

**A guidebook for**

**GOD'S  
BOOK**



**A guidebook for**

# **GOD'S BOOK**

**A Guide to Reading the Bible in  
One Year**

**&**

**A common man's commentary**

**Harold David Conley**

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When quoting the Holy Scriptures, The King James Version of the Bible has been used throughout this book.

*This book is dedicated to God Almighty who gave us His Holy Word to tell us what we should know, how we should live, and what we should believe. It is also dedicated to my family (especially my wife, Debra) and to the many people who have supported and encouraged me through the years.*

*Thank you for the kind words!*

*Without you (and you know who you are) this book would not have been published!*

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# Introduction

This book is designed to be used in several ways. The primary focus is to guide the reader through a daily reading of the Bible (365 days). Each day a suggested scripture reference is given at the top of the page. The reader is then offered some guidance as to what the selected scripture holds for them. The reader will then go to their personal Bible and read the daily selection. Notice the daily selected reading is not always in the order that you will find it in your Bible. This will happen when books are closely related to one another and are better read together.

The book can also be used as a common man's commentary! Find the desired selection easily using the Table of Contents and find the comments on the referenced page(s).

The book can be used in a Bible Class or personal study group. Once the class has selected a book of the Bible to study, this book can be used to supplement that study.

It is the author's hope that this work will help the reader better understand the Bible regardless how the reader chooses to use it.

## CHAPTER ONE

# The Five Books of Law

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

## Day 1      Genesis Chapters 1-3

Law

"In the beginning God ..."! That's how it all started! As we read today's passage, don't forget Moses wrote (by inspiration of course) to the Hebrews wandering in the wilderness. They would die there! Pretend you are one of those people. You are sadly aware that your lack of faith and disobedience costed you the "Promised Land". You won't get to go, but you surely want your children to inherit the land.

You need them to remember that Adam & Eve were ejected from the Garden of Eden when they disobeyed God. Their sin separated them from God. The consequence of Adam's sin has affected the entire world ever since. We are living in a "fallen" world because of his actions. You would remind your son that you missed the opportunity to enjoy the "Promised Land" for the exact same reason! You sinned against God! You did it your way instead of God's way. As you take your children on your knee, you tell them to check with God in the beginning before they make any decision.

We all are looking forward to our "Promised Land". Our "Garden of Eden". Heaven! Today, you will make some decisions. Before you do, make sure you check with God's Will first.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Genesis 1:26 "And God said, Let US make man in OUR image..."! John 1:1 & 14 tells us that Jesus was there! Also in Genesis 3:15, Jesus is the prophesied "seed" that would crush our sin problem. In Adam, we as sinners must die, but in Christ, we all have life (Romans 5:12-21).

## Day 2                      Genesis Chapters 4 - 7

Law

The first people to read this text were wandering in a wilderness. Many were doomed to die there! Imagine you are one of those Hebrews. How sad you feel to know you missed the opportunity to enter the "Promised Land". Your selfish decisions and uncontrolled emotions caused you to reject Joshua and Caleb's advice to take the land. The consequences of your actions were monumental! You don't want your children to repeat your mistake. What do they need to know?

You remind your children that when Cain's uncontrolled emotions moved him to kill Abel, he suffered the consequences. When the whole world started following their own desires and lusts, they suffered the consequences. Noah's faith moved him to build an ark and it saved his life! He begged everyone he knew to get into the ark. Sadly, they selfishly ignored his warning. They missed the boat! You explain to your son he will have an opportunity to go into the "Promised Land" someday. You firmly say to him, "Don't miss the boat!"

In I Peter 3:20-21 we are reminded that only eight people were saved in Noah's ark. All those that followed their own lusts perished. Peter went on to explain that the flood waters then, speaks of water baptism today. He said that "baptism doth also now save us". Why? Compare Galatians 3:27. We will have more to say about that when we read Galatians and I Peter. Right now suffice it to say that if we want to be saved ... we had better not miss the boat!

**In the Shadow... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus was not in the ark - Jesus IS the ark! The shadow figure is simply this: If you were in the ark, you were saved. If you are In Christ, you are saved! (II Timothy 2:10)

## Day 3      Genesis Chapters 8 - 11

Law

You are still imagining that you are one of the Hebrews who had been freed from Egyptian bondage. God had used Moses to save you. Unfortunately, you refused to go on into the land of promise. You thought you knew more than God about the matter. After all, there were giants in the land! Now you realize that God knows best, but it's too late for you. You missed the opportunity to enjoy the promise of God. What does your children need to know?

You call your child over and read this portion of Moses' writing. You show him Noah still made mistakes even after he trusted God's salvation through the ark. We must always humble ourselves before God. Never think we have "arrived". Don't become like those who tried to build a tower to make a name for themselves. How arrogant they were! They thought they knew more than God about the matter! Couldn't they build a tower and knock on His front door? "No, child," you warn, "Humble yourself before God, or He will do it for you! Don't die in this wilderness!"

Today we are building our lives. Some think we know more than God about the matter. Don't we know best how to do it? Haven't we got it all figured out? Couldn't we just build our lives without God? No! Humble yourself. Don't die in this life's "wilderness".

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The people who built the Tower of Babel wanted to get glory for themselves. As a result they were divided. The Glory belongs to God and Jesus. One day all nationalities, cultures, races, and languages will be united giving praise to "The Lamb" - Jesus! (Revelation 7:9-10)

## Day 4      **Genesis Chapters 12 - 15**

Law

"Why didn't I believe God's promise?" you ask yourself as you read this text. You are a Hebrew. Moses has led you out of the cruel bondage of Egypt. Just as you were about to go into the "Promised Land", you doubted God's promise. As a result, your generation is condemned to die in the wilderness! You brush back a tear as you read this portion of Moses' book to your children.

You proudly tell your son that their forefather, Abraham, believed God. He left his home in Ur (present day Iraq) and faithfully went to the land of the Canaanite (present day Israel). God promised him, in no uncertain terms, that He would give him the land. God extended the promise to Abraham's "seed". Over and over in this portion of Genesis, God reaffirms His promise. When Abram (Abraham) had to flee, God was with him. When dealing with family issues, God was with him. When he had to fight, God was with him. God had made a promise. God keeps his promises! You tell your son that he is one of Abraham's "seed". God has promised him "rest" in the land! "Please don't be like me," you tell him, "When your opportunity comes to enter into that "rest", trust God and go!"

Hebrews chapters 3 & 4 tell us there is another "rest" that God has promised! Heaven is our "promised land". Our land of "rest"! The generation that followed Moses didn't get to enter into Canaan land because they didn't believe the promise God had made to their father, Abraham. If we don't believe in the promise God has given us through Jesus, we will not enter Heaven.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Genesis 12:3 "... in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." There is the "seed" promise again. The "seed" is Jesus (Galatians 3:16)! God dealt with the Jewish nation to show "all the families of the earth" how He deals with mankind. If we trust in God through Jesus, we will have "rest"! We also see Melchizedek in Chapter 14. He was both King and Priest. Hebrews chapter 7 explains he was a "shadow" of our King and Priest, Jesus. Since Melchizedek blessed Abraham and received tithes from him, he is greater than Abraham. This was God's way of showing the world that His true people are not physical Jews. God's people are those who are in Christ! Are you a Christian?

**Day 5      Genesis Chapters 16 - 18**

Law

"Even our father, Abraham, had his doubts," you tell your son. God promised His "seed" would inherit the land of Canaan. He promised His "seed" would be as the "dust of the earth" and the "stars of the heaven". How could this be, seeing he had no children! Abram was 75 years old when God made that promise. More than ten years had gone by. With each passing year came a bit more doubt. Perhaps God needed a little help in keeping his promise. His wife, Sarai, was too old. Abram himself was 86 years old now. They decided Abram should take Sarai's slave girl, Hagar, to be his wife. Hagar had a son. Surely this was God's plan after all! Ishmael would be the "seed" promised by God!

"No!" was God's clear response. Genesis 16:10-12 explains that Ishmael would indeed have a multitude of seed, but they would be "wild" men. They would be "against every man" and every man would be "against" them. Thirteen years later, when Abram was 99 years old, God reaffirmed His promise to Abram. Sarai will have a child! God changed their names to show they would be the "Father" and "Princess" of many! He also told Abraham (Abram's new name) to circumcise himself, his thirteen year old son, Ishmael, and all males under his authority. This would be a token of the Covenant (solemn promise) between God and Abraham.

Today, don't try to help God keep his promise. We will make a mess of things. I believe we are still feeling the consequences of Abraham's "help" through Ishmael's seed. Just be obedient and patient. God will keep His promise in His time.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Circumcision is a "shadow" of Jesus. In Jesus, physical circumcision has no profit at all, but it is our FAITH in him that gives us our covenant with God (Galatians 5:6). We are not a child of God through circumcision of our flesh (on the outside). We are children of God if we circumcise our hearts (on the inside) (Romans 2:28-29). It is the follower of Jesus Christ, the Christian, who are God's children and enjoy His promises! Are you a Christian?



## Day 6      Genesis Chapters 19 – 20

Law

"Oh Father," your son calls to you with fear in his voice. "There are wicked people in the land of Canaan! Will we be safe?" You understand exactly how he feels. You remember how afraid you were when the spies told you that there were giants in the land! You smile reassuringly as you read this portion of Moses' book. God destroyed the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, yet he saved Lot. Lot was Abraham's nephew. Abraham had interceded with God for Lot's sake. That's why God saved Lot. You remind your son he is Abraham's seed. God will destroy the wicked and save him because he made a promise to Abraham! You also show from this part of the book that God humbled the king of Gerar because he offended Abraham. After God's rebuke, the king said to Abraham, "my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee."

"Son, God will always be with you", you explain, "even in the midst of evil people!" You assure your boy that when he has an opportunity to take the land of promise, he should remember God is much more powerful than wicked cities. God can deal with those kings in Canaan! God will be with you! You will be able to take the land and "dwell where it pleaseth thee"!

Today we as Christians, are surrounded by wickedness. From sodomy to stealing! From mischief to murder! Yet, we can rest assured that God is with us. We have been promised eternal life in Heaven. I can just imagine Jesus standing in front of all those mansions He has prepared for us and saying, "Dwell where you please"!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** We may have just missed him! Remember Genesis 18:2 when Abraham met with, and entertained, THREE men. In Genesis 18:22 these THREE men went toward Sodom. However, in today's reading only TWO angels visited Lot! Where was the THIRD? Could he have been Jesus? Perhaps God sent His Son in the form of an unknown stranger to tell Abraham of God's intention to give him the promised son, Isaac. At the same time, they knew of the certain destruction to come upon the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jesus offers salvation, yet many will reject it. They will be destroyed. We have a choice. We can live in Safety or in Sodom ... "Dwell where you please"!

**Day 7      Genesis Chapters 21 - 23**

Law

God sent Moses to lead His people, the Hebrews, out of Egyptian bondage. Moses was to lead them to the “Promised Land”. Acts 7:38 tells us they were called the “church in the wilderness”. Unfortunately, the people didn’t trust God to give them the land. That generation was condemned to wander in the wilderness until they died. Moses knew the next generation would have the opportunity to take the land. He wrote this book to show them they had a RIGHT to the land!

God told Abraham to send Hagar and her son, Ishmael, away. This broke Abraham’s heart, but God insisted it must be done. Why? It’s because Isaac was the promised son, not Ishmael. Ishmael’s seed would not have the inheritance. Moses tells this generation they are Isaac’s seed. This “church in the wilderness” has a RIGHT to the land promised to their father, Abraham. In addition, the king of the area, Abimelech, made a binding contract with Abraham allowing his seed to occupy the land! Abraham even purchased a cemetery plot in Canaan land to bury Sarah! They already OWN the land! Go into the land! It’s already yours! It has been bought and paid for!

