.” (Matt 24:5-8)

Comment: The birth of a new covenant given by Christ, the Son of God came with much pain by persecution by both the Jews and the Roman Empire.

“You will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.” (Matt 24:9)

Comment: Jews did not accept the miracles and other evidence that Jesus was the Messiah so when New Covenant offering salvation and eternal life was implemented, it was also rejected and the followers of Christ and His New Covenant were persecuted.

“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like those anticipating the arrival of the groom. Some were prepared others were not. The unprepared were not allowed to enter into to the wedding banquet.” (Matt 25:1-13)

Comment: The unprepared, those who reject the Christ and His new covenant, will not be allowed to enter into Heaven.

“Knowing all things Jesus knew the time for His atoning sacrifice was near, He assembled with His disciples to:

- Partake of the Jewish Passover, the reminder of deliverance from slavery by to those who escaped Egypt bondage.
- Implement a memorial of His atoning sacrifice - a reminder of the deliverance from the bondage of sin for those who have chosen to depart from sin and accept His offer of forgiveness and salvation.
- Identify His betrayer Jesus overwhelmed with sorrow, prayed "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup (His crucifixion) be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." (Matt 26:39)

“Judas with a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people arrested Jesus.” (Matt 26:47-48)

Jesus' crucifixion – The Atoning Sacrifice

“Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled.” (Matt 26:57) “They were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death.” (Matt 26:59) “They spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him.” (Matt 26:67) “Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.” (Matt 27:1-2)

“Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ ‘Yes, it is as you say,’ Jesus replied.” (Matt 27:11)

“‘What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?’ Pilate asked. They all answered, ‘Crucify him!’ ‘Why? What crime has he committed?’ asked Pilate.” (Matt 27:22-23)

“Yielding to the riotous crowd Pilate released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.” (Matt 27:26)

“When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.” (Matt 27:35-37)

“Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit (he died). At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.” (Matt 27:50-53)

Comment: The entrance to the Most-Holy place was opened for all.

“Joseph (from Arimathea) took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.” (Matt 27:59-61)

Resurrection

“After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.” (Matt 28:1-4)

“The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen.” (Matt 28:5-6)

“The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing (immersing) them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.’” (Matt 28:16-20)

Key Points from Matthew

- The genealogy of Jesus was very important to the Jews as the Messiah was to be a descendant of David and these records were proof.
- Jesus teachings were validated by His miracles.
- Pride, power and prestige kept many from hearing, understanding and accepting evidence that Jesus was their long looked for Messiah.
- The covenant with Israel through Moses was fulfilled with a New Covenant established by Christ for all mankind, not just Jews.
- Christ willingly gave his earthly life as the only atoning sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.
- Christ’s resurrection from death and the grave is the victory over spiritual death Satan’s hold over man.

Question: Was Jesus of Nazareth, as the Pharisees claim, the son of Joseph, human like everyone else; or both God and man as the voice from heaven said “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased”?

“Isaiah the prophet stated ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’” (from Isaiah 40:3) (Mark 1:2-3)

“John, the Baptist, proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins stating ‘after me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’ ... Jesus came to be baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. A voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son.” (Mark 1:4; 7-11)

Miracles Prove Jesus was the Son of God

“Jesus went into the synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God!’ ‘Be quiet!’ said Jesus sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What is this? A new teaching — and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.’ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.” (Mark 1:21-28)

Comment: Spirit beings, though evil, knew Him. The people were amazed at His teachings but religious leaders refused to acknowledge Him.

“Simon's (Peter) mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. So, he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.” (Mark 1:30-31)

“People brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.” (Mark 1:32-34)

“A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, ‘If you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.” (Mark 1:40-42)

“Jesus again entered Capernaum; So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ‘Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, ‘Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’ ... He said to the paralytic, ‘I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.’ He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!” (Mark 2:1-12)

Comment: The word Jesus taught was the Good News – Forgiveness of sin is near. Therefore, repent and get prepared for the Messiah.

“A ruler of the synagogue named Jairus pleaded earnestly with Jesus to heal his dying daughter. When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, ‘Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.’ But they laughed at him. He took the little girl by the hand and said to her ‘Little girl, I say to you, get up!’ Immediately the girl stood up and walked around. (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished” (Mark 5:22-23; 38-43)

“A large crowd followed Him where ever He went, so he began teaching them many things. Time passed and it grew late in a remote place without any food. Therefore, Jesus told His disciples ‘You give them something to eat.’ The disciples were out of time, little money and did not see that Jesus could take five loaves of bread and two fish and feed five thousand – but He did.” (Mark 6:34-38)

“Again, another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, ‘I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance.’ His disciples answered, ‘But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?’ They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. The people ate and were satisfied.” (Mark 8:1-8)

“They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. Jesus did and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.” (Mark 8:22-26)

Point of the Miracles

Jesus healed many but not all. His healing occurred with many witnesses who were amazed at His power and authority. His feeding the crowd involved thousand not just the few who were healed. They attributed these miracles to God, but their leaders, the Pharisees, scribes and teachers did not. These leaders desired to retain power and control even to the point attributing God’s power to Satan. To the populous it was becoming clear that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. The leaders were comfortable in their traditions and to these elite rabbis, the Messiah could not have come from such a lowly status in life if he was to be their king.

Kingdom of Heaven

“He taught by parables saying ‘A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times.’” (Mark 4:2-8)

Explanation - The farmer sows the word. Some people hear it but Satan comes and quickly takes it away Others at first receive it with joy, but since they have no root, they last only a short time. Still others, hear the word but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. While others hear the word, accept it, and produce— thirty, sixty or even a hundred times more. (from Mark 4:14-20)

“A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain — first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come. It is also like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade.” (Mark 4:26-32)

Comment: The seed is the good news that Jesus’ atoning sacrifice and resurrection will provide - the forgiveness of sins to those who are willing to listen to His message and put their trust in Him by obeying His teachings of being buried into Christ’s death (blood).

“A man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. He had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. When he saw Jesus He shouted at the top of his voice, ‘What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most-High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!’ For Jesus had said to him, ‘Come out of this man, you evil spirit!’ ‘What is your name?’ Legion he replied. they begged Jesus to send them among the herd of pigs. As a result, the pigs rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. The people went out to see what had happened. When they saw the demon possessed man sitting, dressed and in his right mind; they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man — and told about the pigs as well. As Jesus was getting into the boat, the demon-possessed man begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but

said, 'Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.' So, the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed." (Mark 5:2-20)

Point of the Parables about the Kingdom

God taught His people through the Mosaic Covenant, that He would bring complete forgiveness through a New Covenant. This New Covenant would come through His Son, Jesus of Nazareth. It would include the promise of Eternal Life to everyone, including Gentiles, in any nation who put their trust in Him through obedience.

Convincing and Preparing His Disciples

"Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits. They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them." (Mark 6:7; 12-13)

Comment: Not only did Jesus have power to heal, He had the power to give others the power to heal when He was not nearby.

"Jesus told His disciples 'the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.'" (Mark 8:31)

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." (Mark 8:34-38)

Comment: One must cease focusing on the pleasures of life and concentrate on the spiritual.

"I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power." (Mark 9:1)

"After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. A cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus." (Mark 9:2-8)

To settle an argument among His disciples about rank and position Jesus said "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." (Mark 9:35)

Comment: All those in Christ, His Church, are servants.

"Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?' 'What did Moses command you?' he replied. They said, 'Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.' 'It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,' Jesus replied. 'But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So, they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate.' When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. He answered, 'Anyone who divorces (the Greek word *apoluo*) his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.'" (Mark 10:2-12)

Comment: A wife is still married when she is sent or put away without a certificate of divorcement – this is the meaning of the Greek word *apoluo*. If she marries without a certificate, she breaks her marriage covenant with the husband who sent her away as she is sent away not divorced. Therefore, she is an adulteress. With a certificate the wife is no longer married thus free to remarry therefore, not an adulteress as there is no marriage covenant to break. The Pharisees were very familiar with this as recorded in Deuteronomy 24.

thebiblewayonline.com/html/MarriageDivorce.html

“A man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. ‘Good teacher,’ he asked, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ I have kept The Law since I was a boy.’ One thing you lack,’ he said. ‘Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’ At this, the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.” (Mark 10:17-22)

Comment: He relied on his own wealth thus not willing to forgo the pleasures of life rather than God’s wealth.

“James and John sons of Zebedee thinking that Jesus would establish an earthly kingdom asked ‘Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.’ Jesus replied that it was not up to Him but if they wanted to be great in the kingdom he said ‘You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’” (Mark 10:37-45)

“As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. Then Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted Hosanna!’ ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!’ ‘Hosanna in the highest!’” (Mark 11:1-10)

“As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!’ ‘Do you see all these great buildings?’ replied Jesus. ‘Not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down.’ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, ‘Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?’ ‘Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, I am he, and will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.” (Mark 13:1-9) “But when will they happen? ‘When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ standing where it does not belong — let the reader understand — then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.’” (Mark 13:14-15)

Comment: There is much speculation on what the abomination was. But whatever it was the Jews knew that it was not supposed to be there, it was offensive to them and against their worship. Then the disciples would know that it was time to depart from Jerusalem as the Temple was about to be destroyed. (See Daniel 9:27)

“But in those days, following that distress, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens. Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. “Therefore, keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back — whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’” (Mark 13:24-37)

Comment: Those present were told that some would see the destruction of their revered Temple but the news Jesus brought was the promised Good News, the forgiveness of sin and salvation by His atoning sacrifice. It would stand

forever. But the time is coming when the Son of Man will return and gather those who chose salvation by trust and obedience to His Word.

Comment: Jesus had selected men to proclaim the Good News that salvation and forgiveness of sin not available under the Old Covenant but would be made available in the New Covenant following His atoning sacrifice. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah who was to establish an earthly kingdom as their beloved King David had done. Following Christ's resurrection, appearances and His ascension back to Heaven, which they personally witnessed, they were finally willing to give their lives for Him when and if it became necessary. Their testimony and righteous lives make it possible for all who were not witnesses to believe, trust and obey.

The Plotting Pharisees

“Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. The Pharisees asked of themselves will He heal on the Sabbath? So, Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, ‘Stand up in front of everyone.’ Then Jesus asked them, ‘Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?’ But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.” (Mark 3:1-6)

“Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered to hear him teach or perform a miracle. The teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, ‘He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.’ Jesus asked ‘How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.’” (Mark 3:20-29)

Comment: Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit appears to be attributing the Holy Spirit's work and power to Satan.

“The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were ‘unclean,’ that is, unwashed. (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. They asked ‘Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?’ He replied, ‘Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.’ And he said to them: ‘You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!’ Jesus explains ‘Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him unclean.’” (Mark 7:1-14)

“Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. He sighed deeply and said, ‘Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it.’” (Mark 8:11-12)

Comment: The Pharisees came because they were aware of His many miracles. Raising the dead, feeding thousands with so little food and healing hundreds in many areas of Judea was not enough. They wanted a miracle from God in Heaven not from someone on earth since they did not recognize Jesus as God.

“On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, ‘Is it not written: My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.’ The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.’” (Mark 11:15-18)

“They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. ‘By what authority are you doing these things?’ they asked. ‘And who gave you authority to do this?’ Jesus replied, ‘I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism — was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!’ They discussed it among themselves and said, ‘If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn't you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men’ ... ‘(They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.) So, they answered Jesus, ‘We don't know.’ Jesus said, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.’” (Mark 11:27-33)

“A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed. ‘He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But the tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ So, they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.’ ‘What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. Haven't you read this scripture: The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’ Then they looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them.” (Mark 12:1-12)

“Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. They came to him and said, ‘Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?’ But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. ‘Why are you trying to trap me?’ he asked. ‘Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.’ They brought the coin, and he asked them, ‘Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?’ ‘Caesar's,’ they replied. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.’” (Mark 12:13-17)

“Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?’ Jesus replied, ‘Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. Now about the dead rising — have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!’” (Mark 12:18-27)

Comment: Marriage is an earthly union, covenant, between man and woman which ends at death.

“One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, ‘Of all the commandments, which is the most important?’ ‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.’ ‘Well said, teacher,’ the man replied. ‘You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.’ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.” (Mark 12:28-34)

Comment: The desire for preeminence and power creates an attitude of self-importance and arrogance. This attitude does not produce truth, rather, it prevents one from humbling himself to become an obedient servant. Every evidence presented and rejected hardens one's heart just as happened with Pharaoh when he faced the plagues.

The Atoning Sacrifice

“On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, ‘Take; this is my body.’ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.’ (Mark 14:12-31)

Comment: “Blessing” is from the Greek word *eulogeésas* meaning to praise, celebrate with praises. “My body” is God in human flesh to be the atoning sacrifice.

“They went out to the Mount of Olives where Jesus said, ‘You will all fall away, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.’ Peter said to him, ‘Even though they all fall away, I will not.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.’ But he said emphatically ‘even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.’ (Mark 14:27-31) A short time later one of the servant girls of the high priest came, and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, ‘You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.’ But he denied it, saying, ‘I neither know nor understand what you mean.’ Again, Peter denied knowing Jesus. The third time he even called down curses on himself and he swore to them, ‘I don't know this man you're talking about.’ Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: ‘Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.’ And he broke down and wept.” (Mark 14:66-72)

“Then they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled saying ‘My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.’ Going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’ Now the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.” (Mark 14:32-42)

Comment: The cup Jesus desired to be removed was not a vessel or its contents but His pending crucifixion, the cup of suffering, His atoning sacrifice to bring forgiveness of sins, salvation and eternal life to those putting their trust in Him through obedience.

“Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.’ So, Judas went up to him at once and said, ‘Rabbi!’ And he kissed him. The guards laid hands on him, seized him and led Jesus to the high priest. All the chief priests and the elders and the scribes had come together seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. Therefore, the high priest asked him, ‘Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’ Jesus said, ‘I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.’ ‘What further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?’ They all condemned him as deserving death.” (Mark 14:44-64)

“As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole Council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered it is as you say. Pilate not finding Jesus guilty of death and perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up asked. What shall I do with the King of the Jews? They cried out again, ‘Crucify him.’ And Pilate said to them, ‘Why, what evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Crucify him.’ So, Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.” (Mark 15:1-15)

“The soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. They clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. And they began to salute him, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ They were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling

down in homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. They led him out to Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull) to crucify him and placed on the cross the charge against Him 'The King of the Jews.'" (Mark 15:16-26)

"Those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!' Also, the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.'" (Mark 15:29-32)

"Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. Ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb." (Mark 15:43-47)

Comment: Before the Sabbath began Joseph of Arimathea requested the dead body of Jesus for burial. Roman Soldiers confirmed to Pilate that Jesus was dead. Joseph buried the body of Jesus and rolled a stone over the entrance of the tomb. Guards were posted the next day.

"When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, 'Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?' But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. 'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" (Mark 16:1-7)

Point of the Atoning Sacrifice

The Old Covenant God gave through Moses was to prepare the people for forgiveness. Every year the Jews brought to the priest an animal without blemish as their sacrifice for their sins. In the New Covenant Jesus, a sacrifice without the blemishes of sin, provided an opportunity for the forgiveness of sin and eternal life to all who heard Christ teachings, put their trust in Him by obeying His teachings and live righteously. Refer to a Roman Crucifixion, thebiblewayonline.com.

Key Points from Mark

- Jesus's miracles proved that He was Deity, the Son of God as He claimed to be.
- God's message of Salvation is Christ – His death, burial, resurrection and ascension - the atoning sacrifice.
- People so steeped in their tradition find it difficult if not impossible to accept Christ.
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Question: What is the purpose of the atoning sacrifice?

LUKE

Paul was chosen by Christ to be His as the apostle to the Gentiles. Luke was not a Jew but a gentile and a physician who accompanied Paul on most of his evangelistic travels. In Colossians 4:14, Paul reveals how much he appreciated Luke with these words: Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. Luke stated in the beginning "just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account. (Luke 1:2-3) Luke continues his narrative of the "things that happened among us" (1:1) with the book of Acts, also known as Acts of the Apostles.

Birth of John - Christ's Forerunner

“Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And his wife Elizabeth, from the daughters of Aaron were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child. ... the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ... He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.’ Because you did not believe ‘you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place.’ Those present at his circumcision attempted to name him Zechariah but Elizabeth so NO his name is John. Therefore, they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, ‘His name is John.’ And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbors.” (from Luke 1:5-7; 13; 15-17; 20; 62-65)

Birth of Jesus

“Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!’ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most-High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most-High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ... Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.’” (Luke 1:26-33;36; 38)

“A decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. So, Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:1; 4-7)

“Now an angel of the Lord appeared to nearby shepherds, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. The angel said to them, ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all (note all includes gentiles) the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.’” (Luke 2:8-12)

“The shepherds said, ‘Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.’ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.” (Luke 2:15-19)

“When the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ... to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation (comforting of Israel- the Messiah) of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, - ‘Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.’” (Luke 2:22-32)

“When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.” (Luke 2:39-40)

“Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. His mother said to him, ‘Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.’ And he said to them, ‘Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?’” (Luke 2:41-42; 46-49)

“The word of God came to John (the Baptist) the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ (Isaiah 40:3) He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.” (Luke 3:2-6)

Comment: One must change, repent, from a sinful life to living a righteous life in order to produce good fruit pleasing to God.

“While proclaiming the good news the people were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, ‘I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.’” (Luke 3:15-19)

“Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.’ Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age.” (Luke 3:21-23)

Jesus Begins His Ministry

“Full of the Holy Spirit Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.” (Luke 4:1-2; 13)

“Jesus goes back home to Nazareth in Galilee and as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.’ He rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down and said ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ All spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words. Because they had known him from His youth said “Is not this Joseph's son?” Jesus replied ‘Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.’ ... they rose up and drove him out of the town to throw him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, he went away.” (Luke 4:16-30)

Jesus came to Capernaum performing many miracles of healing: a) Peter's mother-in-law; b) a leper; c) a paralytic d) driving out an evil spirit; and e) all brought to Him. “The scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, ‘Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?’ Jesus answered with ‘which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? Therefore, He said get up, pick up your bed and go home. Now you know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’” (Luke 4:31- 5:26)

“One day Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from Judea, Jerusalem, Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases, those troubled by evil spirits.