Today, we are the church! We can rest assured Heaven is our home! It has been bought and paid for! How? Acts 20:28 answers that question: “... he hath purchased with his own blood”!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** In the middle of this passage, chapter 22 tells an incredible story! Abraham was told to offer his son, Isaac, to God. “Father Abraham” is a shadow of Father God. The son, Isaac, is a shadow of Jesus, the Son. The mountain range in the land of Moriah, where Isaac was to be sacrificed, is the same place where Jesus was crucified! Abraham brought two of his young men with them. Jesus was crucified between two thieves. Abraham traveled for three days to the place of the sacrifice. Jesus was in the tomb for three days before his resurrection. Isaac carried the wood for his sacrifice on his own back! Jesus carried the wooden cross for his sacrifice on His own back! Isaac was NOT sacrificed ... JESUS WAS!!! What a difference!! Become a Christian today and God will add you to the church (Acts 2:47). Why? Heaven already belongs to the church! The blood of Jesus has bought and paid for it!!!

**Day 8                      Genesis Chapters 24 - 25**

Law

Moses has succeeded in convincing the Hebrews they have a RIGHT to the land that God has promised, but they have a question. “We are not the ONLY descendants of Abraham!” Moses had already explained that Ishmael would not inherit the land, but what about Abraham’s other sons? After Sarah died, Abraham remarried. His new wife, Keturah, had six sons! Do they have any right to the land?

“No” is God’s clear answer. Abraham gave those son’s “gifts” and fulfilled any obligation he had to them. It was to Isaac he gave “all that he had”! Moses shows in this text that the folks in the “church in the wilderness” were indeed the only rightful heirs to the land! This assures them, although many CLAIM the right to the promise, only they have it!

Today, we are the church! Through Jesus, we are the only heirs to the promise. There is no other way to get to Heaven! Many CLAIM salvation in some other name, but only we have it! (Acts 4:12)

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Events in Isaac’s life have shadowed Jesus. In today’s reading we saw Abraham, the father, insisted Isaac, his son, have a special bride. The church is the “bride of Christ” (Revelation 21:9). Christians are the church (the only true people of God). We are special. We are called out of this world to be His bride. Let’s be faithful to our “husband”!

**Day 9      Genesis Chapters 26 - 28**

Law

Moses has succeeded in convincing the Hebrews they have a RIGHT to the land God has promised through Abraham, but they have a question. “What about the descendants of Isaac?” After Abraham died, his son, Isaac, was the promised one. God reaffirmed His covenant (solemn promise) with Isaac (Genesis 26:3-4). When famine hit the land, just as it had in the days of Abraham, God was with Isaac. When the king of the region in Canaan offended Isaac, just as they had Abraham, God was with Isaac. Isaac was virtually following in his father’s footsteps! There was a big difference. Abraham had only ONE son with his wife, Sarah. Isaac had TWO children with his wife, Rebekah. Their names were Jacob and Esau. The folks following Moses in the wilderness were the seed of Jacob. What about the seed of Esau? Do they have rights to the land?

“No” is God’s clear answer. Esau “despised” his Birthright and sold it to Jacob for a bowl of soup! Esau even lost the very important Blessing to Jacob! This was no surprise to God. He had told Rebekah, while the boys were in her womb, “the elder shall serve the younger.” In Genesis 28:4 Isaac told Jacob he had the “blessing of Abraham”! There could be no doubt that the “church in the wilderness” was indeed the only rightful heirs to the land! This assures them, although others CLAIM the right to the promise, only they have it!

Again we are reminded that we are the church! Through Jesus, we are the only heirs to the promise. There is no other way to get to Heaven! Many CLAIM salvation in some other name, but only we have it! (Acts 4:12)

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** In Genesis 28:12-15 we see God reaffirming His promise that He had originally made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, yet this time He gave it to Jacob. There we see that “seed” promise again ... “in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed (vs.14)”! God has fulfilled that promise. The “seed” is Jesus (Galatians 3:16). He has certainly blessed all the families of the earth!

## Day 10      Genesis Chapters 29 - 30

Law

As you think about all that Moses had written so far, you look out at the tens of thousands of people camped in the wilderness. They are grouped according to their tribe. In this portion of Moses' book you are reminded how these tribes began. When Jacob left home, he lived with his uncle Laban. He worked for him more than 21 years! During that time he married both of Laban's daughters. He had many children with them and their two servant girls. These children became the "Fathers" of each of these tribes. Moses reminds you that Laban took advantage of Jacob. Even though Jacob was deceived, God took care of him. All things worked together for Jacob's good.

Jacob had gone to Laban with nothing, but when he left, he had become a very wealthy man! God had blessed him with many children for his heritage. God was certainly with Jacob. You call your son to your side. You show him all the tribes camped in the open wilderness. "Son," you say with a lump in your throat, "All these people came from one man who had nothing! While we were in Egypt we were slaves. We had nothing! When the time comes for you to go into the land, trust God! He will make all things work together for your good!"

As Christians, we are God's people. He has promised us in Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." God had a purpose for Jacob. God has a purpose for us. All things will work together for good.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Leah, one of Jacob's wives, ultimately has six sons and one daughter. She named the fourth son, Judah, which means "Praise". Leah could not have known Jesus would be born through the tribe of Judah. It is fitting since Jesus is praise perfected (Matthew 21:15-16)! Judah is also where the word "Jew" originates. The people of God will become known as "Jews". Paul makes a play on Judah's name when he explains Christians are the real "Jews" in Romans 2:29 ... "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the

heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Paul is saying that a fleshly circumcised Jew (Judah) is not the one who has the real praise (Judah). The real praise (Judah) belongs to the one who circumcises their heart in the spirit! These are the followers of Christ. Are you a Christian?

**Day 11      Genesis Chapters 31 - 32**

Law

Moses reminded the Hebrews in this portion of the text that Laban had taken advantage of Jacob and “changed his wages” many times. This did not affect the outcome. God was with Jacob and he prospered.

This will be true with the Hebrews in the land. Nations will deceive them. They will attack them. They will hate them. This will not affect the outcome. God will be with them and they will prosper.

As Christians, we are God’s people. Folks may lie to us, cheat us, and hate us, but this will not affect the outcome. God is with us. He has promised us Heaven. If we’ll trust Him, we will be saved.

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Just before Jacob met Esau he had a strange encounter. He wrestled a man all night. The man finally blessed Jacob. He changed his name from Jacob (heel grabber) to Israel (Prince of God). This was a reaffirmation of the covenant. Jacob later realized this was actually a manifestation of God Himself. That is why he named the place Peniel (Face of God). Jesus is Emmanuel (God with us). Many believe this was a visit to Jacob from Jesus Himself.

## Day 12      Genesis Chapters 33 - 35

Law

Jacob was so worried about meeting his brother Esau. Perhaps he forgot about God's promise to be with him. After all that worry, everything turned out fine. We also see Jacob's boys doing something that was very upsetting. Jacob worried about that also. Everything turned out fine.

God told Jacob to trust and worship Him. If he did that, everything will turn out fine. Sure Jacob had problems in the family. Of course Jacob lost loved ones. Yes, things happened that were not good. However, God told Jacob if he would remain faithful, everything would be fine. After all, God had made a promise. He intended to keep it!

What are you worried about today? What has happened that has broken your heart or stirred a fearful feeling in your mind? It isn't comfortable, but trust God and worship Him. Everything will be fine. After all, God has promised you a home in Heaven. That's a promise He intends to keep!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jacob returned to Bethel (The House of God) to worship God. Today the church is the "House of God" (I Timothy 3:15). Jesus is the head of the church (Ephesians 5:23). The promise made to Jacob (Israel) at Bethel is a shadow of Jesus' promise to His church ... US!



## Day 13      Genesis Chapters 36 - 38

Law

“Stay awake!” You nudge your son as you read the family heritage of Esau. “Esau intermarried among the people of Canaan,” you explain. “Esau produced dukes and kings! He became the father of the Edomites! That did not change God’s mind about who would get the land!” Before going into the long list of names in chapter 36 don’t miss verses 6 & 7. There we see Jacob and Esau’s combined wealth could not be sustained by the land. One of them had to go! Esau LEFT Canaan! He has forfeited any claim to it for his heirs. The land clearly belongs to Israel (Jacob’s new name) and his heirs. “Son,” you say as you look deep into his eyes, “You are an Israelite, not an Edomite! The land belongs to you!”

The narrative changes from genealogy back to history. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers. The brothers lied to their father, Jacob. You cringe as you remember Jacob had lied to his father too! “What goes around comes around,” you tell your son. You see this more clearly as you read the following chapter. Moses tells of the deceit of Judah against his daughter-in-law, Tamar. In the end, Judah was deceived, but he admitted Tamar was “more righteous”!

We know from Matthew 1:3 that Tamar was in the blood line of Jesus Christ! God can take man’s deceitful intentions and use them for good. Is there is someone in your life who has deceived you? Have you deceived someone? It may be true you have suffered great anguish and heart ache. Can you let go? Can you trust God for the outcome? Trust in His promises and watch what God can do!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Joseph is a type of Christ. Joseph will save his people from certain death. Jesus was sent to save us from spiritual death. In chapter 37 Joseph told about his dreams. One day his brothers would bow down to him. Even his father would bow down. Jacob was upset with Joseph. It was inconceivable that Israel would bow down to one of his own children! Yet that is exactly what happened! Jesus is a Jew, a child of Israel. Israel must bow down to Jesus to be saved. They, like us, must become Christians! No man can be saved outside of Jesus Christ ... not even Israel!

**Day 14      Genesis Chapters 39 - 41**

Law

Every morning you wake up to another day in the wilderness. Oh how you wished you would have trusted God and taken the land promised by Him, but you didn't! You will die in this wilderness. Your son needs to learn if he will simply trust God and obey Him, God will provide. This part of Moses' book gives a clear example of God's providential care.

Your son's emotions swing up and down as you read the story of Joseph. You watched earlier as he was horrified when his brothers sold him into slavery. You couldn't help but notice how happy your boy was when God blessed him in Potiphar's house. Then you saw him become upset as Potiphar's wife falsely accused him. That feeling soon gave way to more joy as Joseph was blessed in the prison and helped Pharaoh's butler. Yet anger filled your boy's eyes when Pharaoh's butler forgot about him for two years! Then you saw how happy your son was to hear Joseph became the second highest ruler in all the land of Egypt! This was the greatest "rags to riches back to rags then back to riches then even greater riches" story ever told!

Joseph had no idea he would become so great. He simply did the right thing regardless of his circumstances. He could have blamed God for what his brothers did to him and refuse to give Potiphar honest work. He could have hated Potiphar's wife and refused to work in the prison. He could have refused to help Pharaoh and the country which put him into slavery. He could have ... but he didn't! He followed God's way. God blessed him!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Joseph is a type of Christ. Joseph was sent to a foreign land to prepare for his people's salvation. Jesus was sent to this earth to save us. Jesus had every opportunity to refuse to do God's Will, but he always submitted and said, "... nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). In Genesis 41:57 we see in today's reading all the countries came to Joseph! If you want to be saved today ... you have to come to Jesus! Are you a Christian?

**Day 15      Genesis Chapters 42 - 44**

Law

"Can you imagine how Joseph felt?" you ask your son as you read him this passage. The last time Joseph had seen his brothers, their faces were filled with anger, hate, and pride. That day, they were humbled and bowing before him! "Joseph remembered his dreams!" your son exclaimed. "God knew they were going to bow!" Joseph wept!

Joseph put his brothers through a series of tests to see if they were truly changed men. Would they give up Benjamin as they had given him up so many years ago? They would NOT! They pleaded for Benjamin. They had indeed changed. Joseph wept!