Looking at his disciples, he said:

- a) Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
- b) Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.
- c) Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.
- d) Blessed are you when men hate you, exclude you, insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.
- e) Rejoice because great is your reward in heaven.”
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”But, woe to you who:

- a) Are rich, for you have already received your comfort.
- b) Are well fed now, for you will go hungry.
- c) Laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.
- d) Men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.”

“But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” (Luke 6:1-13; 17-29)

“Jesus continued how one should love, give, judge and forgive – the very nature of God. He continued by stating that people can tell if one is living according to God’s nature by your action ‘the good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.’” (Luke 6:45)

“This depends on the foundations upon which their life has been built. The centurion’s foundation was very solid for he said ‘I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed.’” (Luke 7:7)

“John the Baptist sent one of his disciples to ask Jesus ‘are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’ Rather than replying with YES Jesus said look at what I do and what I teach. After they left, He said to the crowd ‘I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.’ All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.” (Luke 7:28-30)

“Jesus began traveling from town to town proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of heaven. A large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: A farmer sowed his seed some fell on a) path, b) rocks, c) thorns and d) fertile soil which yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown. His disciples did not understand so he explained: a) some people only hear words spoken, b) some hear and believe for a while, c) some accept what they heard but chose riches and pleasure and d) some “with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.” (Luke 8:1-15)

“He continued traveling from town to town performing miracles of calming the storm, healing a demon- possessed man, raising the dead and feeding thousands. His disciples saw all these miracles but needed more training to increase their faith. Therefore, Jesus sent them put two by two giving His power to heal.” (Luke 8:16-9:17)

“Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, ‘Who do the crowds say I am?’ They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.’ ‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Peter answered, ‘The Christ of God.’

Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." Then he said to them all: 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.'" (Luke 9:18-27)

"About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters — one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.) While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.' When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen." (Luke 9:28-36)

"As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, 'Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?' But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village." (Luke 9:51-56)

"After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' I tell you it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.' The seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.' ... He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." (Luke 10:1-12, 18)

Rejection by Pharisees and Experts in the Law

"On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' 'What is written in the Law?' he replied. 'How do you read it?' He answered: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 'You have answered correctly,' Jesus replied. 'Do this and you will live.' But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' In reply Jesus said: 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra

expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.' Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise.'" (Luke 10:25-37)

"Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. But some of them said, 'By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.' Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven. ... As the crowds increased, Jesus said, 'This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation.'" (Luke 11:14-16; 29-30)

Comment: A miracle by Jesus was not sufficient. Some wanted a miracle direct from Heaven. They refused to accept Jesus' miracles as coming from God.

"When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so, he went in and reclined at the table. But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised. Then the Lord said to him. 'Now then, you Pharisees

- clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? But give what is inside (the dish) to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.
- you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.
- you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.
- you are like unmarked graves which men walk over without knowing it.

You experts in the law

- woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.
- you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them.
- your forefathers killed the prophets, you testify that you approve and you build their tombs.
- this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world.
- Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering."

"When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, waiting to catch him in something he might say." (Luke 11:37-54)

"Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ... Whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven." (Luke 12:1-2; 8-10)

"'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.' And he told them this parable: 'The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' 'But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.' Then Jesus said to his disciples: 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn;

yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?" (Luke 12:15-26)

"Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, 'Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?' He said to them, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.' 'But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.' "Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' 'But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!'" (Luke 13:22-27)

"Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ... Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:25-27; 33)

Comment: Nothing can be put ahead of Christ, not material things of life or even family.

"Jesus said 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So, he divided his property between them. "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So, he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So, he got up and went to his father." But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.' The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So, they began to celebrate. Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So, he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So, his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'" (Luke 15:11-32)

Comment: There are several attitudes presented here:

- a) The youngest son thought only of himself and having a good time. For a period of time his pride prevented repentance thus he wallowed in self-pity performing despicable jobs. Finally, recognizing his situation, he made a change (he repented), humbly returned seeking help without conditions. This must be the attitude of one seeking forgiveness of sins.
- b) The older son was jealous, full of self-pity, unwilling to rejoice with his father over his brothers change in attitude and return willing to become a servant.
- c) As difficult as it was, the father did not force his youngest son to stay, but allowed him to learn to make his own decisions knowing it could bring sorrow.
- d) The father's constant desire for the son's repentance and return is demonstrated by his looking and seeing his son a far off.

e) The father's attitude of forgiveness and rejoicing over the repentance and return of the son is the attitude God demonstrated in the giving Jesus to be the sacrifice for man's sins to all who are willing to be restored to His loving relationship by their repentance and return to Him.

“No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.’ The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, ‘You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.’” (Luke 16:13-15)

“Anyone who divorces (from the Greek word *apoluo*; the ASV and YLT have sends away) his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.” (Luke 16:18)

Comment: Greek word *apoluo* means to send (put) away without a certificate of divorcement, they are still married. Whereas the Greek word *apostasion* is divorce with a certificate of divorcement. They are no longer married. The committing of adultery occurs when a sent away wife without a certificate of divorcement marries thereby committing adultery, since she is still married to the husband who sent her away without a divorce certificate.

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. ‘The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So, he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’ He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’” He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’” (Luke 16:19-31)

Comment: It would appear the man of plenty was aware of the destitute man at the entrance to his property, not some unknown stranger he knew nothing about claiming to be in need. While focusing on his easy life, he was unable to recognize and have compassion of the plight of the misfortune of one at his doorstep.

“Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. So, watch yourselves.” (Luke 17:1-3)

“If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.” (Luke 17:3-4)

“Having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.’” (Luke 17:20-21)

Comment: The leaders and all the people were looking for an earthly kingdom like David's. The kingdom to come is not a government and rulers but attitudes and lifestyles in God's nature – love, peace, mercy, truth, faithfulness – things within the heart of man, not self-righteousness. What a shock to the Jews looking for an earthly power.

Comment: The Kingdom of God is not a church building (sanctuary) or some religious organization but an organism, a functioning body of people.

“To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed

about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 'But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 'I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'" (Luke 18:9-14)

Someone asked Jesus what must I do to inherit eternal life, I have kept the law since my youth? Jesus replied by keeping the law you cannot earn eternal life you must put your trust in God becoming like Him, not relying on your wealth. (From Luke 18:18-22)

"Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, 'We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.'" (Luke 18:31-33)

"On their way to Jerusalem. ... he sent two of his disciples to 'Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.' Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' They replied, 'The Lord needs it.' They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!' 'I tell you,' he replied, 'if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.'" (Luke 19:34-40)

"As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you." (Luke 19:41-44)

"Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. 'It is written,' he said to them, 'My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.' Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words." (Luke 19:28-45)

"Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, 'As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.' 'Teacher,' they asked, 'when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?' ... 'When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written.' ... 'this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.'" (Luke 21:5-7; 20; 32-35)

"The Passover, was approaching, the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered Judas. He went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus." (Luke 22:1-4)

Time for the Atoning Sacrifice

"Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.' 'Where do you want us to prepare for it?' they asked. He

replied, 'As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there.' They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So, they prepared the Passover. When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.'" After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him.'" (Luke 22:7-23)

"Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, 'Pray that you will not fall into temptation.' He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.' An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." (Luke 22:39-44)

"While Jesus was still talking to His disciples a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, Jesus asked him, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?' ... seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. ... The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. They blindfolded him and demanded, 'Prophesy! Who hit you?' And they said many other insulting things to him. At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. 'If you are the Christ,' they said, 'tell us.' Jesus answered, 'If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.' They all asked, 'Are you then the Son of God?' He replied, 'You are right in saying I am.' Then they said, 'Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.' Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, 'We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king.' So, Pilate asked Jesus, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' 'Yes, it is as you say,' Jesus replied. Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I find no basis for a charge against this man.'" (Luke 22:47-48; 54, 63; 23:1-4)

"After Pilate sent Jesus to Herod who returned Him to Pilate without judgment. Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, and said to them, 'You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.' With one voice they cried out, 'Away with this man! Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!' For the third time he spoke to them: 'Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore, I will have him punished and then release him.' But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. Pilate decided to grant their demand." (Luke 23:13-25)

"When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals — one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.' The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.' There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." (Luke 23:33-38)

"It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my

spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." (Luke 23:44-47)

"Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin." (Luke 23:50-54)

"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

- a) The stone had been rolled away from the tomb.
- b) The body of Jesus was not found.
- c) Two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them said 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' Then they remembered his words." (Luke 24:1-8)

"Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. ... Jesus beginning with Moses and all the Prophets explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.' So, he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ... they got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together. ... While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, 'Do you have anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.' Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.' When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God." (Luke 24:13-16; 27-31; 33-34; 36-53)

Key Points from Luke

- God came to earth by action of the Holy Spirit as the person Jesus of Nazareth.
- Jesus lived a sinless life even when tempted by Satan.
- He performed acts only God could do; e.g., raise someone from the dead.
- Offered his sinless human body of flesh to God, The Father, as the only sacrifice to atone for sin.
- Following His death and burial he was raised to life and seen over a 40-day period by many.
- Jesus ascension back to Heaven was witnessed by many.

Question - What is the significance of Christ's Resurrection?

The Beginning of all things was the Word

- The Word was With God.
- The Word was God.
- The Word made all things.
- The Word was Life which was the light of men.
- The Word was in the world but not recognized by man.
- The Word gives the right to be spiritual children of God.
- The Word became flesh living among men.

Testimony of John The Baptist

- The one, Jesus, coming after me is far greater than I.
- This Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away sins of world.
- I saw the Spirit descend on Jesus.

Jesus Begins His Ministry

Some of John's disciples left him to follow Jesus believing He was the Messiah.

“Nicodemus a member of the ruling council came to Jesus at night (probably not wanting to be seen) and said Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. ‘For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.’ In reply Jesus declared, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.’ ‘How can a man be born when he is old?’ Nicodemus asked. Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ‘How can this be?’ Nicodemus asked. Jesus said I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?”

“No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven — the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. Which is the reason God gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:2-15)

Comment: “For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.” What a profound statement that Nicodemus's fellow council members either could not see or refused to recognize.

Comment: The kingdom of God cannot be entered by any earthly means, ancestry, power, position or money since it is spiritual and requires a spiritual birth through accepting Jesus as God and through obedience to His message of forgiveness and reconciliation.

“Jesus left Judea and departed again for Galilee passing through a town of Samaria called Sychar, Jacob's well was there; so, Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. ... There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?’ (Jews did not deal with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The

woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.' Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he (the Messiah)." (John 4:3-26)

"The woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?' They went out of the town and were coming to him. Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me all that I ever did.' So, when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.'" (John 4:28-30; 39-42)

"Jesus left Samaria and went again to Galilee where He healed a royal official's son by not being in the official's son's presence but only speaking his healing. The official believed his son was healed and left." (John 4:52)

"Jesus went to Jerusalem where he healed an invalid who sat at the Sheep gate pool. The Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I am working.' This infuriated them even more because He was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God (Jesus had just done the human impossible). Jesus responded with 'Whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.'" (John 5:1-24)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:25-29)

Comment: The spiritually dead are unable to hear Christ message. They did not want to hear anything different than their traditions implemented over many years by their leaders.

"But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (John 5:42-47)

Comment: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him." (Deut. 18:15-16)

"Jesus had gone to the other side of the lake. The crowds went there seeking Him. Jesus said "you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life (words of Christ), which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, 'This

is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.’ So, they said to him, ‘Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ Jesus then said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ They said to him, ‘Sir, give us this bread always.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life (He is the food for eternal life); whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.’” (John 6:26-40)

Comment: Belief requires more than awareness it requires action. For if you truly believe you are about to die physically, you will take some action to prevent your death. The same is true spiritually, for if you truly believe Jesus is God and gives eternal life, you will take whatever action necessary to receive eternal life with Him.

“The Jews grumbled about him, because he said, ‘I am the bread that came down from heaven.’ They said, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” Jesus answered them, ‘Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him (by the message of Jesus). I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.’” (John 6:41-51)

Comment: The living bread is the Son of God, Jesus the Christ, since He is eternal life. His message when obeyed from the heart, not out of duty or some ritual, gives forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

“Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves. How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood (consumes His very being as the everlasting God who is in human form and will become the sacrifice that atones for sin) has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.’ He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. On hearing it, many of his disciples said, ‘This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?’” (John 6:52-60)

Comment: God puts those into Christ Body, His Church, following their repentance, lifestyle change, and burial by immersion – baptism.

“Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, ‘Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before (back to The Father)! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe.’ For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. He went on to say, ‘This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.’” From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.’ (John 6:61-66)

Comment: Jesus’ statement “The words I have spoken to you” give forgiveness and salvation – Eternal Life – through Christ’s atoning sacrifice.

“The Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near; Jesus went but in secret. The crowds were looking for him whispering ‘He is a good man.’ Others replied, ‘No, he deceives the people.’ But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.” (John 7:12-13)

Halfway through the Feast Jesus went up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews were amazed and asked, ‘How did this man get such learning without having studied?’ Jesus replied ‘My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.’ (John 7:14-17)

“‘Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?’ ‘You are demon-possessed,’ the crowd answered. Some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, ‘Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ.’” (John 7:19-26)

“Jesus said, ‘I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.’ Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him?” (John 7:33-35)

Comment: How often had Jesus told them He was from the Father, as evidenced by his miracles? Their traditions that the Christ would be earthly prevented their willingness to believe.

Come to Me I Am The Way

“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.” (John 7:37-39)

“I am the light of the world (God’s message of salvation). Whoever follows me will never walk-in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

“Jesus said to them, ‘I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.’” (John 8:21)

“You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am (the one I claim to be), you will indeed die in your sins.” (John 8:23-24)

Comment: If one does not act upon their belief that Jesus is God, they cannot be forgiven of sins.

“They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. So, Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man (when crucified on the cross), then you will know that I am (the one I claim to be) and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” (John 8:27-30)

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31-32)

Comment: If you do not hold to His teachings, you cease being His disciple as you are not a believing follower.

“Everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father.” (John 8:34-38)

“If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father,

the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.” (John 8:42-47)

“As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva, anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’. He went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, ‘Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?’ Some claimed that he was. Others said, ‘No, he only looks like him.’ But he himself insisted, ‘I am the man.’ ... So, they brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It was a Sabbath day when Jesus healed the blind man. Therefore, the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. The man replied Jesus put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see. Some said this man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath. But others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?’ But others asked, ‘How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?’ Finally, they turned again to the blind man, ‘What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.’ The man replied, ‘He is a prophet.’ The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. ‘Is this your son?’ they asked. ‘Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?’ ‘We know he is our son,’ the parents answered, ‘and we know he was born blind.’ ... For the second time they called the man saying ‘Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.’ He answered, ‘Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.’ ... The man answered, ‘Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.’ ... They answered him, ‘You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?’ And they cast him out.” (John 9:1-34)

Comment: They knew the man was blind – “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” Yet they refused to acknowledge the impossible. Oh, the power of tradition.

“Jesus said he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. Their shepherd goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.” (John 10:1-5)

“I am the door and the Good Shepherd who will lay down his life for the sheep. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10:7-17)

“I have other sheep that are not of this fold (other sheep are followers that are not Jews). I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason, the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” (John 10:16-18)

“It was winter, Jesus was walking in the temple. The Jews gathered around him and said to him, ‘How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do (miracles obvious to the masses that He was from God, but unacceptable to their leaders) in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.” (John 10:22-30)

Raising Lazarus for Dead

It was told to Jesus that Lazarus of Bethany was ill. Jesus said this illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it. A little later He said “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but

I go to awaken him.” The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” (John 11:11-16)

“When Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ... Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?’ She said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.’” (John 11:17, 21-27)

“Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’ ‘Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?’ Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.’ When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out.’ The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, and let him go.’” (John 11:38-44)

“Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council and said, ‘What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.’ ... Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish. From that day on they made plans to put him to death.’” (John 11:45-49, 53)

Time Is Near for The Atoning Sacrifice

“Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, “What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?” Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.” (John 11:55-57)

“Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, Mary anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, ‘Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?’ He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. Jesus said, ‘Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.’” (John 12:1; 4-8)

“Therefore, the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.” (John 12:10-11)

Comment: Murder was forbidden by Law of Moses, which they intended to ignore. Their power, prestige, wealth and honor were more important to them than God’s commandments.

“A large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So, they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, ‘Hosanna! (meaning Save us!) Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!’ And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, ‘Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!’” (from Zachariah 9:9) (John 12:12-15)

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.” (John 12:23-26)

“Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world (Satan) be cast out. When I am lifted up from the earth (being crucified on the cross), I will draw all people to myself.” (John 12:31-32)

“The light (Jesus) is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.” (John 12:35-37)

“Many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.” (John 12:42-43)

“Jesus cried out and said, ‘Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. Whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.’” (John 12:44-50)

Comment: The Message of Jesus, His Word, was and is the Gospel, forgiveness of sins is through Christ. Acceptance through faith, trust and obedience gives eternal life, rejection gives everlasting death. Thereby one’s actions either accept or reject His Word which judges.

“Jesus knew that his hour had come. He began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, ‘Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. A servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’ Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.’” (John 13:1, 5, 12-21)

“I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.” (John 13:33)

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35)

Comment: God is love, so to be like Him one must also love.