People can change. It may be rare, but it does happen! Shouldn't we have compassion on these folks? They have hurt us. They have betrayed us. They have done horrible things to us. Joseph wept ... even after all he had been through. Why? How could he be so compassionate? He saw God's plan was greater than man's hand! When we see the greater picture of God's hand in our lives, we, too, can weep!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Judah finally said what Joseph needed to hear! Judah offered himself for Benjamin! Jesus is the "lion of the tribe of Judah" (Revelation 5:5). Judah's love for his father and his brother was to be admired, but it was only a shadow of Jesus' love for Father God and us. What great love He showed by sacrificing Himself for all those that believe! Do you believe?

## Day 16      Genesis Chapters 45 - 47

Law

What a tender and compassionate moment it was when Joseph revealed who he really was to his brothers. The emotions were mixed. The brothers were shocked, happy, and afraid all at the same time! Joseph had the power to have them killed. Who would have blamed him? Look what they had put him through! Joseph saw the big picture! There was purpose in everything that happened. He had more work to do! It wasn't finished!

Joseph was able to tell his brothers, "It was not you that sent me here, but God". Joseph even told his brothers not to be angry with themselves! Wow! Joseph, who could have been furious, showed great mercy and forgiveness. Joseph immediately began the plans to bring his family down to Egypt and save them from certain destruction. How could he do that? Where did he find the strength to forgive and move on? He saw the big picture! He had to finish the purpose God had for him! He basically said, "Boys, put this behind us! There's more work to do! It's not finished!"

Who do we need to forgive today? God has a purpose for our lives. We don't have time to devote to regret, hate, fear, and anger. We need to find what God's purpose is for our lives. Put certain things behind us! There's more work to do! It's not finished!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Joseph is a shadow of Jesus. God sent Joseph to save his people. God sent Jesus to save us. Who put Jesus on the cross? The Jews? The Romans? No! God did! He used these folks to fulfill His plan! Just like Joseph was able to forgive his brothers, Jesus was able to say, "Father, forgive them". Jesus, like Joseph, followed God's purpose. He had work to do! Then, with his last breath, he was able to say, "It is finished"!

## Day 17      Genesis Chapters 48 - 50

Law

"Son," you ask as you finish reading Moses' first book, "Do you see a clear message in this book?" You know someday your son will be asked to trust God and enter the "Promised Land". You plan to read this book to him over and over again. He must understand that God has made a promise to him ... a promise that He fully intends to keep!

In this last portion of the book Jacob blesses his sons. The blessing of the father has great impact. It is not simply a "wish you well" gesture. The blessing carries the full power of God behind it. Whatever the father says about the future of the son is binding! It will come to pass! Jacob's blessings gave clear indications that his children, the Israelites, have a future! Jacob died after blessing his sons. He had made them promise to bury him in the cemetery plot that his grandfather, Abraham, had purchased. The same plot where his family had been buried. You lift your eyes from the pages of the book and look into the distance. There you see it. The casket of Joseph! He, too, had made the people promise to bury him in the family cemetery. Here it is, about 400 years later. You should have kept that promise, but you were too afraid to trust God. You tell your son, "Make sure you get Joseph to the Promised Land!"

God has promised us Heaven! He fully intends to keep that promise. Do we believe it?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** We saw shadows of Jesus throughout this book. Let's see one more. Notice the blessing Jacob gave to Judah in chapter 49:10. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The "scepter" belongs to the king. The word "Shiloh" means "Peaceful One". Jesus is the "King of kings". Jesus is the "Prince of Peace"! He is "Shiloh"! The people gather to Him. That's why Jesus said, "Come unto me"! Christians are God's people today. Christians have answered the call to "come to Jesus". They have gathered to Him! Are you a Christian?

**Day 18      Exodus Chapters 1 - 3**

Law

As you read through Exodus, imagine you are a Hebrew. You were a teenager when you left Egypt. Old enough to remember the details of the Exodus, but young enough to escape the sentence of death in the wilderness. You are now forty years old. In a few years the generation that failed to trust God to deliver the Promised Land to them will be gone. You are the next generation. You will see the Promised Land! Your father has impressed upon you the need to trust God. As you read the story of the Exodus, you find more reasons to trust Him!

You glance up from your reading as the author of the book, Moses himself, walks by. He is very strong even though he is almost 120 years old! You can imagine how proud his parents must have been. When the Egyptians passed the despicable law to kill the new born Hebrew males, they found a way to save Moses. You know it was God's providence that placed Moses in Pharaoh's house for forty years. Even when Moses killed an Egyptian and left Egypt, you understand that God still had His hand upon him. It was so sweet to read these words, "... God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."! God had not forgotten you! When Moses saw the bush burning yet not consumed, he knew there was something special about it. Upon investigation, he found that God had called him to deliver the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage. God explained the mission, but He also told Moses that Pharaoh would not let the people go easily. Pharaoh's resistance would allow God to show His great strength and power!

Today, God has not forgotten us! We are in the bondage of sin and death, but God has sent His Son, Jesus, to deliver us! The question is ... will we trust Him?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Like Jesus, Moses was a savior born under the sentence of death! Joseph carried Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape death. Moses was under the protection of the daughter of the Egyptian king! It is easy to see Moses is a shadow of Jesus. As we read through Exodus, the shadow

becomes even more vivid! One more glimpse of Jesus ... In Exodus 3:14, God told Moses who He was, "I AM THAT I AM"! In John 8:58, Jesus told unbelieving Jews He is "I AM"! Jesus is God!

**Day 19      Exodus Chapters 4 - 6**

Law

You are so happy God remembered the promise He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You are very excited He chose a deliverer, Moses, to bring you to the Promised Land. You wished your father's generation had believed, but they didn't. Your generation is positioned to take the land. You must believe! Even Moses had a hard time trusting God at first. Regardless of the signs God showed him, he still asked God to send someone else! God became angry! He sent Aaron, Moses' brother, with him. No more excuses! Finally, Moses took his family and went to Egypt to do what he was told.

Moses told the Hebrew slaves God had spoken to him. He did the signs God gave him to do. The people believed! They were so grateful. They bowed their heads and worshipped. This motivated Moses and Aaron. They went before Pharaoh and TOLD him God demanded him to release the Hebrews. Pharaoh scoffed at the notion. He increased their burdens to break them further. The Hebrews quickly lost faith. They complained to Moses. Moses approached God and asked Him, "Why is it that thou sent ME?" That was the problem! Moses thought the salvation was through HIM!!! As you read chapter 6 verses 1 through 8, you count how many times God said, "I"! You soon realize it was never about Moses ... It was about God! He would get the glory! Now that Moses was humbled, God was ready to send him back to Pharaoh and get the job done!

Today we may think it's about us! It's about how well we do the work God has sent us to do. Perhaps we think it's about how many people believe in us and follow us. The reality is, it's ALWAYS about God. If God doesn't get the glory, then we are on the wrong path!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** There are three very interesting verses in chapter 4 ... verses 24 - 26. Circumcision was a token of God's Covenant with the Jews. Every time they looked at their circumcision, they were reminded of God's promises to Abraham. God commanded all Jews circumcise their



children. Moses had not circumcised his son! Zipporah, Moses' wife, was not Jewish. She didn't understand the significance of the act. God had just told Moses He would kill the first born son of Pharaoh. Even Moses was not exempt from God's law. He and his son would die if they did not submit to the law of circumcision. Thankfully, Zipporah yielded and spared them! This is a Shadow of Christ. Jesus is the Son of God! He came to pay the penalty for our sins. All who would be saved must submit to God's New Covenant. If we refuse, then we must pay the penalty ourselves!

**Day 20      Exodus Chapters 7 - 9**

Law

Moses had finally accepted God was in control. The success of the mission totally depended on Him. Moses simply trusted and obeyed, the rest was up to God. The Egyptians worshipped many gods. They believed the Nile River itself was a god. They believed there was a god governing frogs and cattle. A god named "Ra" was their sun god. They even had a god of fertility governing child birth. You clearly see the plagues God sent were to show the Egyptians He was mightier than any of their so-called gods.

Moses learned to trust God. Trust is wonderful. Misplaced trust is horrifying! If you place your trust in a power that doesn't exist, there will be severe consequences! God showed His power wasn't to be questioned when He turned the Nile River into blood. Then sending the plagues of frogs, lice, flies, disease on the cattle, boils on men, hail mingle with fire, and more, God revealed His power over all their deities. God is, was, and always will be, the only God!

Today we may place our trust in our jobs, education, talents, parents, spouses, children, possessions, or even our government. When people believe these are the most powerful things in their lives, they become despondent when they are taken away or fail to provide the security they had hoped for. The truth is, only God can be relied upon for our strength!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The plagues that God sent upon the Egyptians are a Shadow of the miracles that Jesus did when among men. The difference is that God's plagues pronounced judgment and inflicted disease. Jesus' miracles heralded salvation and healing! The Hebrew nation was saved as a result of God's power over the Pharaoh and the Egyptians. We are saved through Jesus' power over sin and death!

**Day 21 Exodus Chapters 10 - 12**

Law

God hardened Pharaoh's heart! Even after the locusts and the darkness, he would not let the people go! God said He had reasons that, even after nine plagues, the Hebrews would still be in bondage. "That I might show these my signs before him" was one reason given. The second reason was "That thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt." Another reason was "That ye may know how that I am the Lord"! As you imagine yourself to be a Hebrew, you remember these plagues. You remember the awe you felt. You have told it to your sons! You fully expect the events to be told to your grandchildren and generations to come! You absolutely believe God is the Lord! God achieved His purposes!

God's last plague took the firstborn of all Egyptians, even the firstborn of their slaves and cattle! The firstborn of the Hebrews would also die unless they kept a new feast. The Passover would be celebrated every year after this night. This was the night the firstborn of the Hebrews were spared because they ate a special meal and put the blood of a lamb over the door and on the two side posts. When God came through and saw the blood, He passed over that house! Imagine you are the firstborn in your household. About midnight, you heard the cry throughout the country as so many die. Even the hard hearted Pharaoh lost his son. You ask your father, "Am I going to die tonight?" He smiles and says, "No son, we have applied the blood of the lamb!"

Today, we need to soften our hearts! Hard hearted people resist God. Soft hearted people submit to God's Will. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Lamb is a Shadow of Jesus. In your mind's eye, when you look at the blood at the top of the door and on the two side posts, you can almost see the crown of thorns on Jesus' head and His hands stretched out upon the cross! Has His blood been applied to the door of your soul? Have you "put on Christ"? Galatians 3:27 tells us "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Put on Christ TODAY! The Midnight Hour is closer than we think!

## Day 22 Exodus Chapters 13 - 15

Law

God called Israel His "firstborn". In this section of Moses' book, God commands the "firstborn" shall be "sanctified" or set apart. God had spared the firstborn of their children during the Passover. He told them when they get to the Promised Land, they were to keep this feast annually as a memorial of this great salvation!

God led the Hebrews out of Egypt. He went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. When they made it to the Red Sea, Pharaoh had hardened His heart yet again. This gave God another opportunity to show His great power. The Hebrew nation was told to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord"! God parted the sea allowing His people to safely cross. He told them to "go forward". Then God collapsed the waters upon the pursuing Egyptian soldiers. Moses then sang a song giving God all the Glory!

Today, God wants to "sanctify" us! He wants to set us apart for salvation! Be careful not to "get ahead" of God. Follow His lead, and when the time comes, "Stand Still" and see His Salvation! Then be prepared to "Go Forward" trusting that Salvation!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus IS the Salvation of God! He is the "Firstborn" of God, "sanctified", or set apart, specifically to save us through His blood. Jesus is God's pillar of cloud and fire, leading us through the wilderness of this life and finally to the "Promised Land", Heaven. In Revelation 15:3 we read about the ultimate Song of Moses and the Lamb singing praises to God for His Salvation!