“‘Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.’... ‘You know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’ Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.’ Philip said, ‘Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.’ Jesus answered: ‘Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever

you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” (John 13:36; 14:4-14)

The Spirit of Truth

“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” (John 14:15-21)

“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ... I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.” (John 14:25-26, 30-31)

“My Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.” (John 15:1-2, 4)

Comment: Anyone that God has put into Christ’s Church can choose not to remain in Him thereby, invalidating the teaching of “once saved always saved” because if you do not walk in the light then the blood of Christ cannot continue to cleanse on of sins - if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

“When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.” (John 15:26-27)

“Jesus told His disciples ‘a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.’ ... “Now I am going to him who sent me ... but, When the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.” (John 16:2-3, 5, 13-16)

Jesus’ Prayer

“After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: ‘Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.’” (John 17:1-3)

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.” (John 17:13-18)

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message (including Gentiles), that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in

them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (John 17:20-23)

The Tine Has Come

“When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. Judas came guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people. Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. Pilate came out to them and asked, ‘What charges are you bringing against this man?’ ‘Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.’ ‘But we have no right to execute anyone.’” (John 18:1, 3, 12-14, 28-31)

“Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ ‘Is that your own idea,’ Jesus asked, ‘or did others talk to you about me?’ ‘Am I a Jew?’ Pilate replied. ‘It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?’ Jesus said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.’ ‘You are a king, then!’ said Pilate. Jesus answered, ‘You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.’” (John 18:33-37)

“Pilate went out again to the Jews and said, ‘I find no basis for a charge against him. It is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews?’’ They shouted back, ‘No, not him! Give us Barabbas!’” (John 18:38-40)

“Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, ‘Hail, king of the Jews!’ And they struck him in the face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, ‘Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.’ The chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, ‘Crucify! Crucify!’ He must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God. When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. ‘Where do you come from?’ he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. ‘Do you refuse to speak to me?’ Pilate said. ‘Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?’ Jesus answered, ‘You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.’ From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, ‘If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.’” (John 19:1-12)

“Finally, Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified and had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.” (John 19:16, 19)

“Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.” (John 19:38-40)

The Resurrection

“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. She came running to Simon Peter and John and said, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!’” (John 20:1-2)

“Peter and John started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around

Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. They went inside the tomb saw and believed.” (John 20:3-9)

“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ Again, Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’” (John 20:19-23)

“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:30-31)

“Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore by the Sea of Tiberias, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, ‘Friends, haven't you any fish?’ ‘No,’ they answered. He said, ‘Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.’ Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ ... Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish you have just caught.’ ‘Come and have breakfast.’ ... When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’ Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ he said, ‘you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs.’ Again, Jesus said, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me?’ He answered, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Take care of my sheep.’ The third time he said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ He said, ‘Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed my sheep. I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.’ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, ‘Follow me!’” (John 21:4-15)

Key Points from John

- Jesus was and is God.
- Through Jesus all things were created.
- Jesus is the only way to eternal life.
- His miracles were proof Jesus was God in the human body.
- A closed mind steeped in tradition cannot accept what they see or hear.
- Eternal Life is available to all who believe; e.g., put their trust in Christ and act on their knowledge of His commands.
- John was with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry. Therefore, an eye witness of things he wrote.
- Whoever has Jesus obeys commands is the one who loves me.

Question - What is so important about John's statement “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God?”

ACTS

The Church Christ Established

“In the first book, O Theophilus, I (Luke) have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. To them he presented himself alive after his suffering (crucifixion) by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, ‘you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’”

The Ascension of Jesus Back to Heaven

“Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel (Note: the -restore to Israel- they were still thinking about earthly kingdom)?” He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’” (Acts 1:7-11)

Holy Spirit Given

“When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

“Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven (came to Jerusalem because of Pentecost). At this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. They were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? How is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language ... both Jews and proselytes? Cretans and Arabs — we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’ ‘We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.’ All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ But others mocking said, ‘They are filled with new wine (they are drunk).’” (Acts 2:1-13)

“Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, ‘Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day (9 O’clock). This is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”’ (from Joel 2:28-32) (Acts 2:14-21)

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs (miracles) that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up by the hands of lawless men according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed. God raised him up, loosening the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning him – ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore, my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’” (Ps 16:8-11) (Acts 2:23-28)

“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades (the abode of souls of men), nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing (the sound of the rushing wind, speaking and hearing in various languages). For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, -The Lord said to my

Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool. - Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.’ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (the gift - not the pouring out of the Holy Spirit which had just occurred). For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.’ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this crooked generation.’ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:14-41)

Fellowship of the Believers

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common. They were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. The Lord added to their number (the Body of obedient believers God added to the Church Christ established) day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42-47)

Lame Beggar Healed

“Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. A man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, ‘I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!’ Immediately his feet and ankles were made strong, leaping up he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms.”

“While he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico astounded. When Peter saw all the people, he addressed them: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. By faith in His name this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.”

“I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers (Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees). But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. It shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet (the Messiah) shall be destroyed from the people.' All the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.” (Acts 3)

Peter and John Before the Council

“As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead (Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection). They arrested them and put them in custody until the next day. Many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.” (Acts 4:1-4)

“On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, ‘By what power or by what name did you do this?’ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.’” (Acts 4:5-12)

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated (not trained by them in their rabbinical schools), common men, they were astonished. They recognized that they had been with Jesus. But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.’ So, they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.’ And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.” (Acts 4:13-22)

Boldness

“When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, ‘Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’—for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.’ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:23-31)

Fellowship - Everything in Common

“Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.” (Acts 4:32-35)

Many Signs and Wonders Done

“Many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. They were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people

also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.” (Acts 5:12-16)

Apostles Arrested

“The high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ‘Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.’ When they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach. Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council and all the senate of Israel and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, ‘We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside.’ Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to. Someone came and told them, ‘Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.’” (Acts 5:17-25)

“Then the captain with the officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. When they had brought them, they set them before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, ‘We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us. But Peter and the apostles answered, ‘We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.’”

“When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, said to the council, ‘Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. Keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!’ They took his advice and then beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” (Acts 5:26-42)

Stephen Is Seized and Stoned

“Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen rose up and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. Then they secretly instigated men who said, ‘We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.’ They stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and they set up false witnesses who said, ‘This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us.’ And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.” (Acts 6:8-15)

“Stephen ended his speech with ‘You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.’” (Acts 7:51-53)

“When they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, ‘Lord Jesus,

receive my spirit.’ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:54-60)

“On that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.” (Acts 8:1-3) thebiblewayonline.com/html/ChurchChristBuilt.html

Christ Proclaimed in Samaria

“Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. The crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So, there was much joy in that city. There was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. Seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed. Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ Peter said to him, ‘May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.’ Simon answered, ‘Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.’” (Acts 8:4-24)

Ethiopian Eunuch

“An angel of the Lord said to Philip, ‘Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is a desert place. He rose and went. There was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. The Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go over and join this chariot.’ Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ He said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ He invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: ‘Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.’ The eunuch said to Philip, ‘About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?’ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?’ So, he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.” (Acts 8:26-40)

thebiblewayonline.com/html/BaptismIntoChrist.html)

The Conversion of Saul

“Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ And

he said, "Who are you, Lord?" He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So, they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank." (Acts 9:1-9)

"There was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias' 'Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. He has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' So, Ananias departed and entered the house. Laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; and taking food, he was strengthened." (Acts 9:10-19)

"For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.' All who heard him were amazed and said, 'Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? Has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?' But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ. When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket." (Acts 9:20-25)

"When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. They were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. So, he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him. When the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. So, the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. Walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied." (Acts 9:26-31)

Peter Heals Aeneas and Tabitha

"In Lydda a man named Aeneas was paralyzed and bedridden for eight years Peter said to him, 'Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed.' Immediately he rose. All the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord."

"In Joppa a disciple named Tabitha. She became ill and died. The disciples sent two men to Peter urging him, 'Please come to us without delay.' Peter rose and went when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, 'Tabitha, arise.' He gave her his hand and raised her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. It became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. He stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner." (Acts 9:32 -43)

Cornelius

"There was a man named Cornelius a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. About the ninth hour of the day, he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God who said, 'Cornelius.' He stared at him in terror and said, 'What is it, Lord?' And he said to him, 'Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. Send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside." When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he

called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.” (Acts 10:1-8)

Peter's Vision

“The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. There came a voice to him: ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But Peter said, ‘By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.’ The voice came to him again a second time, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.” (Acts 10:9-16)

“While Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. While Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.’ Peter went down to the men and said, ‘I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?’ They said, ‘Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.’ Peter invited them in to be his guests.” (Acts 10:17-23)

“The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.’” (Acts 10:24-43)

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

“While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. The believers from among the circumcised (Jews from Joppa) who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ‘Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’ He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.” (Acts 10:44-48)

Peter Reports to the Church

“The apostles and the brothers heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So, when Peter went up to Jerusalem the Christian Jews criticized him, saying, ‘You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them’ (this was against their traditions). Peter began and explained the vision he received in Joppa and that the Spirit told him to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me. As I began to speak, (to Cornelius) the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?’ When they heard these things, they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, ‘Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.’” (Acts 11:1-18)

The Church in Antioch

“Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. So, Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, (later called Paul) when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.”

“Prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So, the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea”. (Acts 11:18-29)

Persecution Begins

“About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. When he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So, Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.”

“When Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. An angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, ‘Get up quickly.’ And the chains fell off his hands. The angel said to him, ‘Dress yourself and put on your sandals.’ ‘Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.’ He went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. When Peter came to himself, he said, ‘Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.’”

“Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. When he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. When they opened the gate, they saw Peter and were amazed. Motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. He said, ‘Tell these things to James and to the brothers.’ Then he departed and went to another place.” (Acts 12:1-19)

Set Apart to Preach Christ

“Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” (Acts 13:1-3)

The Work of The Body Of Christ

Paphos

“So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Salamis and proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas opposed them, seeking to turn the

proconsul away from the faith. Saul now called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, ‘You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.’ Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. The proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.” (Acts 13:4-12)

Antioch in Pisidia

“Paul and his companions set sail to Antioch in Pisidia. On the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, ‘Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.’ Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. After destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. All this took about 450 years. He then gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul, when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ Of this man’s offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. Before his coming, John (the Baptist) had proclaimed a baptism of repentance (not forgiveness or salvation) to all the people of Israel. When John was finishing his course said behold, after me one (Jesus the Messiah) is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.” (Acts 13:13-25)

“Those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. They nor Pilate found in him no guilt worthy of death asked Pilate to have him executed. When they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. We bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, has been fulfilled as written in the second Psalm, “‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’ In another psalm David said “‘You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’ As you know David died was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. Let it be known through this man (Jesus of Nazareth, Christ) forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.” (Acts 13:26-39)

“Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about: ‘Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.’ As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. After the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas urged them to continue in the grace of God. The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, ‘It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’ When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, many believed and the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution and drove them out of their district. The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 13:40-52)

Iconium

“At Iconium they spoke (proclaimed God’s Word) in the synagogue in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. They remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe to preach the gospel.” (Acts 14:1-7)

Lystra

“At Lystra there was a man crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking. Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, ‘Stand upright on your feet.’ He sprang up and began walking. The crowds saw what Paul had done, lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, ‘The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!’ Barnabas, they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. But Barnabas and Paul tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, ‘Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news (salvation), that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.’ Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them. Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. When the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city.” (Acts 14:8-20)

Derbe, and back to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch

“The next day they went to Derbe. When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. When they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia, Perga and Attalia proclaiming the Christ. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled.”

Circumcision Controversy

“Some men came down from Judea and were teaching, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ After Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, they sent a delegation to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. They were welcomed by the church, apostles and elders then declared all that God had done with them. Some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.’” (Acts 15:1-6)

“The apostles and the elders consider this matter and after much debate, Peter said, ‘Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. Therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.’” (Acts 15:7-11)

“Barnabas and Paul related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, it seemed good to send for them to send Judas, and Silas go to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas with the following letter: “The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the sake of

our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” (Acts 15:12-29)

“At Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. When they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words and then returned to Jerusalem. But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.” (Acts 15:30-35)

Paul Revisits

“After some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.’ Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. So, that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, Paul chose Silas and went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.” (Acts 15:36-41)

“Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy well-spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. Timothy accompanied Paul as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem.” (Acts 16:1-5)

Macedonian

“They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia. When they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ When Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.” (Acts 16:6-10)

Lydia

So, setting sail from Troas, they arrived at Philippi. On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. After she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” (Acts 16:11-15)

The Jailer

“A slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling followed them, crying out, ‘These men are servants of the Most-High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.’ She kept doing this for many days. Paul turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ It came out that very hour. Her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers and said, ‘These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.’ The magistrates tore the garments off them, beat them with rods and threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. Immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, ‘Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.’ The jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you

will be saved, you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. He took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. He rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.'" (Acts 16:16-34)

"The next day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, 'Let those men go.' The jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, 'The magistrates have sent to let you go in peace.' But Paul said, 'They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, thrown us into prison; and now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.' The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. They came and apologized, took them out and asked them to leave the city. They went out of the prison, visited Lydia, encouraged the brethren and departed.'" (Acts 16:35-40)

Thessalonica

"Paul went in to the synagogue and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus, whom I proclaim is the Christ.' Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, 'These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.' The people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. When they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go." (Acts 17:1-9)

Berea

"The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, when they arrived, they went into the Jewish synagogue. These Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there agitating and stirring up the crowds. Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off to Athens." (Acts 17:10-15)

Athens

"Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, he saw that the city was full of idols. He reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers said, 'He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities' because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. They took him to the Areopagus, saying, 'May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?' Paul said: 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you (Paul proclaimed Christ). The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.' Being God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.' Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, 'We will hear you again about this.' So, Paul went out from their midst. Some men joined him and

believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others.” (Acts 17:16-34)

Corinth

“Paul left Athens and went to Corinth and found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He stayed with them for they were tentmakers by trade. He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. When they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." He went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, next door to the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. Many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. The Lord said to Paul, ‘Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.’ He stayed a year and half teaching the Word of God.” (Acts 18:1-18)

Ephesus

“A Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. Being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately. From Ephesus he went to Achaia and greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.” (Acts 18:19-24)

“Paul came to Ephesus and found some disciples. He said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They said, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ So, Paul asked, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ They said, ‘Into John's baptism.’ Paul replied, ‘John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.’ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. There were about twelve men in all. Then Paul entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.” (Acts 19:1-20)

“There arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. A man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, ‘Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth (greed is always a problem). You see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. There is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.’ When they heard this, they were enraged and were crying out, ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’ They continued for about two hours crying out with one voice, ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’ When the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, ‘Men of Ephesus, if Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion.’ He then dismissed the assembly. After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia and came to Troas.” (Acts 19:21-41)

Troas

“On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. A young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. Being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, ‘Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him.’ When Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.” (Acts 20:1-16)

Returning to Jerusalem

“Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. He warned them to pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. Now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:1-38)

“After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and landed at Tyre. Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. They urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. We continued our voyage to Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, ‘The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’ When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, ‘Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.’ When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, ‘The Lord's will be done.’ After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.” (Acts 21:1-16)

“When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: ‘You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law (Christians Jews still holding on to their traditions and the Law of Moses). They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites (traditions) and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.” (Acts 21:17-25)

Beginning of Paul's persecution

“The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them. When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting, ‘Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and

our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place.’ (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.) The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers. The crowd that followed kept shouting, ‘Away with him!’” (Acts 21:26-36)

“As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, ‘May I say something to you?’ ‘Do you speak Greek?’ he replied. ‘Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?’ Paul answered, ‘I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people.’ Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic: ‘Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense.’ When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.” (Acts 21:37-22:2)

“Then Paul said: ‘I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished. About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked.’ ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ I asked. ‘Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’ My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me. A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him. Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. Now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’ When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking. ‘Quick!’ he said to me. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ ‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. When the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’ ‘Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’” (Acts 22:3-21)

Sanhedrin Demand Paul’s Death

“The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, ‘Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!’ (An attitude of hatred leads to a closed mind) As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, ‘Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?’ The commander was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains. In an attempt to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he brought Paul to stand before the chief priests and the Sanhedrin. Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, ‘My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.’ Knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, ‘My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead.’ When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there

is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.) (Truth did not matter but group tradition did.) There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. "We find nothing wrong with this man," they said. "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks." (Acts 22:22; 23:10)

"The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, 'Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.' The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. More than forty men were involved in this plot. They went to the chief priests and elders and said, 'We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here.' But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, 'Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him.' So, he took him to the commander. The centurion said, 'Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you.' The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, 'What is it you want to tell me?' He said: 'The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him. Don't give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request.' The commander dismissed the young man and cautioned him, 'Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me.'" (Acts 23:11-22)

"Then the commander called two of his centurions and ordered them, 'Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix.' He wrote a letter to His Excellency, Governor Felix from Claudius Lysias. So, the soldiers too Paul to Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, he said, 'I will hear your case when your accusers get here.' Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace. Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: 'We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly. We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect and even tried to desecrate the temple; we seized him. By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him.' The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true. When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: 'I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so, I gladly make my defense. You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. They cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me. However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man. After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin— unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'" (Acts 24:11-21)

“Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings stating, ‘when Lysias the commander comes,’ he said, ‘I will decide your case.’ Two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison. Festus convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him. When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove. Paul made his defense: ‘I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar.’ Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, ‘Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?’ Paul answered: ‘I am now standing before Caesar’s court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!’ After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: ‘You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!’ (Acts 24:22-27; 25:12)

Paul Going to Rome

“Agrippa said ‘this man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.’ When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. The next day we landed at Sidon; next at Myra in Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous. Paul warned them, ‘Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.’ But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. When a gentle south wind began to blow, they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the northeaster, swept down from the island. The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so, we gave way to it and were driven along. We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. On the third day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.”

“After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: “Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.’ So, keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.” On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. ‘For the last fourteen days,’ he said, ‘you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food — you haven’t eaten anything. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.’ After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. Altogether there were 276 of us on board. When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea. When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf. The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them

from swimming away and escaping. But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety.”

“Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, ‘This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.’ But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. They honored us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed. After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. We set sail and arrived two days later we reached Puteoli. There we found some brothers who invited us to spend a week with them. So, we came to Rome.”

“The brothers there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged. When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him. Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: ‘My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar — not that I had any charge to bring against my own people. For this reason, I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.’ They replied, ‘We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect.’ They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening, he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: - Go to this people and say, You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.’ For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’ “Therefore, I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Key Points of God’s Message from Acts

- His disciples witnessed Jesus’ death.
- For forty days after His resurrection”, Christ was with His disciples before He returned to God.
- On Pentecost as Jesus had promised, He poured out the Holy Spirit as evidenced by the sound of rushing wind and apostles speaking in language with which they were unfamiliar.
- The Apostles were witnesses of Jesus’ return to heaven and boldly proclaimed forgiveness of sin and salvation to all who obeyed His teachings.
- Unbelieving Jews began persecuting which resulted in Christ’s message of reconciliation being spread outside Jerusalem.
- Salvation and Eternal Life is offered to all mankind – not to Jews only.

Questions

What is the purpose of the Book of Acts?

Did Christ build; a structure (a sanctuary, meeting place), a religious organization or reconstitute a new Jewish Sanhedrin?

ROMANS

Paul

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

“I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you. I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you - but have been prevented from doing so. I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith.” (Romans 1:8-17)

Wickedness

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened”. (Romans 1:18-21)

“Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.” (Romans 1:22-32)

Comment: God does not force His created beings to do his will as He created them with the ability to choose. Therefore, He allowed them to do what they desired to do. Neither did He take action to prevent them from choosing Satan's foolish and rebellious actions.

Judgment

“You who pass judgment on someone else have no excuse, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So, when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's

kindness leads you toward repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will give to each person according to what he has done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism." (Romans 2:1-11)

Comment: Those with stubbornness and unrepentant heart were probably those steeped in tradition.

"All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares." (Romans 2:12-16)

"Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written: 'God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.'" (Romans 2:17-24)

Righteousness

"Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God. What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God." (Romans 2:25-3:2)

"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law. Therefore, no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law." (Romans 3:19-31)

"Abraham believed God, and it (his belief as evidenced by his actions) was credited to him as righteousness." Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. To the man who does not work but

trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven; whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.'" (Rom 4:3-8)

Comment: Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness before God made the covenant with Moses. He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe Jew and Gentile.

The Promise

"Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. He is the father of us all. As it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations (peoples).' He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed — the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead — since he was about a hundred years old — and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why 'it was credited to him as righteousness.' The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness — for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." (Romans 4:16-25)

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." (Romans 5:1-11)

Comment: One is justified through faith. Without any action to confirming one's faith there is no faith. They have only awareness.

Comment: If Christ demonstrated his own love for man by the atoning sacrifice, Man would demonstrate his love for God's forgiveness by his faith action of turning away from sin and being buried into the blood of that sacrifice.

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all men, because all sinned— for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses (death reigned before the Law), even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace (the gift of salvation to all who obey) of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life (eternal life) for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:12-19)

Comment: God's gift of salvation came by grace, Jesus of Nazareth, out of love (a gift from God). Man must decide whether he will accept His gift by obedience or reject it.

Faith, Righteousness and Covenants

"God made a promise to be faithful and righteous to Abraham – 'through you ALL nations will be blessed (your descendant Christ).' Hundreds of years later He made a covenant with the Israelites through Moses which excluded gentiles. The covenant with the Israelites made them aware of sin but not forgiveness only a promise of a redeemer who would. Their annual sacrifices of animals were a reminder of past sins and the promise of future forgiveness. The promise of a redeemer was fulfilled when God sent Jesus to establish a better covenant with all mankind not just the Jews."

"This new lasting covenant was put into effect by the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, His resurrection from the grave - victory over death - Satan's hold over man. This new and better covenant offered forgiveness, redemption and reconciliation to God. Those who chose to accept His gift of salvation will be buried through baptism into Christ's death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, they too will be united with Him to live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been freed from sin."

Comment: This gift of forgiveness, redemption, reconciliation – salvation - can either be accepted or rejected.

Comment: Baptism then is a burial, following the death of the sinful life, into Christ's death and blood – also referred to as immersion.

Comment: If one is not buried into Christ death then they neither will they be united in His resurrection.

"To explain covenants to the Roman Christians Paul gave the marriage covenant as an example. - Do you not know, brothers — for I am speaking to men who know the law (of Moses) — that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man."

Comment: Since adultery is the breaking of a covenant and since death dissolves covenants, a wife whose husband died is no longer married and cannot be an adulteress when she marries again as there is no marriage covenant to break.

Comment: Man enters into a covenant with Christ after his death to a sinful life. But when he worships anything other than God, he becomes an adulterer because he broke his covenant with Christ.

"My brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code." (Romans 7:5-6)

Comment: The atoning sacrifice, death of Christ, fulfilled the old covenant and established a new and better one through Christ.

Comment: The Jews could not become adulterers when they accepted Christ's gift of salvation in the new covenant, since the old covenant was done away with by fulfilment.

"I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:21-25)

“So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. He condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1-4)

“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” (Romans 8:5-11)

Comment: You are controlled by the Spirit when from within your inner being, the heart, you constantly seek and do God's will.

Spirit

“We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans (the inner man's deep feelings of grief, joy, hope or despair) that words cannot express. He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:26-30, 36-39)

Comment: All mankind was created with the ability to choose.

Comment: God foreknew the heart of his creation; that is, how they could react to situations confronting them in life; e.g., quick tempered or laid-back and easy going, my way or no way, kind or self-centered.

Comment: God's desires all mankind to be saved.

Comment: God predestined salvation and called all men unto Him by the gift of Jesus (grace) but only a few have or will accept His call.

“Now Rebekah's children had the same father, Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls — she was told, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ ‘Jacob, I loved, but Esau, I hated’ (love less, disregard, detest (possibly because of attitude). What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion” (based on His knowledge of their heart). Also, the Scripture says to Pharaoh: ‘I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’ God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. One of you will say to me: ‘Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will? But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, Why did you make me like this? Does not the potter (God) have the right to make out of the same lump of clay (mankind) some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use (a flaw in the clay may alter the product intended to have been made)? ... What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not

attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. See, I lay in Zion a stone (Christ) that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” (Romans 9:9-21; 30-33)

Comment: A heart is hardened by constant rejection of opportunities presented by God to do his will. This heart hardening was demonstrated through Pharaoh by the ten choices God presented to him which he rejected.

“I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.” (Romans 10:2-4)

“The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: if you confess with your mouth, -Jesus is Lord,- and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, ‘Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame’ (as they have acted upon their trust, confession and belief) How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in, or how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard. And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? How can they preach unless they are sent?’ (Romans 10:8-15)

Comment: God’s call is His Word, the Gospel - Christ.

Comment: One can mentally accept something; that is, have knowledge of but not be committed to it – not from within their heart.

God’s Mercy

“Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received His gifts, His call and His mercy (His offer of salvation). Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies (how you live your life) as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (the mind must be a part of the spiritual act of worship). Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 11:28-36; 12:1-2)

Servants

“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function. So, in Christ we who are many, form one body and each member belongs to all the others. We have different functions, works, according to the grace given us. If:

- prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith;
- serving, let him serve;
- teaching, let him teach;
- encouraging, let him encourage;
- contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously;
- leadership, let him govern diligently;
- showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.” (Romans 12:3-8)

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do

not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:9-21)

"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law." (Romans 13:1-10)

"The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So, let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God." (Romans 13:11-14; 14:6)

Comment: God's servants are to work, be faithful, submissive, honor others and not judge others.

"None of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat." (Romans 14:7-10)

Judgment

"As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.' So, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore, let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a

man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.” (Romans 14:11-21)

Comment: One’s service to God is to be their actions and speech that results in God being glorifying.

“Whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin. We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy.” (Romans 14:22-15:9)

Comment: Personal opinions and interpretations are not to be forced upon others as a test of fellowship.

Key Points from Romans

- God’s invisible qualities are love, peace, mercy, truth, kind, just, holy and His eternal power are clearly seen.
- In His day of wrath God’s righteous judgment will be revealed at which time he "will give to each person according to what he has done."
- Righteousness comes from God through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. This is often referred to as ‘imputed’ righteousness.
- They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus’ atoning sacrifice, through burial into His blood and continual obedience.
- Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

Question – How does man become righteous?

1 CORINTHIANS

Paul and Sosthenes,

To the church of God in Corinth,

“I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way — in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore, you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.” (1 Cor 1:10)

Quarrels and Division

“I appeal to you, brothers, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, ‘I follow Paul’; another, ‘I follow Apollos’; another, ‘I follow Cephas’; still another, ‘I follow Christ.’” (1 Cor 1:10-12)

Comment: The Corinthian Churches division was not over personal interpretation of scripture but in placing importance on who did the baptizing. To them being united in Christ through His blood sacrifice was not as important as being baptized by someone considered important.

“Christ did not send me (Paul) to baptize, but to preach the gospel, the cross of Christ. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.’ Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.” (1 Cor 1:13-25)

Comment: God calls all men but, those who are seeking eternal life with Him through the gospel of Christ hear His voice.

“Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards (not the elite, wealthy and/or self-reliant); not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.” (1 Cor 1:26-30)

“I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. We speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’ — but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.” (1 Cor 2:1-10)

“The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Cor 2:10-16)

“Brothers you are mere infants in Christ. You are still worldly. There is jealousy and quarreling among you. You are acting like mere men when one says, ‘I follow Paul,’ and another, ‘I follow Apollos,’ are you not mere men? What are Paul and Apollos? Only servants, through whom you came to believe each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So, neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For, we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.” (1 Cor 3:1-9)

Comment: It is the message of forgiveness, reconciliation, redemption and restoration that is important; not those who deliver God's Message.

“I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each servant should be careful how he builds, for no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day

will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.” (1 Cor 3:10-1)

Comment: The question each Christian must answer - If one chooses not to build; will there be a reward?

Servants in God's Temple

“Don't you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple. Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a ‘fool’ ‘The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.’ So then, no more boasting about men! We are servants of Christ entrusted with the secret things of God and those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. God will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. ‘Do not go beyond what is written.’ Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? If you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?” (1 Cor 3:16 -4:7)

Handling Sin and conflict In the Church

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality (fornication) among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife (is living with his father's wife- RSV) and you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting (about this sexual sin) is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast (sin) that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are.” (1 Cor 5:1-8)

Comment: Sexually immoral and adultery are not equivalent terms

sexual immoral, Greek *pornos* - immorality; harlotry, idolatry; unchastity; fornication; any illicit sexual intercourse). adultery, adulterous, Greek *moichos* - breaking of a covenant by intercourse with someone other than their spouse or other means; e.g., not fulfilling marriage covenant responsibilities.

Comment: Sin within the Body of Christ must not be ignored. It must be confronted from a loving heart desiring to bring one back to Christ.

“I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, greedy, swindlers, drunkard or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. Therefore, do not associate or eat with such a so-called brother. You are to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you.” (1 Cor 5:9-13)

Comment: Do not associate with a brother, does not mean no contact with the unrepentant sinning brother. In order to show love for the sinning brother and concern for the sin in their life, one must be able to communicate their love and concern while explaining the nature of their sinful life and how to repent and return to Christ. Any contact that leaves the impression of the approval of the teaching is to be avoided.

“If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead, one brother goes to law against another — and this in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.” (1 Cor 6:1-8)

“Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral (fornication) nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Cor 6:9-11)

Comment: Those practicing, the continued living of a sinful life, will not inherit eternal life. Those forgiven and now living righteously before God are those who will receive eternal life.

“Everything is permissible for me-but not everything is beneficial, I will not be mastered by anything. Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"-but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.” (1 Cor 6:12-17)

“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.” (1 Cor 6:18-20)

Marriage

“God by design in the creation process stated that it was not good for man to be alone and that he needed a suitable companion, his counterpart, his helper, a wife. He united the male and female together by the covenant relationship we call marriage to satisfy their fleshly desires of companionship and sexual passion. Therefore, marriage is honorable and not a sin. ‘Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.’” (Hebrews 13:4-5)

“It is good for a man not to marry (under the stressful persecution situation). But since there is so much immorality (people not able to control their sexual desires), each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other (sexually or in any other way) except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command.” (1 Cor 7:1-6)

Comment: Immorality is from the Greek word *Háptesthai* meaning intercourse (fornication) and cohabit - living together as if married.

Comment: Marriage is the joining together of man and woman into one body as if glued together with all selfishness and self-centeredness gone and with the desire to do what is best physically and spiritually for the spouse.

Unmarried

“Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” (1 Cor 7:1-9)

Comment: The unmarried are those never married, divorced or widowed - any adult without a spouse.

Married

“To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. A husband must not divorce his wife.” (1 Cor 7:10-17)

Comment: One who separates, departs or leaves (the Greek word *chorizo*) her husband or his wife permanently without a divorce is still married.

Comment: The Greek word *afiénai* translated here as divorce is the putting away a wife without a certificate of divorcement, so they are still married.

Spouse not a Christian

“To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. If a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?” (1 Cor 7:12-16)

Comment: Bound is from the Greek word *deoo* - to bind, fasten together; e.g., by a marriage covenant. They are no longer two but one. So, one not bound has been freed or set loose from the marriage covenant.

“Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts. Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you — although if you can gain your freedom, do so. For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.” (1 Cor 7:17-24)

Marital Status

“Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are. Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. (Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. NASU) But, if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.” (1 Cor 7:25-28)

Comment: Virgins are generally considered never married women but could also be never married men.

Comment: Free or loosed (the Greek word *lúsin* - divorced Thayer's); are no longer in a marriage covenant.

“I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs — how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world — how he can please his wife— and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world — how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.” (1 Cor 7:29-35)

“If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin — this man also does the right thing. So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better.” (1 Cor 7:36-38)

Death dissolves covenants

“A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is — and I think that I too have the Spirit of God. (1 Cor 7:39-40)

Idol Sacrifices

Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God. So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food, they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it (their conscience) is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do." (1 Cor 8:1-8)

"Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So, this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall." (1 Cor 8:9-13)

"Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely, I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. Don't we have the right to food and drink? Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely, he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?" (1 Cor 9:1-12)

"But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel." (1 Cor 9:13-14)

"But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me. I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of this boast. Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it." (1 Cor 9:15-18)

Free in Christ

"Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." (1 Cor 9:19-23)

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating

the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” (1 Cor 9:24-27)

“For I do not want you to be ignorant brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did — and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test the Lord, as some of them did — and were killed by snakes. Do not grumble, as some of them did — and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (1 Cor 10:1-13)

Comment: God’s children of the Old Covenant given through Moses who displeased God were not allowed to enter the earthly Promised Land, Canaan. Likewise, God’s children of the covenant of Christ who displease God will not enter the spiritual Promised Land, Heaven.

Honor and Respect

“Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head — it is just as though her head were shaved. If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head. In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice — nor do the churches of God.” (1 Cor 11:3-16)

Comment: Both men and women prayed and prophesied. Their head covering indicated their desire to honor the one responsible for their welfare – referred to as their head.

Comment: A woman with a shaved head indicated she was a prostitute.

Christians Assembling Together

“I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!” (1 Cor 11:18-22)

Comment: It appears the Christians in Corinth agreed to assemble to fellowship by eating together. Instead, the wealthy to their shame, humiliated and ignored the poor brethren (probably many slaves) and ate to their fill leaving little for the poor who returned home hungry – no love and no fellowship. The memorial to Christ perhaps had become a meaningless ritual as their actions did not glorify Christ’s life or His sacrifice.

“The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ After supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new

covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine (consider his past actions, attitude and current thoughts about Christ) himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.” (1 Cor 11:23-32)

“So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.” (1 Cor 11:33-34)

Spiritual Gifts,

“There are different kinds of (varieties) of gifts, service and workings the Spirit gives to each one, just as he determines. To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

- wisdom,
- knowledge
- faith
- healing
- miraculous powers,
- prophecy,
- distinguishing between spirits,
- speaking in different kinds of tongues (languages) and
- interpretation of tongues.” (1 Cor 12:1-11)

In the Body of Christ

“The physical body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So, it is with Christ. For we were all baptized (immersed) by one Spirit into one spiritual body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many and God has arranged the parts in the just as he wanted them to be. Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor and the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.” (1 Cor 12:12-26)

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. In the church (body of Christians) God has appointed:

- apostles
- prophets
- third teachers (evangelists, teaching pastors, other teachers)
- workers of miracles
- having gifts of healing
- able to help others
- gifts of administration
- speaking in different kinds of tongues (languages).

“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.”

“Now I will show you the most excellent way. (1 Cor 12:27-31)

- If I speak in tongues (all kinds of languages) whether of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.
- If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge.
- if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.
- If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing for Love is:
 - patient
 - kind
 - not envious
 - not boastful
 - not proud
 - not rude
 - not self-seeking
 - not easily angered
 - keeps no record of wrongs
 - does not delight in evil

“Rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. Now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (In eternity faith and hope are a present reality, not something in the future.) Therefore, follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.” (1 Cor 13:1-14:5)

“Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in a language you do not understand, what good will I be to you, unless speak your language even if bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? If the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? So, it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. So, it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.” (1 Cor 14:6-12)

“Anyone who speaks in a language not understood by others should pray that he may interpret what he says, otherwise your speech is unfruitful and no one edified. So, in the assembled church five intelligible words to instruct others is better than ten thousand words in a language not known by the hearers.” (1 Cor 14:13-19)

“Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers (who knows the language); prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. So, if the whole church comes is speaking in languages they do not understand and unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged

by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So, he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’” (1 Cor 14:20-25)

“So, when you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening (edifying) of the assembled Body. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two — or at the most three — should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. If a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.” (1 Cor 14:25-33)

Comment: The assemblies of the Body are to be orderly not chaos and confusion - not speakers attempting to talk louder, or over, someone else, as if seeking recognition of their importance or power.