## Day 23 Exodus Chapters 16 - 18

Law

The Hebrew nation was now free. The Egyptians were soundly defeated, and the children of Israel didn't even lift a spear! They were happy for their freedom, but they were concerned about their future! Now that they were in the wilderness, how would they feed themselves? What would they drink? They concluded they would surely die! As you imagine yourself to be one of those Hebrews, you recall how surprised you were your fathers had lost faith so quickly! Couldn't the God that sent locusts on Egypt send bread to the Hebrews? Couldn't the God that parted the waters of the Red Sea send water to the Hebrews? Of course He could, and He did!

"Manna" is a Hebrew word that means, "What is it?". That's what they called the bread that covered the ground each morning when they woke. It was bread from heaven! God also sent quail and fresh water. God even saved them from enemies. The countries had heard about this great nation coming out of Egypt. They wanted to stop them. What they failed to understand is if God can save them ... God can keep them saved! Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, came to visit. When he saw the stress Moses was under as the sole judge of the people, he advised him to delegate the responsibility. However, they brought the difficult cases to Moses himself.

Today, God wants to free us from the bondage of sin. He can save us, and He can sustain us! If the people had gone back to Egypt, they would have died. Since they stayed with God in the wilderness, they lived. Stay with God in the wilderness of this life. He will save you!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** "Manna" was bread from Heaven. Jesus said in John 6:51 He is the bread from heaven. If you "eat" Him you will live forever. Have we completely trusted the powerful blood of Jesus to save us? Do we trust Him to sustain us? Surely He is able to provide righteous judgment for our lives. Will we surrender to His judgment?

**Day 24 Exodus Chapters 19 - 21**

Law

You remember it like it was yesterday! You were a teenager, but the event will be with you the rest of your life! God had extended an invitation to the people: "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:" You remember the solemn reply: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.!" Moses told everyone to spend the next three days getting prepared to meet God. On the appointed day, God Himself came down and rested on Mt. Sinai in the form of smoke. The whole mountain shook! Then it happened ... God spoke! You heard it! You will never forget it! The deal was done. A covenant had been made between God and man!

Moses went up the mountain to get the terms of the covenant. Ten Commandments captured the heart of the covenant. The first four was concerning God. The last six dealt with man. Moses was given many more specific laws, but you could clearly see if you love God, and love your fellow man, you would automatically keep all the others! The laws were good laws. If kept, a nation could live in peace and harmony. God knew the best way to treat a servant. He knew how to deal with men who committed murder and manslaughter. His laws explained exactly how people should compensate someone they had harmed. They laid out the best way to hold people responsible for their actions. The rights of the unborn would be protected. There would be no frivolous lawsuits, no "pain & suffering" settlements, or unreasonable liabilities. It would be a fair and just system. Unfortunately, no one loved God or their fellow man perfectly. Though they made the promise to keep "ALL" the Lord speaks, they broke the covenant!

Today, we find ourselves in the same situation. The Law was given to show mankind we CAN'T keep it! I John 3:4 tells us when we "transgress" the law (which we all do) it is called "Sin". Romans 6:23 explains the "wages", or payment, for sin is death! When God gave Moses the Law, He exposed the whole world as the sinners we all are! We ALL deserve to die!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** God made a NEW Covenant with mankind! No one who ever lived could keep the law of God except Jesus! He was sent to condemn sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3)!! He was the only person who kept the law perfectly. He loved God perfectly! He loved man perfectly! Since He did not sin, He is the only one who is worthy to pay the "death penalty" for our sin! We now can enter into a NEW Covenant with God that forgives sin through Jesus' sacrifice! Have you sinned? The price must be paid! Jesus' blood is powerful enough to pay it for you. Apply His blood to your account today! Enter into the New Covenant with God!

**Day 25 Exodus Chapters 22 - 24**

Law

Laws, Laws, and more Laws! Would Moses ever stop writing?!! God gave him so much to bind on the people! How unfair! Then you read what was written. These laws are reasonable and fair. The Hebrew nation had been slaves for over 400 years. They didn't know how to draft a constitution and form a government. Even if they did, what would be the best laws to govern a society? The laws God gave Moses were perfect! There were specific instructions about how to deal with a thief. How to handle destruction of property. There were even built-in protections against frivolous lawsuits! God outlined distinct methods of assigning accountability and liability. The laws covered spiritual matters too; witchcraft, sexual immorality, and idolatry. God condemned perjury, civil riots, and bribery. He even gave laws concerning land conservation and animal control! He didn't leave out worship. The people were given specific times and instruction for praising God. If the society followed these legislations, they would be unified and strong. Surrounding countries would fear them!

Moses read these laws to the people. Once again you heard the people say, "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do". They even sealed the covenant with God by blood sacrifice! Yet you realize it was only a matter of time before they broke the covenant they had entered into.

Today, we would do well to obey God and keep His commandments. Our relationships would be better, our work ethics would be stronger, our lives would be richer, and our spiritual connection with God would be unfettered! Why do we allow the pleasure of sin to so easily draw us to self-destruction?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Look at chapter 23:20-23. God sent His "angel" to guide them to the Promised Land. If the people would "obey His voice" and do all God speaks, then they would be saved. This "angel" could be Jesus Himself! If not Jesus, certainly His Shadow! It is Jesus that God has "sent" to lead us to our Promised Land, Heaven. He



sealed the New Covenant by His own blood sacrifice! If we obey His voice and keep God's commandments, we will be saved. I John 2:3-4 says, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." God's salvation is free, but it is conditional! Do we hear His voice? Are we following Him?

**Day 26 Exodus Chapters 25 - 27**

Law

Everyone knows the LAST thing you read when putting something together is the INSTRUCTIONS! Why do you read them at all? Because you realize you did it WRONG! Then you have to find the instructions and get it RIGHT. As you imagine yourself to be a Hebrew, you almost make this mistake. In this section, God told Moses to command an offering from the people. With their gifts, Moses was to build some specific things in specific ways. God gave him detailed instructions. He told Moses, "According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it." God wanted to be SURE these things were built exactly the way He designed them.

There was an "Ark", or box. The lid on the box was called the "mercy seat". This is where the blood of a lamb would be placed, and God would meet the people! Then there was a table for bread. There was a golden candlestick. The "tabernacle", or tent, was where these items would be kept. It had a lot of specifications! Outside the tabernacle would be an altar to offer sacrifice. There would be a court area. God gave exact instructions how these items should not only be built, but how they were to be used, and when, and by whom!

Today, we learn there is a "true" tabernacle according to Hebrews chapters 8 & 9. It is the Church. The physical tabernacle was a type of the ultimate place of communion between God and man! No wonder God wanted it to be so precise. It was a picture of the "Bride" of Christ!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In this passage, Jesus' shadow is EVERYWHERE! Jesus' blood has been placed on the "mercy seat" where God has met us. Jesus is the "bread of life". Jesus is the "light of the world". Jesus' said in Matthew 16:18, "... I will build my church ..." the true tabernacle! He sacrificed His precious, sinless, blood for us! Have you been added to His church (Acts 2:47)? Follow the instructions!

**Day 27      Exodus Chapters 28 - 29**

Law

More instructions!!! God even gave Moses specific instructions about the clothes the priest should wear! They were to have a special "breast plate" with special stones. These stones were to be placed in a special order. He even gave a pattern for the priest's hat! He didn't stop there. He told Moses his brother, Aaron, and his sons, would be consecrated to be the High Priests. God explained the exact type and order of the sacrifices He expected to be carried out. If they followed these instructions and patterns, God promised, "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God."

Wow! What a promise! Yet you quickly realize the promise was conditional. If Aaron put on any other clothes than the ones God ordained, he would forfeit this promise! The people would be careful to carry this out God's way!

Today, we have a New Covenant with God based on a better priesthood! Jesus is our High Priest! God has given us specific instructions on how He chooses to be worshiped. If we worship in a different way, we forfeit the promise He has made of Heaven! As we read the New Testament, we will see God's new pattern!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Aaron is a shadow of Jesus. He has offered His OWN blood for us. He has brought that blood before God on our behalf. In I Corinthians chapter 11, we find we are to remember this sacrifice in an act of worship called "Communion" or "The Lord's Supper". According to Acts 20:7, this was done every Sunday. Let's be sure to follow the pattern! Just as the Old Testament worship pointed forward to what Jesus WOULD do, the New Testament worship points back to what Jesus DID do!

**Day 28 Exodus Chapters 30 - 32**

Law

God went on to explain He wanted an altar of incense and a laver built. He also wanted a special anointing oil and gave the recipe! After He appointed certain people to accomplish the building, He set up the "Sabbath Day" to be kept. Then God gave Moses two tables of stone where He wrote the commandments with His own finger!

Moses had been gone for many days. Anything could have happened to him. The people wanted a god to worship. How soon they had forgotten about the one true God! They got Moses' brother, Aaron, to build them an image of a calf made of gold. They worshiped the golden calf. God knew what they had done. He became very angry! He told Moses He would destroy the people and make Moses' seed a great nation. Moses begged God to forgive them! Moses knew God had made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel). Moses knew God keeps His promises! Unfortunately, many of the people did not keep their promise to God. Moses broke the tables of stone in the people's sight to show them they have broken the covenant God had made with them. When given the opportunity to repent, about three thousand refused. They were put to death!

Today, God still keeps His promises! The question is, will we? If we put anyone or anything before our service to God, that person or thing becomes our god. Don't let that happen! Serve God and keep His commandments! It's our purpose in life!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Moses is a type of Christ. Just as Moses delivered the Hebrews from the bondage of slavery, Jesus delivered us from the bondage of sin. Don't miss what Moses said in chapter 32 verses 31 & 32. Moses went up to the mountain to make an "atonement" for the people's sin. Then he offered himself! This is a shadow of Jesus' sacrifice for our atonement! God wouldn't accept Moses' offer, but He does accept the blood of Jesus! God knew His son would do this for the world and He sent Moses to paint the picture!

## Day 29 Exodus Chapters 33 - 35

Law

Moses had gone up the mountain to God several times. This time, in the eyes of the people, God appeared to Moses in front of the tent door as a cloudy pillar! He talked with him faced to face, as a man talks with his friend. The people worshiped God!

Moses wanted more! He asked God if he could see Him! "Show me thy glory" is the way he put it. God explained no man could look at Him and live. It would be too much for him. However, God did allow Moses to "see" Him. He put Moses in the cleft of a rock and covered him there with His hand. Then God caused His "glory" to pass by! Then Moses "saw" God as He "proclaimed" Himself. Moses "saw" God's Mercy, Grace, Patience, Goodness, Truth, Forgiving Nature, etc. Moses "saw" God's Person! Upon witnessing God, there was only one possible reaction Moses could have. He "made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped"! God then gave Moses two new tables of stone with the commandments written. Moses had broken the earlier ones. Though he had been in God's presence several times, this time Moses' face "shone"! He had "seen" God!

Today, we have an opportunity to "see" God! We can humble ourselves before Him and learn about Him. Then, as we learn, we can apply those qualities to our own lives and become more like Him.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Did you see Him? Chapter 34 verses 6 & 7! He is GOD! Philip was one of Jesus' disciples. He asked Jesus to show them the "Father". Jesus' response was eye opening, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father" (John 14:9). Jesus possesses all the qualities of God's nature. He is the "express image of His person" (Hebrews 1:3). Do you want to be like God? Then be like Christ! Become a Christian!!

## Day 30 Exodus Chapters 36 - 38

Law

Deja vu! It seems you have already read these chapters before! Earlier you read the instructions. You now read about the carrying out of the instructions. They are the same, because God was intent on them being the same! He was creating a picture of His glorious Son, Jesus and His Church! He wanted to be sure it was done right!