“As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.” (1 Cor 14:33-39)

Comment: “They are not allowed” is not in the Greek text. The women that were to be silent and in submission are the wives of a Christian husband who may have been speaking. By being silent, she shows respect for her husband and can fully discuss the topic at home without embarrassing him. If this were not the case then a woman without a Christian husband would be unable to understand the message since it would be useless to ask her unbelieving or pagan husband.

Preach Christ

“Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel (Christ sin offering, his atoning sacrifice; resurrection, his victory over death; and ascension, his return to God in Heaven.) By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word, I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain (so, if you do not remain faithful you will not be saved.) For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them — yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.” (1 Cor 15:1-11)

“But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.” (1 Cor 15:12-19)

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the first-fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.” (1 Cor 15:20-28)

“Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? As for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? I die every day — I mean that, brothers — just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised.” (1 Cor 15:29-32)

Comment: Perhaps people thought they could change a dead person’s life (repent), confess that Christ was God’s Son, the Messiah, and be baptized for them. In refuting the belief that there is no resurrection, he asked a rhetorical question that if people thought there was no resurrection why would they baptize of those already dead? If this belief were true, then at judgment a relative would have assumed responsibility for another’s actions rather than who had not personally obeyed Christ.

Resurrected Body of the Dead

“But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So, will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The (earthly) body that is sown is perishable, it is raised, imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.” (1 Cor 15:33-44)

“If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So, it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. ... I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor 15:45-57)

Refer to:

thebiblewayonline.com/html/BodySoulSpirit.html

Key Points from 1 Corinthians

- Acts or appearances of superiority among Christians for whatever reason leads to quarrels and division.
- Those aware of sin within the Body must go to the sinning brother express their love, confront the sin and to bring about repentance.
- Marriage is not required but is recommended to prevent sexual immorality due to one’s sexual passions.
- Marriage is a covenant relationship founded on trust.
- Unfaithful sexually or other otherwise breaks the marriage covenant.
- Knowledge puffs up while love builds up. One with greater knowledge or ability must not look down on one with lesser knowledge or ability. Doing so may cause both to lose faith and become unfaithful.
- Faith and hope for an eternal life are present only in this life. While love is present in both the physical and spiritual life - for God is Love.
- The physical body of the living and the bodies of the righteous dead will be changed into an immortality body. The physical body of the rebellious will be changed into an imperishable body.

Question – Was and is the church at Corinthian an example other churches should follow?

2 CORINTHIANS

Paul and Timothy

To the church of God in Corinth

Paul had previously written a painful letter (1 Corinthians) to the Corinthians Christians about his concern of some severe division problems and their pride and lack of love of a member whose sin was not even accepted among the pagan community.

Concern About Painful Letter

“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.” (2 Cor 1:8-11)

“So, (because of my painful letter) I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you. For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved? I wrote so that when I come I should not be distressed by those who ought to make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.” (2 Cor 2:1-4)

“If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent — not to put it too severely. The punishment (not associating with) inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. What I have forgiven — if there was anything to forgive — I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.” (2 Cor 2:5-11)

Preach the Gospel of Christ

“When I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So, I said good-bye to them and went on to Macedonia.” (2 Cor 2:12-13)

“God has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant — not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. If the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. If what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!” (2 Cor 3:6-11)

Comment: The glory of Moses face faded so did the Covenant God gave through him. But, the glory of the New Covenant established by God, the Son, will never fade away.

“Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now

the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." (2 Cor 3:12-18)

"Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." (2 Cor 4:3-6)

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay (bodies of flesh and blood) to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body." (2 Cor 4:7-11)

"It is written: 'I believed; therefore, I have spoken.' With that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away (getting older day by day), yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day (growing in knowledge and faith). For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (2 Cor 4:13-18)

"Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. We are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. I would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So, we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." (2 Cor 5:1-10)

Comment: Since God who has made us for eternal life, are we striving to find and fulfill His purpose in our lives?

"Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ... For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. From now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old (sinful man) has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor 5:11-21)

Comment: The ministry of reconciliation is the ministry of teaching Christ crucified, doing not listening' Yes, Christ's ambassadors are to proclaim His message.

"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great

endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything. We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange — I speak as to my children — open wide your hearts also.” (2 Cor 6:2-13)

Comment: If today is the day of salvation, then tomorrow may be too late for a receptive heart - DO NOT WAIT.

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore, come out from them and be separate, I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’ Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” (2 Cor 6:14-18; 7:1)

Comment: Being yoked is being bound together. So, being yoked with someone will either help or prevent living a righteous life.

Giving

“Brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. So, we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us - see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” (2 Cor 8:1-7)

Comment: Is our giving for the purpose of sharing the gospel or to meet the needs defined in a budget, which may not reflect our understanding of God's will?

“Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: ‘He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little.’” (2 Cor 8:10-15)

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” (2 Cor 9:6-9)

“This service (of giving) that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. In their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” (2 Cor 9:12-15)

Miscellaneous

“By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you — I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" when away! I beg you that when I come, I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. We will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.” (2 Cor 10:1-6)

“I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. 3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." I may not be a trained speaker (like Greek professional speakers, sophists, who charged goodly sums for speaking), but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way. . . . For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.” (2 Cor 11:2-4; 13-15)

Comment: Teaching Christ is providing knowledge of Christ rather than pressuring someone to do something without knowledge. One's action must be from the heart not some pressured or emotional reaction.

“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. I am not in the least inferior to the "super-apostles," even though I am nothing. The things that mark an apostle — signs, wonders and miracles — were done among you with great perseverance. How were you inferior to the other churches, except that I was never a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!” (2 Cor 12:7-13)

“Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. So, I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less? Be that as it may, I have not been a burden to you. . . . For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.” (2 Cor 12:14-16, 20-21)

“Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you.” (2 Cor 13:1-4)

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you — unless, of course, you fail the test? I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. We

are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is for your perfection. This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority — the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.” (2 Cor 13:5-9)

Key Points from 2 Corinthians

- Sin in the Body of Christ must be confronted regardless of how painful
- The return and repentance of a brother into fellowship displays God’s love in you and comforts him.
- The mission of Christ’s Body is to teach the gospel, faithfulness, love and performing works that result in God being glorified.
- When from one’s heart, giving is an expression of love.
- To remain faithful, one must constantly examine and test themselves against Christ’s teachings not others.

Question – What did Paul mean by stating “God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

GALATIANS

Paul, an apostle

To the churches in Galatia:

“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever.’

Turning Back

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 1:6-12)

Comment: Any in the Body of Christ who have deserted Him and His offer of salvation are no longer in a saved situation, but they can repent and return to Him as He always welcomes any who turns to Him. This is the message God gave to the Israelites – repent and return.

Gospel to the Gentiles

“For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles — only James, the Lord's brother.” (Galatians 1:13-19)

Comment: One can proclaim Christ without being a traveling evangelist.

“Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. (This matter arose) because some false brothers had infiltrated

our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.” (Galatians 2:5)

Comment: Who can be “false brothers” except one who was in Christ Body, but now proclaim a teaching contrary to Christ’s good news of salvation even denying Christ as God.

“As for those who seemed to be important — whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance — those men added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.” (Galatians 2:6-10)

“When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?” As recorded in Acts 15. (Galatians 2:11-14)

Comment: Sin must be confronted regardless of how important the sinner appears to be whether a big financial contributor, parent, spouse, child, preacher or pastor.

Justified by Faith or Law

“We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law (performance of ritual acts deemed to be required), but by faith in Jesus Christ. So, we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. "If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! If I rebuild what I destroyed; I prove that I am a lawbreaker. For through the law, I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” (Galatians 2:15-21)

Comment: A Christian can become a sinner. Therefore, he must change (repent) and seek God’s forgiveness.

Comment: When one dies to sin seeking forgiveness, is buried (baptized; that is, immersed) into His death, raised by God and put into Christ Kingdom, he has been crucified with Christ.

“Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort (earn your goal)? Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? Consider Abraham (who lived over 400 years before the Law of Moses): He believed God (and acted on his belief), and it was credited to him as righteousness. Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you. So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” (Galatians 3:2-9)

“All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.” (Galatians 3:10-14)

Comment: One's actions can be out of duty to fulfill a command or out of a heart of love for Christ and His forgiveness.

“Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.” (Galatians 3:15-18)

“What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one. Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So, the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.” (Galatians 3:19-25)

Sons of God

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (through faith not by observing some requirement because it was a command), for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So, you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.” (Galatians 3:26-29; 4-7)

Comment: There is no distinction among people in Christ, the Kingdom of God and Christ. Jesus does not look at nationality, race or wealth. Jesus looks at the heart.

“Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God — or rather are known by God — how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles (So, a Christian can turn back and be lost (enslaved))? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear that somehow, I have wasted my efforts on you. ... Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. ... Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 4:8-11, 21-23, 28-31, 5:1)

Comment: “You are turning back” – no longer in Christ. Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. (Galatians 5:2-6)

Comment: “You have fallen away from grace - fallen away from Christ.” Is this a true or false statement? If false, what can be trusted?

“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.” (Galatians 5:13-15)

“So, I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.” (Galatians 5:16-18)

“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you (Galatian Christians), as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21)

Comment: These acts of sinful nature existed among Christians during Paul’s time and from then up to and including the present day. So, his warning applies to all Christians in all generations.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.” (Galatians 5:22-26)

Restoration

“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load. Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.” (Galatians 6:1-6)

Comment: In the doctrine of “once saved always saved” Paul’s admonition to those “who are spiritual should restore him gently” is a false statement, since restoration is unnecessary as they are always in a saved state and in no need of being restored.

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man (a Galatian Christian sowing seed of sin will reap destruction) reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” (Galatians 6:7-10)

Key points from Galatians

- The covenant through Moses was fulfilled when the covenant of Christ was established.
- You cannot be obligated to competing covenants, one must choose between ritual or faith.
- A Christian who returns to former sinful life will receive the reward of a sinner unless they return, repent and seek forgiveness.

Question

Who were the sons of God through Christ through faith who were turning back to weak and miserable principles and have fallen away from grace?

EPHESIANS

Paul

To the saints who are in Ephesus

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.” (Eph 1:1-4)

Those Put into The Body of Christ – His Church

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” (Ephesians 1:7-9)

“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.” (Eph 1:11-12)

“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Eph 1:13-14)

One in Christ

“You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace (Christ, the gift of God) you have been saved— and raised us up (from our death to sin and burial into Christ’s blood) and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:1-10)

Comment: The good works which God prepared for us to do appear to is to tell others about salvation in Christ and helping those in need.

“Remember that at one time you Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus salvation is near by the blood of Christ and made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two (so neither Jew or Gentile were no longer bound by the Law given to Moses), thereby making peace and reconciling us both to God in one body through the cross. So, then you gentiles are no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure (body of Christians), being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” (Eph 2:11-22)

The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed

“For this reason, the mystery of Christ has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father that he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.” (Eph 3:1-21)

Comment: The mystery of Christ is that salvation is available to all people who put their trust in Christ and obey His message of redemption, the Gospel of Christ.

Body, Soul and Spirit

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it says, "When he ascended on high, he led a host of captives, (The righteous souls who died prior to Christ ascending back to God that were being held captive in the Paradise side of Hades. Hades being the abode of souls of men whether good or evil.) and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)” (Eph 4:1-10) This is discussed in thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/BodySoulSpirit.html

Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and teaching Pastors

“He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers (some translations have He gave some to be apostles, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers), to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Eph 4:1-16)

Comment: The word “some” (Greek *toús*) precedes apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors but not before teachers indicating pastors and teachers were one group. Some translations have teaching pastors. The text then gives their function – equip the saints for their work. Preaching; e.g., pulpit preaching is not mentioned in Bible but the work of preaching the Gospel is included in the work of the evangelists. More on God’s teaching pastors can be found in:

What you were and what you should be

“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do (Gentiles here represent those outside Christ), in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ! — assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with

anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” (Eph 4:17-32)

Walk in Love

Be imitators of God, walk in love - avoid

- sexual immorality (sex with anyone not a spouse, fornication).
- all impurity or covetousness (greed -worship of money or things).
- filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking.
- do not be deceived by empty words.
- do not associate with them; for those who practice have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Instead let there be thanksgiving

- walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true).
- try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.
- take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.

Look carefully then how you live,

- do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery.
- be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting (yielding) to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Eph 5:1-21)

Relationships

“Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. Husbands are responsible for the family as Christ is of the church, his body. So as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Comment: “Submit” does not mean no voice or discussion but don’t disrespect or demand - speak from your heart then yield allowing husband to decide based upon both facts and opinions doing what is best for the physically and especially spiritually family.

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ‘Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh (glued together to make one).”

“Children, obey (listen to, yield to, be obedient) your parents in the Lord. "Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

“Slaves (servants and employees) obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.”

“Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.” (Eph 5:22-6:9)

Arm Yourself Against Evil Spiritual Forces

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to wrestle against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

“Stand firm having fastened on the belt of truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness. Depend on God by taking up the

- a) shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;
- b) helmet of salvation;
- c) sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, with all prayer and supplication.”

Key Points from Ephesians

- The mystery of Christ is the Gospel - salvation to all mankind who believe in Him, put their trust in Him and obey Him.
- God puts all who obey Christ into the Kingdom, the Body of Christ, His Church.
- Those put into Christ’s Church are to grow into the nature of God.
- Relationships depend on the attitude of each having God’s love.
- Surround yourself with God’s armor to defend against Spiritual evils.

Question - What are the benefits of being in Christ?

PHILIPPIANS

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus
To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi

“This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God.”

Comment: Acquiring knowledge of God’s will through studying His word helps one discern what is pure and blameless. Study can be personal or discussion with fellow Christians.

“I want you to know what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. It has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.” (Phil 1:12-14)

“I will in no way be ashamed, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ be the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault.” (Phil 1:20-21; 2:3-5; 14-15)

“Rejoice in the Lord! Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh (Judaizes). For it is we who are the circumcision (sin removed by obedience), we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— though I myself have reasons for such confidence. ... I too am a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; a Pharisee who persecuted the church, faultless (in regard to the Law of

Moses). But whatever being a Jew was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.” (Phil 3:1-9)

Comment: Mutilators of the flesh were probably Jews demanding Gentiles be circumcised according to the Law of Moses to be in fellowship.

“One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 3:13-14)

Comment: Do not live in heights or depths of the past, but live righteously for your future eternal life.

“Take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven.” (Phil 3:17-20)

Comment: The word translated “pattern” is from the Greek word *tupos* meaning the teaching which embodies the sum and substance (Thayer's Greek Lexicon). The “enemies of the cross” appear to be those who ceased living the sum and substance of Christ’s teachings by developing a requirement that certain act or beliefs must be followed to belong in their fellowship.

“I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.” (Phil 4:2-3)

Comment: The specifics of these ladies disagreement is not known. The point is Christians need to work out their differences and not demand that things must be as what I say and do.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.” (Phil 4:5-9)

Key Points from Philippians

- When we allow God to use us to do His will, then God is in control of our lives and we glorify Him.
- Fellowship requires humility rather than focusing on personal opinion or desires.
- Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others, this is love of one another.
- Establishing and requiring personal interpretation of a scripture result in forsaking or drawing away from the cross of Christ.

Question – Why should one seek to acquire more knowledge and depth of insight of God’s will?

COLOSSIANS

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse. We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— the faith and love

that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant.”

Prayer

“We have been asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. We pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience.” (Col 1:9-11)

“He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” (Col 1:13-14; 16-20)

“Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.” (Col 1:21-23)

Comment: If you do not continue in the faith there will not be a reconciliation with God.

Purpose of Letter

“My purpose is that they (all who have not met Paul personally) may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.” (Col 2:2-5; 8)

“In him you were buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” (Col 2:11-15)

“Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow (the Covenant with Israel) of the things that were to come (the New Covenant with all mankind established by Christ); the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.” (Col 2:16-19)

“Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: - "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.” (Col 2:20-23)

“Since you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

- Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
- Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.
- You must rid yourselves of all such things as
 - Anger
 - Rage
 - Malice
 - Slander
 - Filthy language.
 - Lying to each other
- You must put on
 - Compassion
 - Kindness
 - Humility
 - Gentleness
 - patience.
 - Bear with each other
 - Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.
- Over all these virtues put on
 - Love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.
 - Peace of Christ to rule in your hearts
 - Be thankful.
 - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.
 - Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Col 3:1-2; 5-10; 12-17)

Relationships

- Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
- Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.
- Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.
- Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.
- Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.
- Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.
- Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master. (Col 3:18-23; 4:1)

Key Points from Colossians

- Reconciliation with God is negated by not continuing in faith.
- Daily living pleasing to God is continually in faith.

Question - What are the keys to unity in relationships between person to person and man to God?

1 THESSALONIANS

To the church of the Thessalonians

“We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess.1:1-3)

Love and Encouragement Expressed

“You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. You became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.” (1 Thess.1:6-7)

Comment: Suffering for the cause of Christ can either draw one closer to Him or push them away to relieve stress and strain one perceives - it is a choice.

“We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we spoke his gospel to you in spite of strong opposition. The appeal we made did not spring from error or impure motives, nor trickery. On the contrary, we spoke as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We were not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. We never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else.” (1 Thess.2:2-6)

“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember our toil and hardship for we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God. We dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.” (1 Thess.2:8-9)

“You became imitators of God's churches in Judea since you also suffered from your own countrymen.” (1 Thess. 2:14)

“When we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you — but Satan stopped us.” (1 Thess.2:17-19)

“When we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, that no one would be unsettled by these trials. In fact, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. For this reason, I sent Timothy to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless.” (1 Thess.3:1-5)

“Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? Night and day, we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.” (1 Thess.3:6; 9-10)

“May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.” (1 Thess.3:12-13)

“It is God's will that you should be sanctified (cleansed. made Holy-ISBE) that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.” (1 Thess.4:3-8)

“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.” (1 Thess.4:11-12)

The Dead in Christ

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep (die), or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who

have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord (the 2nd Coming), will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air to be with the Lord forever.” (1 Thess.4:13-18)

“You know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ... But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ... Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. Live in peace with each other. Warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thess.5:2-21)

Comment: Warn those who are idle could mean those who are capable of working to supply needs for themselves but are not doing so. It could also mean not doing what God desires for all His servant to do; e.g., proclaim gospel.

“Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.”

For a study on “Where does the Body, Soul and Spirit Go When you die?”
thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/BodySoulSpirit.html

Key Points of 1 Thessalonians

- Love of fellow workers continues to grow even when separated.
- Expressing one's love is of great encouragement.
- When possible relieve another concerns and anxiety.

Question – What should a Christian strive for – their life's ambition?

2 THESSALONIANS

“Paul tells the Thessalonians that he boasts about their perseverance in all the persecutions. All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God. He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well.” (2 Thess.1:4)

Concern about the Second Coming

“This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels (The end of the ages, the 2nd Coming). He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.” (2 Thess.1:5-10)

“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, do not become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you for that day will not come until the rebellion (a falling away, defection, apostasy (Thayer's Greek Lexicon)) occurs and the man of lawlessness (man of utter destruction - Thayer) is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.” (2 Thess.2:1-4)

Comment: A falling away or apostatizing can occur only by those who are in some group. In this case it is a falling away of those in Christ.

“Don't you remember that when I was with you, I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason, God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.” (2 Thess.2:5-12)

Comment: Those who hear the truth have a choice to accept or reject. Christians everywhere need to see that His message is proclaimed.

“But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.” (2 Thess.2:13-15)

“Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.” (2 Thess.3:1-3)

“Keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. Do not be a burden to any of you. We gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle. Some among you are idle, are not busy; but busybodies. Urge them to settle down and earn what they eat.” (2 Thess.3:6-13)

Comment: Capable Christians need to provide for themselves, their family and those in need rather than those who can but will not.

“If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.” (2 Thess.3:13-14)

Key point from 2 Thessalonians

- Do not be misled by teachings of some reported Christian that appear to be true but are contrary to teachings of Christ or His apostles. One must know Christ and His teachings to not be led astray.

Question - What happens to Christians after the die?

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus

To Timothy my true son in the faith:

“I urged you to stay in Ephesus to command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk.” (1 Timothy 1:3-7)

Comment: The “wandered away” were Christians who apparently left Christ and returned to Judaism.

Comment: Genealogy had deep roots in the culture of the Jews. They were looking for the Messiah of the proven lineage of David who would restore Israel as a powerful earthly kingdom as was David’s kingdom. These genealogical records were destroyed by the Roman’s destruction of their Temple and Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Therefore, there is no way to prove that there is another “messiah” of the lineage of David.

Law and Law Breakers

“Law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers — and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God.”

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.” (1 Timothy 1: 17)

Rejecting Christ

“Timothy, my son, fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.” (1 Timothy 1:18-20)

Comment: Those who have shipwrecked their faith are those who after being in Christ’s Kingdom reject Christ as their savior, thus no longer a faithful Christian in Body of Christ.

Actions Pleasing to God

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

“God our Savior, wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.” (1 Timothy 2:3-7)

“I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.”

Comment: “Holy hands” are hands un-stained and undefiled by sin, free from wickedness. (Thayer's Greek Lexicon)

“I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.” (1 Timothy 2:8-10)

Comment: In the Greek/Roman culture a woman's hair was a very erotic area of her body. Being adorned with 'braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire' called attention to her wealth and sensuality and 'not proper for women who profess godliness.' Women’s dressed in first century Rome and Greece is discussed in thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/Women.html#Women'sDress andHeadCovering)

“A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman

who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing — if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.” (1 Timothy 2:11-15)

Comment: A woman’s teaching is not to be a lecture as one having authority but meek, gentle and preferring one another showing her respect to all especially her husband and leaders of the church. She is not to attempt to dominate her husband because of her leading role in yielding to Satan in the Garden.

Congregation Leaders

“If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, (those who watch over, also sentinels, guardians, shepherds, elder) he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.” (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

Comment: Several translate “noble task” as work which appears to be more accurate as the Greek word is *érgou* – meaning an act, deed or function, not an office or position.

Comment: Traits, in the table below, of those desiring to be a watchman, overseer, are grouped with those of Titus with the compiler’s opinion as to their possible meaning. God specified the kind of shepherds, sentinels, overseers He wants using the following terms.

poimen - provider of spiritual nourishment and protector against dangers.

episkopeés, guardian, sentinel, one who alerts others of pending danger or one who watches over - an overseer.

presbuteros- an adjective to denote seniority older, one advanced in years – spiritual maturity.

Character (qualifications)	Possible meaning
hold firmly to the message	be faithful to Christ and know Him and His apostles' teachings
above reproach	not open to censure
good reputation, blameless	good reputation with outsiders
the husband of one wife	not a polygamist
temperate, sober minded	uses good judgment
self-controlled disciplined	disciplined, not a loose cannon
respectable	orderly, good behavior
hospitable	takes care of needs of others
able to teach (apt KJV)	powerful in communicating
not given to drunkenness	not drink excessively no brawler
not a striker (violent)	not combative or quick tempered
gentle	kind and considerate of others
not quarrelsome	not contentious, one who argues
not greedy	does not puts material things first
manage his own family	family lives within income - not a spendthrift
not be a recent convert	need to face trials as a Christian
children not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient	children not rebellious whether a Christian or not a Christian

“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.” (1 Timothy 5:17-20)

“These servants are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, not pursuing dishonest gain, keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience, be tested; and nothing against them.”

“In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.” 1 Timothy 3:11

Comment: “In the same way their wives” is not in the Greek text. YLT has “Women in like manner grave, not false accusers, vigilant, faithful in all things.” RSV has “Women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.”

“A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.”

Comment: The Greek word *diakonos* translated as “deacon” (servant in English and minister in Latin) is gender-neutral and meaning one who executes another's orders, a runner of errands, an attendant, a helper - either male or female. (Thayer Greek Lexicon)

Comment: *Diakonos* or its variants are used 28 times in the New Testament one of which refers to Pheobe (a female servant with no indication she met the requirements identified above) and twice as deacon in Philippians 1:1.

Comment *Diakonos* are servants doing servants work or function, not an office or position. The simplest way to define the work of a *diakonos* is by its meaning of servant. Therefore, every Christian is a *diakonos*. Those having these specified character traits (qualifications) appear to assist those who watch over the congregation.

“Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.” (1 Timothy 3:12-16)

Abandoning Christ

“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.” (1 Timothy 4:1-5)

Servants in General

“Do not rebuke an older man harshly, exhort him as if he were your father.” (1 Timothy 5:1)

“Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.” (1 Timothy 5:2)

“Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.” (1 Timothy 5:7)

“For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.” (1 Timothy 5:8)

“Put your hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.” (1 Timothy 5:9)

“Strictly charge and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.” (1 Timothy 4:10-15)

“Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Timothy 5:15-16)

“I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.” (1 Timothy 5:21)

“Keep yourself pure.” (1 Timothy 5:22)

“Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others.” (1 Timothy 5:24)

“The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden.” (1 Timothy 5:25)

Widows

If a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion (religion could have been translated as worship or respect) into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents.

The widow who is really in need and left all alone (with no one who will take care of their needs) puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.

A widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives (these widows apparently do not put their hope in God).

If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. Thus, they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. So, I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan. (1 Timothy 5:1-15)

If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need. (1 Timothy 5:16)

Widows is discussed in

thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/widows.html.

Work - Slavery and Employment

“All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are

brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them.” (1 Timothy 6:1-2)

Comment: Whatever your status in life is you must live to glorify God. Employees must do the work they were employed to do and then more - go the extra mile.

Materialism

“If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.”

Comment: There are unscrupulous men in every walk of life. Therefore, all Christians need to seek the truth from personal Bible studies and discussions with faithful and trusted fellow Christians to know God’s word in order to refute false teachings and expose the teacher of such.

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. Flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.” (1 Timothy 6:3-11)

“Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time — God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever.” (1 Tim 6:10-12)

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.” (1 Tim 6:11-19)

“Guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith.”

Key Points from 1 Timothy

- Some Christians have shipwrecked and abandon their faith – Satan conquered.
- One’s outward appearance must not invoke lustful desires.
- Christians are to know the type of spiritual life their shepherds (guardians, sentinels) live for them to be willing to follow (recognize their voice).
- All Christians are servants with functions to do that are pleasing to God.
- Shepherds are to equip all Christians who assemble with them in the knowledge of Christ and His teachings, so they can confront false teachings.

Question – Since the Greek word *diaconos* means servant, who are the servant within congregations and what are they to do?

Paul

To Timothy, my beloved child:

“I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.” (2 Timothy 1:4-14)

“All who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me earnestly and found me— may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day! — and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.” (2 Timothy 1:15-18)

A Good Soldier of Christ Jesus

“Be strengthened by what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses. Entrust what you have heard from me to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.”

“An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.”

“It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.”

“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” (2 Timothy 2:8-10)

Destiny of the Faithful and Unfaithful

Those who have died with him, we will also live with him;

- if we endure, we will also reign with him;
- if we deny him, he also will deny us;
- if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

Instructions to God’s Servants

“Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.”

Comment: Quarreling over words occurs today perhaps due to knowledge levels, environment, job related experiences and ability which result in differing interpretations, none of which may be correct. Quarreling appears to be an unwillingness to examine and discuss the differences in the meaning of some word and by the demanding that “my” understanding is the only meaning.

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

“Avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some.”

“God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.'”

“Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.”

“Flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”

“Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.” (2 Timothy 2:11-26)

Warning of Difficult Times

“But understand this, in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.” (2 Timothy 3:1-9)

Persecution to Come

“You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” (2 Timothy 3:10-13)

Knowledge of Bible Teachings

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

Comment: During the time Paul wrote to Timothy the “all scripture” was the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament.

Preach the Word

“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word (Gospel—the atoning sacrifice, burial, resurrection and ascension) be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

Comment: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1) Therefore, one who preaches the Word preaches Christ - His atoning sacrifice, burial, resurrection and ascension.

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:3-5)

Final Days of Paul

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

“Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.”

“Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.”

“At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So, I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever.”

“Do your best to come before winter. The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.” (2 Timothy 4:6-22)

Key Points from 2 Timothy

- Entrust what you have heard from me to faithful men who will be able to teach others.
- God's servants are to prepare themselves for His Work and be patient, waiting on His Word to germinate and grow.
- Heaven is the destiny of those in Christ.
- The unfaithful who return to a worldly life will be denied Heaven.
- Servants are to proclaim Christ – His atoning sacrifice, burial, resurrection and ascension.
- Prepare yourself for your final days on earth.

Question - What is the result of irreverent babbling and quarreling within the church?

TITUS

Paul sent Titus to Crete to complete things left undone when they left.

Elders, Overseers and Shepherds

“The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless — not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.” (Titus 1:5-9) Also recorded in 1 Timothy 3.

Rebellious People

“There are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things for the sake of dishonest gain. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.” (Titus 1:10-16)

Teach

“Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.”

“Older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach and train the young women:

- to love their husbands and children.
- to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind.
- submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

“Younger men are to be self-controlled.”

“Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.” (Titus 2)

“Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.”

Remind the brethren

“Be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

“Be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.”

“Avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.” (Titus 3:1-14)

Elders, Overseers and Shepherds

These English terms are from the Greek words:

poimen - provider of nourishment and protector against dangers. *eepiskopeés*, guardian watchman, sentinel, one who alerts of pending danger, oversees or watches over.

presbuteros- an adjective to denote older spiritual men.

Character Qualifications	Possible meaning
hold firmly to the message	be faithful to Christ and know Him and His apostles' teachings
above reproach	not open to censure
good reputation, blameless	good reputation with outsiders

the husband of one wife	not a polygamist
temperate, sober minded	uses good judgment
self-controlled disciplined	disciplined, not a loose cannon
respectable	orderly, good behavior
hospitable	takes care of needs of others
able to teach (apt KJV)	powerful in communicating
not given to drunkenness	not drink excessively no brawler
not a striker (violent)	not combative or quick tempered
gentle	kind and considerate of others
not quarrelsome	not contentious, does not argue
not greedy	does not put material things first
manage his own family	family lives within income not a spendthrift
not be a recent convert	need to face trials as a Christian
children not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient	children not rebellious whether a Christian or not a Christian

Comment: None of the above character or qualification pertain to decision making for the church body.

Comment: Decisions are to be made by the whole church Body rather than delegated to others.

“Perhaps an understanding of shepherding sheep and goats will provide an to understanding the function of shepherding spiritual sheep.”

“A good shepherd cares for his sheep and wants to take on the responsibility of their wellbeing. He will constantly be with them calling them by name for they must recognize his voice in order to follow. It is his responsibility to locate pastures near still or slow-moving water and away from danger. He must have knowledge of and remove toxic plants in pastures so they won't be able to eat them and become sick and die. He must be physically strong to protect them from thieves and predators. It is not a job for anyone who just needs a job or money. Recall David's 23 Psalm "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ... You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." I trust HIM for HE takes care of me!”

“On the other hand, goats are independent, inquisitive and difficult to herd whereas sheep are followers and require continual care and protection.”

Spiritual Shepherds, Guardians, Watchmen or Sentinels need:

1. A close relationship with God and those in the Body of Christ.
2. A good knowledge and understanding of the teachings of Christ and His apostles' doctrine (teaching) to prepare Christians for ministry, serving, to bring them to maturity into God's nature.
3. Ability to recognize false teachings and provide opportunity for those under their care to learn, recognize and acquire ability to refute such teachings. (For example, in their time a prevalent teaching was all flesh is evil. Jesus could not have been in an evil human flesh; therefore, He was just a phantom – Gnosticism.
4. Knowledge of difference between an opinion and a false teaching.
5. Ability to lead without forcing your personal opinion on others.
6. Equipped with spiritual tools needed to perform the shepherding functions and their proficient use; e.g., patience - not to fly off the handle or quick to judge; but gentle when expressing concerns; not combative, not a loose cannon, not contentious.

7. The desire to protect your brethren even if it cost your life.
8. Ability to communicate effectively. (Greek *didaktikos* skillful in teaching -Thayer)

Functions Works of Shepherds

1. Teach, feed, equip and bring to maturity.
2. Exhort, admonish, edify and strengthen.
3. Convict false teachers and their false teachings, such as:
 - a. One who denies Christ as God in human body.
 - b. One is saved without being cleansed by Christ's blood.
 - c. Salvation is received, earned, by what a person accomplishes.
4. Promote unity and harmony.
5. Comfort the weak and sick (physically but primarily spiritually).
6. Seek and restore those who have drifted or are drifting away.
7. Pray for self, those under your care and the lost.
8. Warn of dangers lurking in the pathway of life.
9. Prepare God's saints for work of service (show & tell).
(1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-11; 1 Peter 5:2-4; Acts: 20:28-30; Ephesians 4:11-15; Ezekiel 34:2-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14; James 5:14 and Luke 15:3)

Comment: The word "work" – from the Greek word *érgou* - means an act, deed, a function. It is not an office or position.

Functions Guardians must refrain from

1. Being partial.
2. Demanding others agree to his interpretation on some teaching.
3. Assuming Christ's authority by making decisions that His Body as a whole should make.
4. Performing work, the His Body should be doing thereby neglecting his work.
5. Assuming an arbitrator's function, a settler of disputes for which there is a prescribed method that ultimately includes the church as a whole.
6. Yielding to the voice of the more vocal and large contributors.

Key Points from Titus

- There are men within the church who are teaching messages contrary to sound doctrine for financial gain. They must be stopped.
- Knowledgeable and righteous men who desire to be spiritual leaders and who consider their physical life nothing to protect the spiritual lives of their fellow brethren are to be selected for the work of maintaining the teachings of Christ and His apostles. Their work is not a position of honor, power or prestige but a work.

Question - Do the qualifications indicate his ability to make decisions for others or for him to guide and encourage one toward a righteous life?

PHILEMON

"To Philemon, Apphia, Archippus and to the church that meets in your home. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints."

Comment: Paul said the church that meets, meaning people met.

“I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you have refreshed the hearts of the saints.”

Comment: Sharing faith requires communication that refreshes and encourages one to be faithful in living their Christian life.

“I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do. I appeal to you on the basis of love to you for Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. He was formerly useless to you, but now very useful both to you and to me.”

“I am sending him back to you although I would like to keep him so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good— no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.”

“So, if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I will pay it back. I know that you will do even more than I ask.

Love One Another is discussed in

thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/OneAnother/OneAnother.html

Key Points from Philemon

- Do not keep something that rightfully belongs to another regardless of how beneficial it is or will be to you.
- Friends can freely exchange desires, needs and benefits without the feelings of obligations to ask or to receive.
- Love is unmeasurable.
- Fellowship involves communicating God’s word, love of brethren and providing needs to those without necessities of life.

Question – What does “active in sharing your faith?”

HEBREWS

“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So, he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy saying “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.” But angels are ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.” (Hebrews 1:1-14)

Son of Man

“We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding (Covenant given by God through Moses), and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord (Christ), was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.” (Hebrews 2:1-4)

“You made him (Son of Man, Jesus) a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet.” But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.” (Hebrews 2:7-11)

Comment: Those who Jesus called brothers are those God raised from their burial by immersion (baptism) into Christ's death following their death to sin and put onto Christ's Body, His church.