We do see something that gives us an insight on how to get God's work done on earth. There are two components. They are found in Chapter 36 verses 1 - 8. The first component is that God "put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary," into the heart of the folks who come to do the work. In other words, God gives us the ability to get the job done. We may think that we can't do it. We need to understand that God will give us the time, talent, and resources to do whatever He has called us to do! There is a second, and equally important, component. They received the offering of the people and it was more than enough. In fact, the people had to be "restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make, and too much."!!! The component is ... "we gotta wanna"!!! If the will of the people bow to the Will of God ... great things are going to get done!

Today, it works the same. The sad part is folks often are unwilling to yield to the Will of God. We don't "wanna"!!!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** There He was! Christ is God working in us to accomplish His Will. Paul understood this. He said in Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." It's really not you that is doing the work, its God working THROUGH you! You see, the question is not "What am I doing with Christ?" The REAL question is "What is Christ doing with me?" All we have to do is trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey! Do you "wanna"?

**Day 31 Exodus Chapters 39 - 40**

Law

You have been imagining yourself to be one of the Hebrews delivered from Egyptian bondage as you read this book. You were just a teenager when you witnessed the ten plagues. You recall how your heart raced as the Red Sea parted for you to cross. The sight of the smoke filled Mount Sinai quaking and hearing God's voice is imprinted in your mind forever. Watching Moses talk face to face with God Himself as He appeared in the form of a cloudy pillar in the door of the tent. Seeing Moses' face shine after witnessing the very personhood of God Himself. All these things, and more, are racing through your memory as you read.

It is the last chapter that moves you the most! After the tabernacle was completed and all the components were finished and in place, a cloud covered the tent! You knew it was God! His glory filled the place! Moses had been very close to God before, but His presence was so full even Moses couldn't go in! It was the most awesome sight you have seen thus far. You heard your father say what you were thinking, "God is with us!"

Today, God is with us. He is not in a physical tent, but He dwells in Christ's Church. Let's learn something about His presence - it is conditional! Read two verses again Chapter 40 verse 16 "Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he." Also verse 33 "... So Moses finished the work." THEN and only THEN did God's glory fill the tabernacle. If we fail to do God's Will God's Way, we forfeit His presence. Many want His presence, but they don't want to do His Will. The children of Israel wanted to go to the Promised Land, but they didn't want to trust and obey God. They died in the wilderness!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** We have seen Jesus' shadow in every component of the tabernacle and its furnishings. It speaks of His Church that He built which will never fail. Aaron and his sons washed themselves before entering into the tabernacle. I Corinthians 6:11 says "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

**Day 32      Leviticus Chapters 1 - 4**

Law

Leviticus has to do with the work of the priests, the sons of Levi. Hence “Leviticus”. The main teaching of the book is to answer the question, “How do I get rid of my sin?” That's the message of the whole Bible! Leviticus is divided into two sections. The first explains the Way to God through SACRIFICE. These are the “Ceremonial Laws” which deal with how the people were to approach God. The second explains the Walk with God through SANCTIFICATION. These are the “Civil Laws” which deal with how the people were to conduct themselves before God.

God wants the people to approach Him. That could only be done through proper Sacrifices. God gives Moses detailed instructions on the types of Sacrifices He expected. There were five of them. The first was the “Burnt Offering”. It was a free will offering that had to do with consecration. This means the person is dedicating themselves to God. Paul drew a parallel to this offering in Romans 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Here, Paul encourages us to consecrate our lives to God, not an animal. The second sacrifice was the “Meat or Meal Offering”. There was no flesh involved. It was wheat! It was not to be presented as grain, but it was to be cooked in some fashion. This spoke of the people's labor they offered to God. Then there was the “Peace Offering”. This represented the reconciliation of God to man. The priest could eat the Meat Offering and the Peace Offering. These first three were free will offerings. The next two were required. The “Sin Offering” was to be done once a year on the day of “Atonement”. The blood was to be carried into the Tabernacle and the body of the sacrifice was to be carried outside the camp. The people sinned against God, this was the sacrifice for that sin. The last offering is the “Trespass Offering”. We will talk about that in the next reading.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** He's EVERYWHERE! He is ALL of these Sacrifices rolled into one



ULTIMATE Sacrifice! He is our “Burnt Offering” for we are consecrated through Him. He is our “Meal Offering” as the “Bread of Life”. He is our “Peace Offering” for He reconciled us to God. He is our “Sin Offering” for He died for our sins. The way to God is through Sacrifice ... Jesus is that Sacrifice! Only Christians have this pathway to God! Are you a Christian?

**Day 33      Leviticus Chapters 5 - 7**

Law

In the last reading we saw four important sacrifices. There is one more mentioned in today's reading, the "Trespass Offering". God saw a difference between the "Sin Offering" and the "Trespass Offering". Perhaps the difference is the "Sin Offering" is for those offenses against God, while the "Trespass Offering" is for those offenses against their fellow man. Another possibility is the "Sin Offering" is for the HEART of man (we all are sinners), while the "Trespass Offering" is for the BEHAVIOR of man (the act of sin itself). One major difference is the "Trespass Offering" had to be accompanied with the person "making amends" and "restoration" for their offense. There could be no restoration with the "Sin Offering"!

The priests were to keep the fire on the altar always burning. It could never go out. They were also to eat certain portions of certain offerings. They were not to eat the blood at all!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus IS the Ultimate Sacrifice! Jesus' sacrifice is "always burning", continually cleansing us from sin. He is always calling folks to come to Him. He is ever ready to be your sacrifice. Peter said the church today is made up of a "royal priesthood" (I Peter 2:9). The priests in Leviticus offered animals' flesh and blood. These sacrifices could not take away sin, but they foreshadowed Jesus' sacrifice that certainly could – and does! Unlike those priests, Jesus commanded us (His Priests) to eat His flesh and drink His blood (Matthew 26:26-27)! His sacrifice is perfect! Each Sunday, Christians all over the world, as part of worship, keep communion in remembrance of His ultimate sacrifice. Are you a Christian?

**Day 34      Leviticus Chapters 8 - 10**

Law

Moses wrote this book to detail laws concerning the priests of Levi. That is why it is called “Leviticus”. Today we read the specific laws concerning the consecration of the priest. This not only includes his actions, it even includes laws concerning his dress! The priest was to wear a breastplate. We learned in Exodus this breastplate had twelve specific kinds of stones. Each stone represented the twelve tribes of Israel, the people of God. Today we see there were two items placed into that breastplate, the Urim and the Thummim. We don’t know exactly what they were, but the priest used them to determine God’s Will about things. We do know what their names mean. Urim means “Lights” and Thummim means “Perfections”.

The priests were required to do everything the way God had defined. Moses’ brother, Aaron, had two sons, Nadab and Abihu. There was a specific place the fire was to come from to burn incense upon. They took the fire from somewhere else. It was called “strange fire”. As a result, God sent fire down and consumed them! This showed how serious God was about the way He wanted His worship carried out!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Jesus is our High Priest! Jesus is our Urim ... the “Light of the World”. He is our Thummim, the “Perfect Sacrifice”! He has made us (the Church) the “light of the world” and “perfect” through His blood. The only way the people of God could approach Him was through the High Priest. Today, we can come boldly before God through Jesus (Hebrews 4:14-16)! However, we must come on God’s terms! Christians are not like Nadab and Abihu who put their own will above God’s. Christians surrender to God’s Will. They worship God according to the New Testament pattern He set up, not some pattern they particularly like. Are you a Christian?

**Day 35      Leviticus Chapters 11 - 12**

Law

God has given His people many “Ceremonial Laws” detailing the way He demanded to be worshipped. In Leviticus, He also gave “Civil or Social Laws”. Today we read about Food Laws. The vast number of Hebrews who came out of Egypt were, by and large, uneducated slaves. They didn’t know how to govern themselves or preserve public health. Some may believe God set up these food laws (called Kosher by the Jews) simply to see if the population would obey Him or not. Since God is a God of purpose and reason, it is more likely He wanted to preserve the public health. He outlined which things can be eaten, and which were to be avoided. We now know the things God forbade were foods that are most likely to become contaminated if not prepared properly (such as pork). They are also more likely to pass disease (such as rodents).

God also gave laws about what is expected of a woman who has given birth. He explicitly explains how long she is to be considered “unclean”. He also reminds them to circumcise the male children when they are eight days old. God is very concerned with what is “clean” and “unclean”.

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** These laws (and more that we shall read) would improve public health. However, God is ultimately concerned with mankind’s spiritual health and life. Under the New Testament, Paul makes it clear that physical food laws are really nothing (Romans 14:14). Also circumcision and uncircumcision are nothing (I Corinthians 7:19). What is important is spiritual cleanliness. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (I John 1:9). Jesus has made all Christians “clean”! Are you a Christian?

**Day 36      Leviticus Chapters 13 - 14**

Law

In 1847, Dr. Ignaz Semmelweiss, a physician in a Vienna hospital, discovered fatal infections were spread among patients by doctors who failed to wash their hands between examinations. God knew that infection could be spread without proper washing ever since He created man! In today's reading He gave specific laws to avoid the spread of infectious disease. Leviticus has been in man's possession for several thousand years. It makes you wonder why we only figured this out less than two hundred years ago! I suspect some people have been practicing washing and cleansing years before 1847!

Though today's reading deals specifically with the dreaded disease called leprosy, it speaks of God's ultimate concern for mankind's spiritual health. God gave detailed instructions on what to do to be saved from disease. Would we expect anything less from Him on what to do to be saved from sin?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Sin is the disease ... Jesus is the cure! Only Christians have applied the cleansing blood having been baptized to wash away sins (Acts 22:16). Are you a Christian?

**Day 37      Leviticus Chapters 15 - 17** Law

We have seen God give specific “Civil or Social Laws” which detail how to keep the Hebrews “clean”. Today’s reading shows similar content, but God directly deals with blood! In Chapter 15, He tells them what to do if a man is passing blood (or other bodily fluids). He also deals with women’s menstrual cycles. God talks about it as candidly as your doctor would talk about it in the privacy of his office! In Chapter 17, He forbids anyone from eating blood at all! He explained the life is in the blood. Since He has given it to make an atonement for their souls, He forbade them from eating it.

Between these two chapters we find Chapter 16. God explained the instructions for the “Day of Atonement”. Two goats were to be chosen. One was to be sacrificed. The blood of the sacrifice was placed on the “Mercy Seat” above the Ark of the Covenant. The other was to be the “Scapegoat”. It was to be released into the wilderness and “carry away” the sins of the people. After these two goats were treated in their respective manner, Aaron was to wash himself and his clothing.

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Jesus is BOTH the blood sacrifice AND the “Scapegoat”. After John the Baptist baptized Jesus, he watched Him walk away into the wilderness. Then he proclaimed, “... Behold he Lamb of God” (John 1:36). Jesus’ BLOOD is the Atonement for all Christians! Are you washed in the Blood of the Lamb? Are you a Christian?

**Day 38****Leviticus Chapters 18 - 20**

Law

God makes it perfectly clear to His people He is the “Lord your God” and He expects them to behave themselves accordingly! He specifically says His people don’t act like the other nations. His people follow His rules – period! God then gives them more “Civil” or “Social” laws which He expects them to heed.

God proceeds to outline specific rules which would separate them from the world. It is no accident He deals with sexual behavior. The world has twisted concepts about sexuality. God calls their concepts “abominations”. God tells His people to be “Holy” for He is “Holy”. These are some of the laws God expects His people to abide by. Respect your parents. Don’t worship idols. Worship God properly. Make arrangements to feed the poor. Don’t steal. Don’t lie. Don’t take advantage of your employees. Be sensitive to the handicapped. Be fair. Don’t gossip. Love your neighbor. Don’t get involved in the occult or witchcraft. Don’t practice child sacrifice. There are more, but we can see God is requiring His people to live a life with high moral standards.