“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants (those of faith). For this reason, he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.” (Hebrews 2:14-18)

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. We are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.” (Hebrews 3:1-6)

Hear Him

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So, I declared on oath in my anger, 'They (Israelites) shall never enter my rest (Land of Canaan).’” See to it, brothers, that none of you (Christians) has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence, we had at first. Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest (eternal life) still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel (the life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of the Son of God) preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. ... It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them (those who obeyed and then turned back) did not go in, because of disobedience. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience (the Israelites). For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” (Hebrews 3:7-4:10-13)

Comments: On the way to Canaan the Israelites did not hold firm to God so, they did not enter their earthly promised land. Likewise, Christians on their way to Heaven who do not hold firm to God will not enter their spiritual promised land.

Comment: The Word (Gospel) will divide the spirit of God that He put in man, which at death returns to him, from the eternal soul of the wicked and rebellious man which at death goes to everlasting death with the Devil and his angles.

Jesus Christ - Our High Priest

“We have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has

been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

“Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. So, Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father." (Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-5)

“During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. ... Therefore, let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. God permitting, we will do so. It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.” (Hebrews 5:7-10; 6:1-6)

For discussion on elementary teachings about Christ go to:

thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/FirstPrinciples.html.

“Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.”

Comments: Cultivating your spiritual land is accomplished by constant study of God's word and discussions with spiritual brethren as this is the working out your salvation with fear and trembling.

New Covenant

“The Lord said I will make a new covenant in which I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear. Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason, Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.” (Hebrews 8:8,10,13; 9:1, 11, 12, 15)

“When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." But Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming — not the realities themselves.”

Comments: God's shadows and mysteries under the Old Covenant are the reality of the New Covenant.

“First, he said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them’ (although the law required them to be made). Then he said, ‘Here I am, I have come to do your will.’ He sets aside the first covenant to establish the second and better covenant. By that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Then he adds: ‘Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.’ Where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin. Therefore, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 9:19-20, 24, 26-28; 10:1, 8 -10, 17-18, 22-25)

“If we (Christians) deliberately (with no desire to cease) keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth (Gospel of Christ by burial, immersion, into His blood), no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ and again, ‘The Lord will judge his people.’ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

“Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, “He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. If he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.” But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.” (Hebrews 10:26-39)

Faith at Work

Faith is being sure (certainty, not maybe or I think) of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. We understand that the universe was formed at God's command, - not made out of the visible. By faith

Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. He was commended as a righteous man,

Enoch was taken from this life - he did not experience death because God had taken him away.

Noah in holy fear built an ark to save his family and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Abraham obeyed and went as God instructed not know where he was going.

Abraham made his home in the promised land like a stranger living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob,

Abraham was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.

Abraham offered Isaac, the son of promises, as a sacrifice reasoning God could raise him from the dead

Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped.

Joseph spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.

Moses' parents hid him for three months because they saw he was no ordinary child,

Moses refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter choosing the people of God

Moses kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, keeping the death angel from the firstborn of Israel.

The people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land

The walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days.

The prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw and welcomed them from a distance. They admitted they were aliens and strangers on earth looking for their heavenly home.” (Hebrews 11:1-13)

Comment: Every one of these examples had one common thread – actions based on belief and faith (faith and belief are similar words. Nelson's Bible Dictionary).

“What more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received during their life what had been promised.” (Hebrews 11:32- 39)

God's Discipline

“In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. You have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.” (Hebrews 12:4-11, 14-16)

“We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers (but not those who teach a different gospel and deny Christ was God in a human body), for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison (your Christian brothers) as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer (covenant breakers) and all the sexually immoral (sex with someone not your spouse – fornication). Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.” (Hebrews 12:28-29; 13:2-5, 9)

“Continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Obey your leaders and submit (to yield to authority and admonition, (Thayer's)) to their authority. They keep watch over you (not dictate but warn of dangers so you can take actions) as men (spiritual leaders) who must give an account (to the chief shepherd.). Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Hebrews 13:15-17)

Key Points from Hebrews

- The deceitfulness of sin can harden one's heart. Pay close attention to what you have heard so that you do not drift away.
- See to it, brothers, that none of you Christians have a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.
- It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, shared in the Holy Spirit, and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance.
- The Old Covenant was the earthly shadow and types of what the New Covenant would include. Therefore, it was inferior to the New Covenant.
- If Christians deliberately keep on sinning after we have received and obeyed the knowledge of the truth, the gospel, no sacrifice for sins is left as they have removed themselves from Christ.
- One's depth of their faith and belief is shown by their actions in doing good and living righteously.
- The Lord disciplines those he loves as it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace, if one is trained by it.

Question – What is faith and how did those of old show their faith?

JAMES

To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:

“Whenever you face trials of many kinds you know they are for the testing of your faith. These trials develop perseverance so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. But if you lack wisdom, ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault. But you must believe He hears. His answer is what best for the Kingdom. If you do not believe He will answer, why pray? You are double-minded and unstable.”

Comment: It is not if, but when, you face trials for, they are the purpose of testing your faith. How one responds depicts the level of faith. Do they expect God to provide help when they do not seek to know and understand His word?

Desires and Temptations

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” (James 1:12)

Comment: The test is when something one desires, wants or would like, but not necessarily best for him, is placed before him. Does he yield or resist? With constant resisting of sinful, the desire will probably cease to be a desire. It is the uncontrolled desires that allows one to be enticed and yield to sin.

“Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth.” (James 1:16-18)

Listen

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it

says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do forgets. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does.” (James 1:19-25)

Worship

“If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion (religious worship (Thayer Greek Lexicon)) that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after (visit is the KJV) orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” (James 1:26-27)

Comment: To “look after” is from Greek word *episképtesthai* meaning to look upon in order to help or to benefit (Thayer’s); e.g., provide necessities. At the time the KJV was translated the word “visit” meant to go see someone to take care of their unmet necessities of life.

Favoritism

“As believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism to the wealthy well-dressed and disregard poor and lowly. Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? You have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong? Love your neighbor as yourself. But if you show favoritism, you sin.” (James 2:1-9)

Displaying Faith by Actions

“Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment! What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds (actions doing good to others shows faith)? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it (faith) is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Abraham was considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together. A person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.” (James 2:12-24)

Tongue

“He who teach will be judged more strictly. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. We put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. A great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.”

“All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing - this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring or can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs or can a salt spring produce fresh water?” (Of course not.) (James 3:1-12)

“Show your humility by deeds done that comes from wisdom. Envy and selfish ambition in your hearts does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom from heaven is pure; peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness”. (James 3:13-18)

Desires

“Your uncontrolled desires cause fights and quarrels you want something but don't get it. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” (James 4:1-3)

“Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone in Christ who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. He becomes adulterous since he broke his covenant with Christ and God.” (James 4:4)

Submit to God

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6)

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Purify your hearts, you double-minded. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (James 4:7-10)

Slander

“Do not slander or judge one another.” (James 4:11-12)

Brag and Boast

“You who say, “Today or tomorrow I will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.” (James 4:17)

Greed

You rich people,

- Your gold and silver are corroded and testifies against you.
- The wages you failed to pay the workmen crying out against you.
- You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence you have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.
- You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you. (James 5:1-6)

Patience

“Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming as a farmer waits for the autumn and spring rains.”

Grumble

“Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged.”

Comment: The Israelites were constantly grumbling against God and suffered many heartaches. They did not receive their desires when they wanted them.

Oaths

“Above all, my brothers, do not swear — not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your ‘Yes’ be yes, and your ‘No,’ no, or you will be condemned. (James 5:12)

Comment: If a person's life and actions cause his word not to be trusted, swearing accomplishes nothing even if by heaven or earth.)

Prayer and Praise

“Anyone in trouble? Pray.

Anyone happy? Sing songs of praise.

Anyone sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be

forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

Losing one’s faith

“My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.” (James 5:19-20)

Comment: Wandering from truth means one left God as he is Truth. Bringing him back to the truth of Christ allows him to be forgiven, thus back in fellowship with Christ and those in Christ.

Key Points from James

➤ One’s attitude of listening, learning and praying will either glorify God or not.

Question - Who tempts man and why does God allow man to be tempted?

1 PETER

“To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion (the dispersion generally refers to Jews, but it could equally apply to the dispersion of Christians due to persecution) according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood.” (1 Peter 1:1)

Obedience to Christ

“He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3)

Comment: One who died to sin, was buried into Christ blood, raised by God from the water grave of immersion (baptism) and given a new life (born) is put into the Kingdom (Body of Christ) by God.

“If necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, to test genuineness of your faith.” (1 Peter 1:6-7)

“Though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” (1 Peter 1:8-9)

“Therefore, preparing your minds for action. Do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.” (1 Peter 1:13-16)

“Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.” (1 Peter 1:17)

“You have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.” (1 Peter 1:22-23)

“You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” (1 Peter 1:23-24)

“Rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.” (1 Peter 2:1)

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.” (1 Peter 2:2)

Reminder to the Chosen

“As you come to him, the living Stone — rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:4-5)

Comment: Spiritual sacrifices are offering to God what He desires. Under the Old Covenant it was an animal sacrifice offered by priest. Under the New Covenant Christians are priest. They are to offer their life by doing what He desires.

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.” (1 Peter 2:9)

“You are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1 Peter 2:10)

“Abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.” (1 Peter 2:11)

“Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” (1 Peter 2:12)

“Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men.” (1 Peter 2:13)

“Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.” (1 Peter 2:16)

“Have proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.” (1 Peter 2:17)

“Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.” (1 Peter 2:18-19)

“If you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.” (1 Peter 2:20)

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.” (1 Peter 2:24)

“By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls (guardian of souls -Thayer Greek Lexicon).” (1 Peter 2:24-25)

Living the Christian Life

Husbands and wives

“Wives, in the same way be submissive (Be good wives to your husbands, responsive to their needs (The Message Bible)) so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.” (1 Peter 3:1-5)

“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. All of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing.” (1 Peter 3:7-9)

Comment: Weaker partner – weaker may mean lacking in power or strength while partner probably means equal in Christ.

“Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.” (1 Peter 3:13-16)

“Christ was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also —

not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 3:18-21)

“Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.” (1 Peter 4:1-3)

“Don’t live as pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.” (1 Peter 4:3-5)

“Be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” (1 Peter 4:7-9)

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:10-11)

“If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.” (1 Peter 4:11)

“If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides.” (1 Peter 4:11)

“If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.” (1 Peter 4:14)

If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. (1 Peter 4:15)

“Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” (1 Peter 5:2-4)

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:6-7)

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Key Points from 1 Peter

- Your faith will be tested – not maybe or if but will be.
- As God’s servant you will be judged by His work that you do.

Question – Why should a Christian prepare his mind for action?

2 PETER

“Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Comment: Those in Christ are servants of equal standing not by what they have accomplished because of differing abilities but by Christ’s righteousness.

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through

them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” (2 Peter 1:3-4)

Comment: “Knowledge” of Him requires hearing and discussing the Gospel of Christ’s atoning sacrifice to cleanse sin.

Comment: The “calling” is an invitation to accept Christ and obey His words that lead to salvation.

To become partakers of Divine Nature

Make every effort to supplement your

- faith with virtue,
- virtue with knowledge,
- knowledge with self-control,
- self-control with steadfastness,
- steadfastness with godliness,
- godliness with brotherly affection,
- brotherly affection with love.

“For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:5-8)

“For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.” (2 Peter 1:9-10)

“If you practice these qualities, you will never fall.” (2 Peter 1:10-11)

“For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” (2 Peter 1:16-17)

“False teachers will come in among you, secretly bringing in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them.” (2 Peter 2:10-19)

- They are bold and arrogant men who are not afraid to slander celestial beings.
- They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.
- They have eyes full of adultery.
- They seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed
- They have left the straightway and wandered off to follow the wages of wickedness.
- They mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature.
- They entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.
- They promise them freedom.
- They themselves are slaves of depravity.

“For if, after they have escaped the defilements (corruption) of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.” (2 Peter 2:20)

Comment: Once one has been put in the Body of Christ through trust and obedience, he can choose to return to former sinful life thereby being worse off as they have forsaken Christ.

Reminders

“In the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires.” (2 Peter 3:3)

“They deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.” (2 Peter 3:5-7)

“Heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.” (2 Peter 3:7)

“Do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.” (2 Peter 3:8)

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.” (2 Peter 3:9)

“That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.” (2 Peter 3:12)

“In keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.” (2 Peter 3:13)

“Be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.” (2 Peter 3:17)

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)

Key Points from 2 Peter

- There is a stair step pattern of Christian growth that strengthens one’s faith and helps them recognize false teachings.
- Teachers of false doctrine can be identified by comparing their teachings, attitude and actions to Biblical teachings
- Christians can become again entangled in the corruption of the world such that their condition is worse than when they had their sins forgiven by putting on Christ following their death to sin, burial and resurrection followed by being added to Christ Body, His church.

Question – What does Peter’s statement “If some have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first” mean and is it really true?

1 JOHN

John is writing about the Word of Life, Christ (and eternal life), which he saw, touched, testify and proclaim.

The Message he heard

“God is light (righteous); in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” (1 John 1:5-7)

Comment: “Light” probably refers to God’s righteousness not the light enabling one to see things in darkness.

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.” (1 John 1:9-10)

“If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.” (1 John 2:1-2)

“We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.” (1 John 2:3)

“Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.” (1 John 2:6)

Comment: Walking as Jesus is living according to His will.

“Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.” (1 John 2:9)

Comment: Anyone who wishes ill toward another hates.

“Whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness.” (1 John 2:11)

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. Anyone loves the world; the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John 2:15)

“Many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.” (1 John 2:18-19)

Comment: An antichrist is anyone who denies Jesus was God in a human body but just a phantom or denies the existence of Christ.

“You have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.” (1 John 2:20)

“The man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist — he denies the Father and the Son.” (1 John 2:22)

“See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you.” (1 John 2:24)

“I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray.” (1 John 2:26)

Antichrist discussion – see thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/Gnosticism.html

Love of the Father

“We are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him.” (1 John 3:2)

“Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.” (1 John 3:3)

“He appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning.” (1 John 3:5-6)

“No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.” (1 John 3:6)

“Do not let anyone lead you astray - so, one cannot be once saved always be saved.” (1 John 3:7)

“No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on (continue and still be living in righteously in Christ) sinning, because he has been born of God.” (1 John 3:9)

“Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.” (1 John 3:10)

Comment: There are several types or levels of love. The love referred to here is desiring what is best for a brother's physical and eternal life.

“The message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.” (1 John 3:11)

- Love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. (1 John 3:16)
- If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? (1 John 3:17-18)
- Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:18-19)
- His is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another. (1 John 3:23)

- Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1-2)
- Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. (1 John 4:2-3)
- His is the spirit of the antichrist. (1 John 4:3)
- No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us. (1 John 4:12)
- If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. (1 John 4:20-21)
- His is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. (1 John 5:2)
- This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3-4)
- Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory. (1 John 5:4)

Eternal Life

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:13-14)

Comment: We have an advocate, Jesus, The Christ, between us and our merciful God who desires no one perish.

“If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.” (1 John 5:14)

“If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.” (1 John 5:16)

- Physical death – Too late to pray for anyone who does not have their breath of life to obey Christ. Their eternal life is in the hands of a just God.
- Spiritual death – For the living there is hope of repentance and return to God.
- Eternal death – Probably those who deny Jesus was God in human flesh as He said He was but a phantom as Gnostics claim - the antichrist.
- All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death. (1 John 5:17)
- Anyone born of God does not continue to sin. (1 John 5:18)
- The one who was born of God keeps him safe (by the life he lives), and the evil one cannot harm him. (1 John 5:18-19)
- Know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. (1 John 5:20)

Key Points from 1 John

- One can be led astray choosing to cease living a godly.
- The faithful in Christ’s Church, are constantly being washed clean from sin by His blood if they live according to His will.
- A Christian cannot hate (intensely dislike) a brother because God is Love.

Question – What was the message John saw and heard?

2 JOHN

“To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth — and not I only, but also all who know the truth— because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love. It has given me great joy to find some of your

children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.”

Comment: It is unknown who the elect lady was. One could speculate it was a) friend of John’s b) the church c) Mary the mother of Jesus – because of the word chosen and d) anything to keep identity secret.

“Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist, Gnostics. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.”

Comment: The deceivers appear to be, Gnostics, those who deny that Christ came in the flesh because they believe all flesh was evil. So, Christ could not be both God and evil, therefore He was only a phantom. If this belief and teaching is true then there was no atoning sacrifice, no forgiveness, no church and no Body of Christ.

“If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.”

Comment: This teaching is Jesus is and was God who came to earth to be the atoning sacrifice to all who put their trust in Him through obedience to His message of reconciliation.

Comment: During this time the act of hospitality was giving aid to a traveling Christian brother. But by giving aid to a self-proclaimed Christian brother whose teaching was his opinion and contrary to Christ was considered to be agreeing to his false teaching. They were told “do not take him into your house or welcome him.”

Key Points from 2 John

- The teaching that Jesus did not come in the flesh (God in a human body) is the antichrist teaching that destroys the foundation of the atoning sacrifice – forgiveness of sins.
- Welcoming, the taking care of physical needs of food and shelter, is showing hospitality and indicates you support their teaching. Therefore, do not give aid, comfort and support to anyone who denies the existence of Jesus, the Christ, by welcome them into your home.

Question: What is the antichrist?

3 JOHN

To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

“It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”

“You are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God (true hospitality). It was for the sake of the Name that they went out.”

“Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So, if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church. “

“Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone — and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true. “

Key Points from 3 John

- Power and the feeling of self-importance by controlling those in the Body, is the opposite of being a servant, is condemned.

JUDE

This short book was written to those called by God, to Christians. I felt I had to write and urge you to contend (defend as a combatant the Word, Christ the foundation of your faith) for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men (purporting to be fellow Christians) whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. (3-4)

“Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home — these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” (5-7)

“These pretenders, fake Christians, are:

- like Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. (7)
- dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings but even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (8-10)
- speakers who speak abusively against whatever they do not understand. (10)
- blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm. (12)
- shepherds who feed only themselves. (12)
- clouds without rain. (12)
- wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. (13)
- grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires. (13)
- boasters about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. (16)

“Remember what the apostles said: In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires. These are the men who divide you, follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.” (18-19)

But you are to:

- build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. (20)
- keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. (21)
- be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. (22-23)

Key Points from Jude

- There are some people who are pretenders, unfaithful, faultfinders and boastful seeking recognition and approval.
- Encourage each other not to accept the pretender's attitude or lifestyle
- Be merciful and help them and others to change (repent) and return to righteousness.

Question - What was Jude's warning all about?

REVELATION

Introduction

By the end of the first century A.D. all cities in Asia had temples for the worship of Rome and her emperors. Johns summarizes the influence of emperor worship on Asia Minor, concluding: "There is little question that the province of Asia was the world leader in the imperial cult" (1998:154-57). Pilgrim summarizes the case in even stronger language: "Asia Minor was a veritable hotbed for the imperial cult" (1999:148; see Barclay 1960:1.22-24 and Worth.

Christians were compelled to worship the emperor several decades after Revelation was written is documented in a letter from Pliny the Younger to Caesar Trajan, who evidently executed Christians and forced those who denied being Christians to invoke the heathen gods and offer worship, wine, and frankincense before a statue of the Caesar (*Letter* 10.96; see also *Mart. Pol.* 8).

Because Christians were becoming more affluent due to the trade that was prevalent throughout the empire, it may have been their materialism and expectation of wealth, more than outright persecution, that seduced Christians to worship the emperor. (Kraybill, 1996:117

Domitian was the first emperor to have himself officially titled in Rome as "God the Lord." He insisted that other people hail his greatness with acclamations like "Lord of the earth," "Invincible," "Glory," "Holy," and "Thou Alone."

When he ordered people to give him divine honors, Jews, and no doubt Christians, balked. The resulting persecution of Jews is well-documented; that of Christians is not. However, the beast that the author of Revelation describes, as well as the events in the book, are perhaps best interpreted as hidden allusions to the rule of Domitian. In addition, Flavius Clemens, consul in 95, and his wife, Flavia Domitilla, were executed and exiled, respectively, by Domitian's orders; many historians suspect this was because they were Christians.

anabaptistwiki.org/mediawiki/index.php?title=Emperors_and_Emperor_Worship

The Voice's Message

The voice identified Himself to John as the alpha and omega, the first and last, the living one who once was dead but now alive holding the keys to death and abode of dead, Hades. He, Christ, revealed to John a message for Christians near the end of the first century what must soon take place (come to pass quickly (YLT)) to let His people know that regardless of their earthly circumstances He was in Control. The Christian community knew the meaning of the imagery used in what was being revealed but, not the Romans. (Rev 1)

Body of Christians in Seven Cities of Asia

Ephesus

You have left your first love - you have fallen; repent do the first works or I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand.

Smyrna

I know your works, tribulation, and poverty. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life.

Pergamos

You have those who cause others to worship idols by eating things sacrificed to idols, and who encourage the sexual immorality of paganism

Thyratira

You allow a prophetess (probably a “pagan Christian”), to teach and seduce others to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols as worship to them. Hold fast what you have till I come as I will give to each one of you according to your works.

Sardis

You think you are alive but your works show you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen those about ready to die. I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know the hour I come.

Philadelphia

You have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Laodiceia

Your works are neither cold nor hot which exposes how ungrateful you are. Repent, return and be zealous

Comment: These churches represent the types of Christian assemblies;

1. Some had returned to former way of life while still assembling as if faithful – they had departed from Christ.
2. Strong in faith.
3. Worship had become meaningless just a ritual.
4. Believing how you live is not material so enjoy self.
5. Some had ceased to exist as a body of Christians.
6. Faithful amid strong persecution.
7. You do nothing. You are just a social gathering.

God’s Throne Room

Surrounding God’s throne were

- 24 thrones with elders in white and gold crowns.
- In the center were four living creatures.
- These symbolic air breathing creatures and elders were constantly praising, giving honor and glory to God represented by
 - Lion – king of the wilderness
 - Ox – mightiest of domesticated animals
 - Man – given to rule on the earth
 - Eagle – master of the airways

In God’s right hand was a scroll that only the lamb of God, Jesus the Christ who offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice for man could open.

The Scroll with seven Seals

As the seal were opened their action appears to be in the future – things that must shortly come to pass.

First seal - White horse - rider with a bow and crown – rode out for conquest and to conquer.

Second seal- Red horse – rider with a great sword to take peace from earth.

Third seal -Black horse – rider with pair of scales to weigh life’s necessities – famine to occur.

Forth seal -Pale horse – rider named death and hades with power to kill by sword, famine and plague.

Fifth seal - Souls of righteous slain for word of God and their testimony asking when their death would be avenged.

Sixth seal - A sudden change of governments and mighty men of the known world.

Comment: Before the seventh seal could be opened God identified multitudes of His people to protect those not slain during the persecution. They give praises, honor and glory to God and shouting salvation belongs to God and the Lamb. After the 7th seal is opened there was a period of silence in Heaven (the time for waiting is over – God begins His avenging of those who oppose Him and His people). Seven angels with seven trumpets appear ready for action. In 1st

century Rome the trumpet announced some major happening and troop movement.) There is no time table as to when these disasters were to occur against the Roman Empire and its Imperial cult's Emperor worship.

Seventh seal -

First trumpet - natural events; e.g., weather related storm – hail, fire probably from lightening destroying food source

Second trumpet – natural events – volcano eruption near sea disrupting commerce and fishing industry

Third trumpet – natural events – water contaminated (possibly dead animals from first trumpet.)

Fourth trumpet – possibly upheaval of civil government and woes were pronounced upon the inhabitants of the earth

Fifth trumpet and first woe – beyond the terrestrial – a non-human being fell to earth, given power and the key to an immeasurable burning prison (abyss or bottomless pit) from which came creatures to harm for a period of time those who did not have God's seal, people not belonging to God.

Sixth trumpet and second woe

Released four messengers, armies, of death but earth's inhabitants refused to change from pagan practices of murder (possibly infant sacrifices), sorceries, whoredoms, nor thefts.

Mighty angel from heaven with an open scroll declared there will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

- Open scroll (word of God when consumed) sweet by Christians and bitter to enemies of Christ.
- Measuring rod – count the worshippers in God's temple (His abode) but not those not therein. Jews had a court for gentiles who were not allowed to enter their temple area.
- Two witnesses – olive tree and lampstand, light (word of God) and source (Spirit of God) for proclamation of Gospel by men.
- Beast from the abyss to which Satan was given the key. So, the beast was Satan's agent to do attack, do harm and to kill God's Children.

Seventh trumpet

Loud voice declaring "The kingdom of the world (the kingdom the Old Covenant having been fulfilled) has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, (Christ's New Covenant) and He shall reign forever and ever."

Comment: Christ now reigns from heaven over his Kingdom, His Church.

God's temple in heaven was opened. The Ark of the Covenant representing the covenant with Israel is now in Heaven and a new covenant is beginning.

Birth of a ruler over a new kingdom. Satan used a powerful dragon, the Roman Emperors, in an attempt to destroy the new kingdom. Satan was cast out of heaven and allowed to do his dastardly deeds among all the people on earth.

The loud voice again proclaims "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ.

Beast of sea with the same imagery as the red dragon, individual Emperors who persecuted Christians greatly.

Beast of earth were those who exercised the authority of the first beast to force emperor worship (the Imperial cult of emperor worship). In an attempt annihilate God's children, Christ's church, non-Christians receive an identification mark in order to acquire necessities of life.

Time for God's Judgment Against Rome

The Lamb of God appears with the sound of rushing water and a loud peel of thunder. An angel flying in midair having the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth — to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a

loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

The wrath of God begins to be poured out with destruction everywhere – plagues of all kinds, storms, earthquakes and fire. The power of Rome and the Imperial cult to persecute is gone. Satan is no longer in heaven to bring acquisitions against God's children but is cast down to earth to deceive till the end of time – a long time represented as 1000 years.

End of Time on Earth

- Satan is thrown into the abyss.
- First heaven and first earth pass away.
- Earth will melt with fervent heat. (2 Peter 3:12)
- All people stand before God who will judge according to their works, actions in life.
- The end of Satan's power over man. Souls in Hades not having their name written in the Book of Life are to stand in Judgment. However, the righteous in Paradise went with Christ when He ascended to Heaven following His resurrection. This is discussed in
"thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/Body Soul Spirit.html"

Another personal opinion on Revelation is presented in.
thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/RevelationWright/A-Revelation.htm

A short "Unorthodox opinion is also available on the BibleWay website.

Key Points from Revelation

- Because of the Gospel, John was banished to the Isle of Patmos.
- John wrote about things shortly to come to pass to Christians who were undergoing persecution and were aware of much of the imagery therefore able to understand.
- Christians were persecuted almost everywhere but more heavily in Asia where emperor worship was concentrated.
- Faithfulness is rewarded with eternal life with God.
- Satan was defeated cast down from heaven till end of time and allowed to deceive.
- Everyone is answerable for how they live their life.
- God is and has always been in control of all His creation.

Question - What was the message God wanted to convey through John to the Christians undergoing persecution from the Jews, Pagans and Romans?

Questions and Answers from the New Testament books

Matthew

- Q. Was Jesus of Nazareth, as the Pharisees claim, the son of Joseph, human like everyone else; or both God and man as the voice from heaven said "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased"?
- A. Jesus' miracles witnessed by thousands show he was more than human, His resurrection from the grave and His ascension to Heaven, also witnessed by His close's followers, declare Him to be God.

Mark

- Q. What is the purpose of the atoning sacrifice?
- A. Animal sacrifices of bulls and goats under the covenant given by God to Israel through Moses was insufficient. Forgiveness of man's sins requires a sacrifice of a man without sin. Jesus offered Himself to God by allowing the Roman government to crucify Him. The sin of disobedience of God's command by Adam and Eve brought spiritual death to these who refuse to accept Christ's atoning sacrifice that offers of forgiveness.

Luke

Q. What is the significance of Christ's Resurrection?

A. Christ's death and burial without His resurrection would prove Christ was only human, therefore a fraud. God accepted Christ's offering by raising Him from the grave. His resurrection is the Victory over death, Satan's hold over man since Adam and Eve.

John

Q. What is so important about John's statement "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God?"

A. John declared by inspiration that the "Word" (Jesus) was God. Therefore, it also includes God's other attributes of love, peace, mercy, faithfulness to name a few. However, the importance lies in Jesus' desire to give man the opportunity to be forgiven and restored to his righteous position with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Acts

Q. What is the purpose of the Book of Acts?

A. Luke in Acts records Christ's actions through His apostles that provides the opportunity of salvation to those who turn to him for forgiveness. Following their death to sin, burial into the blood of Christ's atoning sacrifice, raised by God from the grave of baptism, God places them into Christ's kingdom of saved people, the church He promised to establish.

Q. Did Christ build a structure (a sanctuary, meeting place), a religious organization or reconstitute the Jewish Sanhedrin?

A. Christ's church is a living organism of people put into Christ's Body by God after one heard Christ's message of redemption, recognized his sinful situation and his need for forgiveness in order to be restored to that righteous state man had in the beginning and by his obedience to Christ's and His apostles' teachings.

Romans

Q. How does man become righteous?

A. All men have sinned, but they can be forgiven. Righteousness comes from God which He imputes His righteousness to those who are put into the Kingdom of Christ and God.

1 Corinthians

Q. Is the church at Corinthian an example other churches should follow?

A. No! They quarreled about their importance because of the person who baptized them and pride in their tolerance of sin. Immersion into Christ's blood is IMPORTANT not who baptized them. Sin within the Body must be confronted immediately with love for the individuals. Otherwise sin like yeast spreads contaminating the whole body.

2 Corinthians

Q. What did Paul mean by stating "God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation?"

A. Since God does not want anyone to perish and since the gospel gives man the opportunity to be saved, then the ministry of reconciliation must be the proclamation of Christ, His atoning sacrifice, burial, resurrection and ascension back to Heaven— the Gospel.

Galatians

Q. Who were the sons of God through faith in Christ who were turning back to weak and miserable principles and have fallen away from grace?

A. The importance is not who they were but the fact that Christians can turn away from Christ and fall away from God's offer of salvation through Christ - His Grace.

Ephesians

Q. What are the benefits of being in Christ?

A. The benefits for those in Christ is salvation and redemption through Christ's blood, an inheritance from God, the seal of the Holy Spirit and being built together into a dwelling place for God.

Philippians

Q. Why should one seek to acquire more knowledge and depth of insight of God's will?

A. Constant meditating on God's message will allow one to be able to discern what is best so he may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God.

Colossians

Q. What are the keys to unity in relationships?

A. It is difficult if not impossible to be united with someone you do not care for. Therefore, some love must be present as love promotes peace and the greater degree of love the more united you become. Then that unity will be displayed in favorable actions of giving one's self over to God. God so loved that He gave Jesus and Jesus so loved He gave His life so man could be restored and united with God.

1 Thessalonians

Q. What should be a Christian life's ambition?

A. Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders.

2 Thessalonians

Q. What happens to Christians after they die?

A. There is a "burial" of some type – cremation, in the earth, at sea or left exposed to earth's elements. Then the spirit God gave all men returns to Him, the souls of the righteous go to paradise and at the 2nd coming the earthly body of the righteous is transformed into an immortal being and reunited with his soul.

1 Timothy

Q. Since the Greek word *diaconos* means servant, who are the servant within congregations and what are they to do.

A. All Christians are servants of Christ's Body, His Church, having differing work to do just as the human body has parts with different functions. All servants are to proclaim Christ, but in different ways; e.g., bring someone to a teacher, taking care of needy widows and orphans, assisting the shepherds in their function as guardians and proclaiming Christ; such as teaching privately, proclaiming the Gospel publicly, and preparing Bible lessons for those seeking God.

2 Timothy

Q. What is the result of irreverent babbling and quarreling within the Kingdom of God?

A. Irreverent babbling and quarreling leads people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. These actions to some extent imply a superiority of ability, knowledge, education – self-importance.

Titus

Q. Do the qualifications of an elder, shepherd, guardian indicate his ability to make decisions for others or for him to guide and encourage one toward a righteous life.

A. Those having these character qualifications show he is faithful to the Lord, his wife and the respect of his children. That he has a good grasp of the scriptures by constant Bible study, the ability to communicate effectively and a temperament such that people seek him for comfort, advice and encouragement to help them mature into the likeness of God. There is no qualification listed for making decisions for others.

Philemon

Q. What does “active in sharing your faith” involve?

A. Some may say the act of sharing is only proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. But, encouraging other to seek to know and understand how to live godly lives pleasing to God and to encourage faithfulness are also actively sharing your faith.

Hebrews

Q. What is faith and how did those of old show their faith?

A. Abel offered God a better sacrifice, Noah built an ark, Abraham obeyed and offered Isaac to God, Moses refused to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter choosing God, Israel kept the Passover and the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched as God directed

James

Q. Who tempts man and why does God allow man to be tempted?

A. God does not tempt nor can He be tempted. He made man with the ability to reason and decide. The Devil knows each man's desires and weaknesses. So, he places before man things to force him to make a decision. Will man decide to be faithful to his God or will he decide to yield to his desires?

1 Peter

Q. Why should a Christian prepare his mind for action?

A. Those in Christ were created to do good works and when man submitted his will to God through obedience to Christ, he became a priest to serve God out of love of God's forgiveness and the promise of an eternal life with a Him. Love creates the desire to do (work) things that are pleasing to God. Therefore, a Christian priest searches the scriptures to determine what God desires of him.

2 Peter

Q. What does Peter's statement “If some have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first” mean? Is it really true?

A. “Escaping the defilement of the world” is being forgiven of sins by Christ blood. “Again entangled” is the return to the sinful ways of the world and its corrupting ways. Being “overcome” is the rejection of righteous ways of Christ by living sinful ways of the world. In his first he was lost now he “worse” means no longer in a saved condition while living the sinful life.

1 John

Q. What was the message John saw and heard?

A. John said I saw and I touched the God, the Messiah (Christ) a man without any sin; a holy and righteous person whose very nature was love.

2 John

Q. Who or what are the antichrists?

A. Antichrists are “Christian” deceivers who believe and teach that Jesus was the son of Joseph, not God in a body of human flesh. He only appealed to the ignorant and naive not to the educated and elite, those who have “the knowledge”.

Jude

Q. What was Jude's warning all about?

A. There are godless teachers purporting to be Christians who accept immoral sexual practices of the pagans, condemn what they do not understand and teach that Jesus was not God in a human body – only a phantom.

Revelation

- Q. What was the message God wanted to convey through John to the Christians undergoing persecution from the Jews, Pagans and Romans?
- A. Through John, God is letting His people know that He is aware of the miserable conditions under which they are forced to endure. I am in control of the world; this situation will not last forever so hold firm to your faith in Me. But, some of those in the churches of Asia have yielded to the pressure of persecution by allowing pagan practices such as sexual immorality, while others have turned back to paganism or Judaism. Repent and return to Christ to receive eternal life.