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** In John 14:9, Jesus declares He is God! God is Holy. Jesus is Holy. Christians are followers of Christ. Christians are called upon to be “Holy” and “Godly”. Are you a Christian?

**Day 39      Leviticus Chapters 21 - 23**

Law

How could God be so strict on these priests? They were forbidden to do anything which would make them “unclean”! They couldn’t touch a dead body, even if it was one of their own parents! They could get married, but it had to be to a virgin. They couldn’t marry widows, divorced women, etc. They were banned from service if they had a “blemish”. This includes everything from a handicap to an injury to a sickness! There were very strict laws concerning who were allowed to eat at the priest’s table. Even his daughter couldn’t eat under certain circumstances! The animal sacrifices had to be without “blemish”.

God then outlines special “Days” He expected His people to keep. The “Sabbath” was kept every seventh day. The “Passover” (also called “Unleavened Bread”) was held in April which commemorated the release from Egyptian bondage. The “Feast of First Fruits” at the beginning of the harvest around May. The “Feast of Weeks” (also called “Pentecost”) held in June. The “Feast of Trumpets” celebrated around September. The “Feast of Booths” to commemorate the time of the wandering in the wilderness held around October. The “Day of Atonement” held around December. There were “Holy Days” or “HOLIDAYS” all through the year!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Jesus is our High Priest. He was PERFECT. He had no “Blemish” – no sin! He is our unblemished sacrifice. Those who follow Christ “eat” at His table. He is their “FEAST”! They celebrate Him! However, only certain ones can participate. Only Christians are allowed at His table! Are you a Christian?



**Day 40****Leviticus Chapters 24 - 25**

Law

Today's reading reminds us the priests were to tend the lamps of the candlestick in the tabernacle. They were to keep them burning continually. The showbread was to be properly displayed and eaten at the appointed time. We also learn God applied the death penalty for blasphemy (speaking against or cursing God). The death penalty also was applied to murder. If you did something to your neighbor it was to be done to you. God put it this way: "eye for eye, tooth for tooth."

Lest we think God is "unfair" or "harsh" we see He instituted "Sabbath Years" and the year of "Jubilee"! Every seventh year, the land was given a rest (no farming). Then after seven "Sabbath Years" (49 years) there was to be the year of "Jubilee" (the 50th year)! What happens then? Slaves were freed, all debts were forgiven, no oppression tolerated, any inheritance lost by financial hardship was to be returned to the original owner, the poor would be helped, etc. It was a liberating year for the people!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** We are a "royal priesthood" following our High Priest, Jesus. He holds us to a higher standard! Under the New Covenant, Jesus has raised the bar! No longer is it "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" it's "turn the other cheek"! We consume ourselves with Christ, the "Bread of Life". Our light constantly shines for Jesus, the "Light of the World"! Christians live like Christ. They enjoy "Jubilee"! Christians are freed from the debt of sin. One day Christians will enjoy a great rest in Heaven, the ultimate "Jubilee"! Are you a Christian?

## Day 41      Leviticus Chapters 26 - 27

Law

As we finish Leviticus we see God's laws are good! If followed, the poor would be treated well, social injustices would be fairly dealt with, and the society would function peacefully. In addition, and most importantly, God would be worshiped and honored!

In this last portion of Leviticus God explains the nature of His covenant. It is conditional! If the people kept God's laws, He would bless them. He would see to it their crops produced and their enemies would not be a problem. They would live in safety. If the people rejected God's laws, He would send disease and cause natural disasters. He would allow their enemies to strike terror into their hearts and minds. Unfortunately, humans don't possess the propensity to keep laws and ordinances perfectly. Sin is the transgression of the law and we all sin! God knew this before He outlined the first commandment. That's why He said He would forgive the sinners who humbled themselves. The people indeed sinned. God indeed punished. Some repented. God extended His grace to them.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus never sinned! Through the Grace of God penitent people are saved through Him! Don't forget, it's conditional. If you surrender to God, He will save you. If you do not, He will condemn. Christians have surrendered and have been washed in the blood of Christ! Are you a Christian?

## Day 42      Numbers Chapters 1 - 2

Law

The Hebrew title for this book is actually “In the Wilderness”. The title “Numbers” is the English name taken from the Latin Vulgate. The content deals with both. Several chapters are a census or count or “Numbering” of the tribes. Many chapters deal with more laws the people were to keep. Other chapters give narratives of what happened to the Hebrews “In the Wilderness”.

The Hebrews needed to be organized to allow for necessary logistics. They had to be ready to move the entire population from one place to another. They had to be prepared for war! The first chapter takes a census of all the men from twenty years old and older who could be involved in military campaigns. The only tribe exempt from this census was the Levites. Their function was strictly to deal with the Tabernacle and its work. In fact, they camped around the Tabernacle. There were twelve more tribes, (Don’t forget Joseph had two tribes through his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh). The military census totaled 603,550.

The second chapter laid out how the camps were to be organized.

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** In Exodus we learned EVERYTHING concerning the tabernacle is a shadow of Jesus. Armies were surrounding the tabernacle. Today we are in the Lord’s Army! Of the 603,550 only two men, Joshua and Caleb, actually entered the Promised Land! Many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew 22:14)! Will we serve in the Lord’s Army faithfully? Will we enter Heaven?

## Day 43      Numbers 3 - 4

Law

This portion of Numbers deals with the Levites and their work. God had chosen the tribe of Levi from all the tribes to be His special religious servants. The census of the Levitical tribe included all the males from one month old and older. The total was 22,273.

A few families were chosen to do specific jobs concerning the tabernacle. One family cared for the taking down, transportation, and setting up of the items in the “Most Holy” portion of the tabernacle. Another family prepared and cared for the oils and incense used in the tabernacle. Still another family took care of the curtains and hanging materials. While another family handled the boards, bars, pillars, etc. Each family was given a specific job to do.

Today we are a “Royal Priesthood” in the kingdom of God, His Church (I Peter 2:9). We each have been given a job to do! We should find out what that work is and do it. We need to be able to say what Paul said in II Timothy 4:7 “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:”

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is our High Priest! He had a work to do – and He did it! Just before He died, He said, “It is finished”!

**Day 44      Numbers Chapters 5 - 6**

Law

Now we get more laws from God. The Hebrew nation was commanded to quarantine the lepers and other diseased people. God also told the folks He expected recompense to be paid for men and women who were guilty of trespasses.

God gave a law how a jealous man, who suspected his wife of unfaithfulness, should proceed. This law gave an opportunity for the woman to clear herself of her husband's jealous accusations. There was a special vow called a "Nazarite" vow. This was very sacred and special. The man who took this vow "separated" themselves to God for a period of time. God had specific laws concerning how this vow was to be carried out and completed.

Today we are not under these laws. Jesus nailed them to his cross (Colossians 2:14). We are under a better covenant! Though we are not under these laws, we serve the same God! He wants to save the sinner, but will cast them out if they don't repent! He is "jealous" for us and will determine if we have been faithful or not!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Matthew 2:23 says "He shall be called a Nazarene." Jesus was "separated" to God to die for the sins of the world! He kept His vow! Will we keep ours?

## Day 45      Numbers Chapter 7

Law

This chapter tells us about a special dedication! Moses had completed the tabernacle according to the instructions he had been given. It was time to dedicate the altar! This took twelve days. Each day, the prince of one of the twelve tribes would come and offer a specific offering.

There are 89 verses in this chapter. From verse 12 to verse 83 it looks like they used the “copy – paste” feature! Each representative from every tribe offered the same gifts. Can you imagine a twelve day ceremony where every day is virtually the same?

Today we think “change” is the key to everything. We think if our services aren’t “stimulating” and “exciting”, we are missing out on something. If we are obeying God in our service, we are doing exactly what He expects. After all, it’s not about what WE want, it’s about what HE wants! In the 89th verse Moses went into the tabernacle and the voice of God spoke to him from the Mercy Seat!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Jesus is the sacrifice of the altar! When His blood is applied to the Mercy Seat, the presence of God is there! No man can come to the Father except through Jesus. Are you Christian?

**Day 46      Numbers Chapters 8 - 11**

Law

God specifically chose the Levites from among all the children of Israel to be “wholly given” to Him. They were to be “cleansed” and “separated” to serve Him. Everyone was instructed to keep the Passover. No one was exempt, not even people who had touched a dead body, which would otherwise make them unclean. Even if they were on a long trip away from the camp, they were required to take time to keep the Passover.

A cloud was over the tabernacle during the day. During the night, there was a pillar of fire. If the cloud moved, the people moved. If the cloud stayed the people stayed. Special trumpets were created to signal the people to action. Sometimes the action was to go to war, or to worship, or simply to assemble. If the trumpet sounded, the people moved. On this occasion, as the people moved, they complained because there was no meat to eat. Moses was overwhelmed! He acknowledged he needed help leading these people. God anointed 70 men to help him. There were even two men in the camp who received the spirit of God. Moses said, “Would to God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!”

Today, Christians have had God’s spirit “poured out” upon them (Acts 2:17). He dwells in the believer (I Corinthians 3:16). Like the Levites, we are God’s priests (I Peter 2:5) separated or “sanctified” and “washed” (I Corinthians 6:11). We move when God says “Move”. We act when God “blows the trumpet”!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Jesus is our High Priest. He is our Passover. When we are called to worship, no one is exempt! There will be action at the sound of His trumpet! Matthew 24:31 says “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Christians are the “elect”. Are you a Christian?

## Day 47      Numbers Chapters 12 - 14

Law

The people had complained against Moses all the way. Now his own family turns on him! His sister, Miriam, and his brother, Aaron, question Moses' authority. God tells them Moses is His chosen leader and they had better submit. God caused Miriam to have the deadly disease, leprosy. Moses begged for her to be forgiven even though she had challenged him.

At God's command, Moses sent twelve spies into the land of Canaan, one man from each of the twelve tribes. They all returned saying the Promised Land was truly magnificent, but it was filled with large men with great strength. Two of the men, Joshua and Caleb, said they could defeat them with God's help. The other ten said it was impossible. The people sided with the ten doubters. They wanted to choose another leader to take them back to Egypt. They rebelled against Moses. God said He would destroy them and begin a new nation through Moses. Moses begged for God to forgive them. As a result, God did not destroy them, but He punished them. All of that generation (from twenty years old and older) died in the wilderness. Only Joshua and Caleb remained alive to enter into the Promised Land.

Today, Christians learn from those Hebrews who died in the wilderness. Hebrews chapter 3 teaches us just as "unbelief" kept them from the Promised Land, "unbelief" will keep us out of Heaven!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Moses is a type of Christ. Moses interceded for the people when God said He would destroy them. God told Moses, "I have pardoned according to thy word". Jesus intercedes for us today! Christians have been pardoned! Are you a Christian?



**Day 48      Numbers Chapters 15 - 17**

Law

God gives specific laws or ordinances concerning how certain sacrifices should be prepared. God expected this to be done by the people of Israel. What about the “strangers” or foreigners who lived among them? Were they expected to obey God’s commandments? Absolutely! God didn’t want the foreigners to be exempt from the Law of Moses. Of course, some broke the laws through ignorance. They simply didn’t know them. God provided a way they could be forgiven. Some broke the law knowing full well what they were doing. They were defying God’s word. Those people received the death penalty! God stated His point, “Seek not after your own heart and your own eyes ... I am the Lord your God”!

No matter how specific God was, people still rose against Him. Korah and others decided they were better off doing things their way. God opened the earth and swallowed them! The next day a large number of people decided he shouldn’t have done that. God killed them with a plague! God showed everyone you did things His way or suffer the consequences! To be sure that everyone knew who God had chosen, He made Aaron’s rod produce buds. He wanted them to see His choice and stop complaining!

Today, Christians follow God’s way, not their own hearts or their own eyes. God has told us how and when He wants to be worshiped. Christians do not add to it or take away from it. They don’t complain about it! They simply do it!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Aaron, as the High Priest, is a type of Christ. When God sent the plague on the large crowd, Aaron ran to the tabernacle and offered an atonement for their sin. As soon as he did, the death stopped. He literally “stood between the dead and the living”! Jesus is our Atonement. Sinners are “The Dead” and Christians are “The Living”! Are you a Christian?

## Day 49 Numbers Chapters 18- 20

Law

Aaron, Moses' brother, and his sons were responsible for keeping the tabernacle pure as they made offering for the sins of the people. God commanded the people to bring a red heifer to the priests to sacrifice for purification for their sin. He then gave further instruction about how to be made "clean" if they touched something "unclean".

Miriam, Moses' sister, died in the wilderness. After her death, the people began complaining once again. This time they wanted water. God told Moses and Aaron to speak to a rock and He would make water flow from it. When they gathered the people together, they said, "Hear now, ye rebels; must WE fetch you water out of this rock?" Then Moses struck the rock. They glorified themselves instead of God. As a result, God told them they would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land. Aaron died soon after that.

Today, we have a choice. We glorify God or glorify ourselves. We either do what God tells us to do to be purified, or we decide for ourselves what WE think we should do. Considering even Moses and Aaron weren't allowed to enter the Promised Land, we shouldn't think we would be allowed to enter Heaven if we disobey God

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is the "Red Heifer"! He was sacrificed for the purification of our sins. Everyone is "unclean" until they are washed in the blood of Jesus. Christians are "clean". Are you a Christian?

**Day 50      Numbers Chapters 21 - 23**

Law

The people of Canaan became disturbed when they saw the Israelites heading their way. They decided to attack them to drive them away. God was with Israel and they defeated the attackers. The Israelites continued to journey through the wilderness, but the way was very difficult. Once again the people complained. Once again God punished them. He sent poisonous snakes among them. Many died. The people repented and Moses prayed for them. God instructed Moses to make a snake out of brass and put it on a pole. Whoever looks at the snake on the pole shall live. The people were saved.

Many other countries decided to resist the Israelites, but God allowed them to defeat them all! Balak was the king of Moab. He realized they could not be defeated with the sword so he decided to try something else. He hired a Balaam, a religious man, to curse them. Balaam wanted the money and the prestige. He had to learn he could not curse what God had not cursed! Balaam told Balak he could only speak what God told him to speak. When the time came to curse the Israelites, blessing came out of Balaam's mouth! Balak was upset, but didn't give up. They moved to another mountain to try again! Once again, only blessings! What did Balak do? He moved to another mountain and offered more sacrifices, still only blessings! What did Balak do this time? He moved to still another place to try again!

Today, God blesses those who follow Him. There are those who don't want to follow God's way. Even preachers are often like Balaam. They want to preach things the people want to hear for their own personal gain. Some people are like Balak. They want to do things their own way. If one practice doesn't get the results they are looking for, they simply move to another place! They believe God will eventually do what they want Him to do. What they fail to understand is God does what He wants! We just need to surrender to His Will and get in on it!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is the "Brass Snake" on the pole! Jesus said in John 3:14, "And as Moses lifted up the

serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up”. Jesus was lifted up on a cross just as the snake was lifted up on the pole! Anyone who comes to Jesus will be saved. Christians are saved! Are you a Christian?

**Day 51      Numbers Chapters 24 - 26**

Law

Balak, the king of Moab, was very upset with Balaam. He was willing to pay him to preach what he wanted. Balaam could only speak what God gave him to speak. They separated and went their own ways!

The Israelites mixed with the Moabites. They intermarried. They adopted their culture. They worshiped their gods. God was “jealous”. They left Him and followed other gods! He demanded them to be punished. Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, decided to stand up against the people’s open defiance. When he took action, God was pleased with his zeal. He stopped the plague He had sent upon the people, but only after 24,000 people had died. God told Moses to take another census of the people twenty years old and older. He reminded them these would all die in the wilderness except Joshua and Caleb.

Today, God is “jealous” when we leave Him. Shouldn’t we be like Phinehas and stand against open defiance? Under the New Covenant, we would not take the type of action Phinehas took, but certainly we should stand up and speak against sin!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** As Balaam blessed Israel, he said “... a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel...” No wonder the wise men from the east were looking for a “Star” to mark the birth of a great King! Jesus is that “Star”! Christians have found Him! Are you a Christian?

## Day 52      Numbers Chapters 27 - 29

Law

What if a man dies, but he has no one to give his inheritance? This situation came up in the camp. God gave specific instruction about what to do with his inheritance. The point was made the inheritance should not be lost!

Moses was reminded that he would not be able to enter the Promised Land. He would die just as his brother, Aaron had. Joshua was chosen to be the new leader. There were several more laws given concerning offerings and sacrifices. These ordinances were very specific and detailed. God intended them to be done!

Today, under the New Testament, God has given us specific things He expects us to do when we worship Him on the first day of the week (Sunday). We are to Sing, Pray, Preach, take the Lord's Supper, and Give. Just as they couldn't add to or take away from those sacrifices, we can't add to or take away from our worship practices.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is the ULTIMATE sacrifice! He is the only sacrifice which can take away our sins. Christians, who are in Christ, will not lose our inheritance in the Promised Land (Heaven)! Are you a Christian?

**Day 53      Numbers Chapters 30 - 31      Law**

If a woman made a “vow”, her father or her husband was given the authority to validate it or void it.

God sent the Israelites to another battle. He gave them the victory. They brought back the spoils of war. God insisted they give a certain portion to Him.

Today, God is with us in the “battle” of life. We are so blessed. Don’t forget to give God His portion!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** God is our “Father” and Jesus is our “Husband”. The Church is His “Bride”! Christians are the Church. We trust in Him to “Validate” us! Trusting in ourselves is sure to be “voided”! Are you a Christian?

**Day 54      Numbers Chapters 32 - 33**

Law

In order to get to the Promised Land, Israel had to cross over Jordan. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and one half the tribe of Manasseh asked Moses to give them the land on this side of the Jordan River for their inheritance. Moses said it wouldn't be right for them to stay while the others went and fought. They promised to fight, but they wanted to return to that land after the other tribes secured the land beyond Jordan. Moses allowed this to happen. He warned them, however, if they didn't fight, they would be punished. Their "sins would find them out"!

The route they used to get from Egypt to the Promised Land was recorded. They were to drive the people from the land. The first order of business was to destroy their idols and religious places of worship. If they allowed them to stay, they would be "thorns in your sides"! Unfortunately, they did allow some to stay. This will become serious problems in their future.

Today, we must fight if we expect to win. Some think we inherit the Promised Land (Heaven) by sitting down and refusing to "fight the good fight of faith" (I Timothy 6:12). Their sins will "find them out"! People shouldn't get too close to this world and what it offers. Make no mistake, their "sins will find them out"!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is "The ROUTE"! Jesus said in John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Christians understand the only "route" or "way" from the bondage of sin and death to eternal life is Jesus Christ! Are you a Christian?



**Day 55      Numbers Chapters 34 - 36**

Law

In this last portion of Numbers we get a “Land Description” defining the borders of the land they were promised. Eleazar the priest, Joshua, and one prince from each tribe were selected to divide the land among the tribes. Remember Rueben, Gad, and one half of the tribe of Manasseh already had their land picked out on this side of the Jordan River.

The Levites were to inherit 48 cities scattered among the tribes. They would also live in six cities which would be known as the “Cities of Refuge”. These cities were specifically set up to protect people who killed someone through negligence or in a way which was not “premeditated murder”. We would call this “manslaughter”. The murderer would be put to death, however the people guilty of manslaughter could go to one of the six “Cities of Refuge” for protection. They would have to live there until they died or until the death of the high priest. When the high priest died, they could go home! The last chapter showed the importance of preserving their inheritance.

Today, we have a Promised Land! We have an “inheritance”! It is preserved. It’s Heaven!! It is described in the Bible! Do you want to live there?

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** He is the priest in the “City of Refuge”. We are under Jesus’ protection! Because He died, Christians get to go “Home”!!! Are you a Christian?

**Day 56      Deuteronomy Chapters 1 - 2      Law**

As you read Deuteronomy, Moses' last of his five books, pretend you are 58 years old. At eighteen years old, you were rescued from Egyptian slavery. You are anxious to finally enter the Promised Land. You have lived in the wilderness for 40 years. Moses is 120 years old.

Your heart races as you read the words you have been waiting to hear for 40 years! "Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them." Wow! The time has finally come! You are about to receive the promise! Moses reminds you your fathers lost faith. They would not take the land. They died in the wilderness. For 40 years God has led you through the wilderness. He has told you who to fight and who to refrain from fighting. Though you complained many times, He never left you!

Today, we are wandering through the "wilderness" of life. The time to go to our "Promised Land", Heaven, is getting closer! Aren't you getting excited?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Moses is a type of Christ. Christians follow Him through their life. They anticipate eternal life with Him in Heaven. Are you a Christian?

**Day 57      Deuteronomy Chapters 3 - 4      Law**

You are imagining yourself to be in the wilderness at the very point of entering into the Promised Land. God had promised the tribes of Rueben, Gad, and one half of the tribe of Manasseh would inherit the land east of the Jordan River. Everyone is excited as you come back from battle. These countries' armies were far stronger than yours, but God delivered them all into your hands! God is keeping His word. The Promised Land is in sight!

Your heart melts as you hear about Moses. He is 120 years old and still very strong. He could live to see the Promised Land. However, there was a time he exalted himself in the eyes of the people instead of exalting God. His punishment was he would not go into the land. He begged God to let him go over. God wouldn't listen. God told Moses not to speak to Him any more of the matter! God did, however, allow Him to see the land from Mount Pisgah. Moses pleaded with the Israelites to be sure to keep the covenant when they reached the land. All the surrounding nations would see the wisdom and strength of God's laws. They would understand they serve a mighty God!

Today, God is helping us with the "battles" in our lives as we get closer to Heaven. As we keep His commandments, the people of the world will see the wisdom of the laws which make us great. People will see our good works and glorify God!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Joshua is a type of Christ. Moses would die before entering the promise land. It would be Joshua who would "cause them to inherit the land." It is Jesus who causes Christians to inherit Heaven. Are you a Christian?

**Day 58      Deuteronomy Chapters 5 - 7**      Law

You remember it like it was yesterday! You were standing at the foot of the mountain. There was smoke, fire, thunder, lighting, and the earth shook. It was the very mountain where God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. Then you heard it! God spoke! It was frightening. Your father, along with the entire nation, ran to Moses and begged him to speak to God on their behalf. They were too afraid to hear God's voice audibly! You promised to do everything God commanded. God hoped all the people would have "such a heart in them" they would always keep His commandments! Sadly, they soon forgot God. They died in the wilderness!

Moses speaks to the next generation. He told them again and again if they kept God's commandments it would "be well with them". He begged them to "Love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all they might." They were commanded to separate themselves from all the people who worshiped false gods. They couldn't make a treaty with them. They couldn't marry them. They had to drive them away! Tell them to leave! Why? God knew if His people were exposed to lies and false gods, they would be inclined to forget Him! They would turn to the idols!

Today, many are exposing themselves to all manner of false religions. We are making deals with the devil! Tell them to leave if they don't want to serve God! Don't be afraid of them. Remember, God is on your side!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Moses is a type of Christ. Moses went to God and interceded for the people. Jesus is at the right hand of God today and intercedes for Christians. Are you a Christian?

**Day 59      Deuteronomy Chapters 8 - 10      Law**

Moses said you spent forty years in the wilderness to be humbled. He allowed you to become hungry, but He fed you. Why? So you could learn “man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.” God took care of you the entire time. Your clothes never wore out and your feet never swelled. You look down at your clothes and your feet. You never noticed before. You just took it for granted. Moses explained God allowed you to suffer to see what condition your heart was in. He was “chastening” you to see whether you would obey Him or not.

Moses told you the land you were about to go into was wonderful. He begged you not to forget God when you had plenty of fine foods and lived in your own fine house. He warned you not to think it was by your own power you acquired these things. God did not bring you to the land because of your own righteousness. He did it to keep His promise!

Today, now that we enjoy great riches and power, we tend to forget God gave it all to us! God said if we continue down this arrogant path, He will destroy us!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Moses is a type of Christ. On several occasions Moses fasted for 40 days and 40 nights as he interceded for the people. They didn't deserve it, but Moses did it anyway! Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days in preparation for His ministry. His ministry was to intercede for Christians. We don't deserve it, but He did it anyway! Are you a Christian?

## Day 60 Deuteronomy Chapters 11 - 13 Law

As you imagine yourself to be one of the Israelites who is about to enter the Promised Land, God gives you a warning. You know how powerful God is because you have seen His miracles and actions with your own eyes. He tells you the land you are about to inherit is different from Egypt. It is truly a land “flowing with milk and honey”. God promises to provide rain for the land and protection from your enemies. He offers you a simple choice – A blessing or a curse! A blessing if you obey. A curse if you don’t.

God is very specific about how and where He wants to be worshiped. You don’t have the right to worship anywhere you want. You don’t have the right to worship any way you want. If anyone tries to influence you to leave God and worship false gods and idols, the penalty is death! Even if a preacher does a “miracle” and then tells you to do something other than what God has commanded, he is to be killed. If your own family tries to influence you to leave God, they are to be put to death! If the community leaves God, they are to be destroyed! God is very serious about folks keeping His commandments!

Today, we still don’t have a choice how or when we worship God. We must worship Him according to the New Testament pattern. He is still very serious about obedience!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** He is the blood! The “blood is the life”. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). He gave His life’s blood for all Christians. Are you a Christian?

## Day 61      Deuteronomy Chapters 14 - 17      Law

You have read Leviticus and Numbers. In fact, as you imagine you are one of the Israelites, you have practiced these laws most of your life. Moses wants you to remember these laws! He wants to be sure you continue to keep them. He repeats them here in Deuteronomy.

Moses lists the kosher foods you are allowed to eat and the foods which are not allowed. He reminds you to tithe. He tells you again about the release of debt and servants every seventh year. He gives more instruction about how to treat the poor and servants. Moses talks about the acceptable sacrifices. He lists the three annual feasts (Passover, Feast of Weeks, & Feast of Tabernacles) and how to observe them. God expects you to respect the judgements of the officers and the priests. Giving God sacrifices which have blemishes is an abomination to Him. Worshipping false gods carries the death penalty! God prefers no king but Himself, but if they insisted upon having a king he had to live up to God's standards. As we read through the Bible, we will see the people broke every single one of these commandments!

Today, we are not bound by the Old Testament Law. We are freed from the law by the body and blood of Jesus Christ (Romans 7:4). However, if we love Jesus, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15). Of course we, like the people of the Old Testament, will break every single one of them! Thank God for Jesus! There is now no condemnation in Christ (Romans 8:1). He paid the death penalty for us!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** He's everywhere! Jesus sets the slaves free, He is the sacrifice of the feasts, the unblemished lamb, and the King of kings! Christians keep His commandments! Are you a Christian?

## Day 62 Deuteronomy Chapters 18 - 20 Law

The Levites were chosen by God for ministry. They had no land inheritance, so they had to be supported by the other tribes. God reminded the nation of their obligation. They must listen to the Levitical priests and follow their words. God told them not to practice the ungodly things that their enemies were doing.

When they get into the land, they were to set up three “cities of refuge”. Later they were to establish three more. This would provide safety to those who accidentally took someone’s life. If someone were accused of a crime, there had to be at least two witnesses to condemn them. If a witness was caught lying, they were to suffer whatever punishment the accused would have received! God was specific about how to recruit soldiers. It was critical to keep the morale high among those who fight. He also gave them a list of which cities to destroy. These were cities that practiced abominations or detestable things!

Today, we don’t follow these “Rules of Engagement” to be acceptable to God, but couldn’t you see how these principles would still work in our judicial system and military?

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Be sure to see what Moses said in chapter 18, verse 15; “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.” Peter tells us in Acts 3:22 Jesus is that “Prophet”. Christians “hearken” (listen) to Him! Are you a Christian?



**Day 63 Deuteronomy Chapters 21 - 23** Law

You were a slave when you came out of Egypt. Their laws were forced upon you. You had no idea how to govern yourself. Forming a constitution, making laws, executing civil order, were foreign ideas. How would Israel become a civilized, functioning society? They would follow God's laws! The chapters in the reading today list several of these laws. Notice how detailed they were. Notice how severe the punishments were. God knew these people must maintain a strict set of standards in order to prevent civic chaos. It worked for them until they began to disobey and do what is right in their own eyes.

As you read today's passage, you will see rules about proper social views of criminal activity. You will see rules concerning family rights and behavior. There are laws about treatment of private property. God got into personal behavior such as the condemnation of transvestites, the treatment of the environment and animals, even what type of material clothing should be made with! God was very detailed about marriage, chastity, and women's rights. He dealt with race. He addressed sanitation. Slavery and prostitution were mentioned. He talked about taxation. God was concerned with integrity. Social food programs were approved by God with proper restrictions. Don't we still deal with these issues?

Today, we don't follow these "Social Laws" to be acceptable to God, but couldn't you see how these principles would still work in a society?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** These laws were designed to bring the people to a higher standard than the neighboring nations. Jesus came into the world to bring us to an even higher level! He told His followers on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, "Ye have heard it said ... but I say unto you". In these statements Jesus "raised the bar" for Christians. Are you a Christian?

## Day 64      Deuteronomy Chapters 24 - 26      Law

More laws for social and civic living. This includes women's rights, financial aid, kidnapping, disease control, private property, personal debt, treatment of the poor, social food programs, crime and punishment, family responsibility, fair business practices, etc.

With all these laws, there is one thing we can't forget ... honor God!! Give Him the first and the best!

Today, we don't follow these "Civil or Ceremonial Laws" to be acceptable to God, but we are to keep God on the top of our list!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The last verse of chapter 26 tells us God wanted His people to be "above all nations" and make His people to be a "Holy People". In I Peter 2:9, Jesus makes Christians a "Holy Nation"! Are you a Christian?

**Day 65      Deuteronomy Chapters 27 - 28      Law**

God commanded His laws to be displayed publically! It was imperative everyone knew them and followed them. Their future depended upon it!

God pronounced curses upon people who practiced evil behavior. This behavior included everything from bestiality & incest to kidnapping and assassination! God pronounced blessings upon them if they obeyed His commandments. There were consequences for their behavior!

Today, we don't follow these "Moral & Civil Laws" to be acceptable to God, but rest assured, there are consequences for our behavior!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** There was a blessing promised in chapter 28 verse 9 for those who "keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways". Christians are promised in I John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Christians walk in the light! Are you a Christian?

## Day 66 Deuteronomy Chapters 29 - 31 Law

As you imagine yourself to be one of the Israelites who was delivered from Egyptian slavery, you are both elated and dismayed by today's reading. As you watch this 120 year old man, Moses, stand to speak, your heart is moved. You are excited when he reminds you of all the good things God has done for you these past 40 years. You remember each one of them with awe. Moses warns you of the punishment God will give if you don't keep His laws. You think to yourself, "I will never forsake the laws of Almighty God!"

You are dismayed when God tells Moses he will die. You are even more disturbed when He says the people will break His covenant and worship false gods! You are horrified when God tells Moses He will punish them severely! How could this happen? At the moment, you are so strong, so convicted of God's power. Surely you will not leave Him! But you do!

Today, God expects us to keep His commandments. We think to ourselves, "We are so convinced of God's Word, we will NEVER depart from it!" But take heed. Remember I Corinthians 10:12 "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." It is a daily commitment to follow Jesus!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** He is SO CLOSE! Compare chapter 30 verse 12 through 14 with Romans 10:5-10 "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The salvation that Jesus offers is SO CLOSE! Christians have found it! Are you a Christian?

## Day 67      Deuteronomy Chapters 32 - 34      Law

Can you believe we are finishing Deuteronomy today? Today, Moses sings a song! It is recorded in Chapter 32 verses 1 – 43. It is a “bitter - sweet” song. It speaks of the “Rock of God’s Salvation”! It also speaks of their rejection of it! In Chapter 33, Moses knows he is about to die. He blesses the Israelites, tribe by tribe. He praises God for leading them out of slavery and to the promise land!

As you read Chapter 34, the last chapter, your heart breaks. Moses goes to mount Nebo to a peak called Pisgah. From Pisgah’s lofty height, Moses saw the promise land! Then Moses died. No one knows where his grave is to this very day.

Today, we are standing on Pisgah’s lofty height looking over into the promise land! Can’t you see it? Are you ready to go?

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** He is the “ROCK” of our Salvation Moses sang about! In Matthew 16 Peter confessed Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus told him God had revealed that fact to him. Jesus then said it was upon this “ROCK” (The fact that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God) He would build His church. Christians believe this fact! Christians make up His Church! Are you a Christian?



CHAPTER TWO

**The Twelve  
Books of History**

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

I & II Samuel

I & II Kings

I & II Chronicles

Ezra

Nehemiah

Esther

**Day 68      Joshua Chapters 1- 4**

History

Moses is dead and Joshua has taken his place. God promised Joshua He would be with him just as He had been with Moses. He would lead the people to the Promised Land! There were conditions. Joshua had to be strong and courageous. He had to meditate on God's law day and night! These were necessary for Joshua to keep the faith. If he kept the faith, God would keep His promise! Anyone who refused to obey God would be killed.

Joshua sent spies into Jericho. Rahab, the harlot, lived in Jericho. She knew the God of the Hebrews was a powerful God. She hid the spies and helped them escape. They promised they would save her and her family. There were conditions. She had to keep their trip a secret. She had to put a scarlet rope outside her window. Everyone in her family had to remain in the house. The spies told her, if anyone gets out of the house, they would be killed!

Today, we are about to cross into our "Promised Land" – Heaven. But there are conditions. God will keep His promise! Will we keep the faith or get out of the house?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Before the people could go into the land, they had to cross over the Jordan River. The priests' feet touched the water of the river first. The waters parted, making a way for the people to cross. Jesus is our High Priest. He opened the way for all Christians to cross over into Heaven! Are you a Christian?



**Day 69      Joshua Chapters 5 - 7**

History

The people of the land of Canaan were petrified when they heard God had parted the Jordan River and allowed the Israelites to cross over. They all had heard what God had done to the Red Sea some 40 years before!

The Hebrews who were born in the wilderness had not been circumcised. God insisted they could not go to the promise land unless they were circumcised. Joshua made sure this was done. God told Joshua exactly what to do to defeat Jericho. Walking around the city, blowing trumpets, and shouting were not exactly what a military strategist would suggest, but Joshua made sure it was done. God explicitly forbade anyone from taking “spoils” from the city. Achan took silver, a garment, and some gold! There was sin in the camp! As a result of his sin, the Hebrews lost their next battle at Ai, a battle which should have easily been won. Joshua knew there was a problem. God exposed Achan and commanded he be put to death. Joshua made sure this was done.

Today, if we want to cross into our “Promised Land” – Heaven, God expects us to be obedient. If we refuse to obey, we will be lost. He has told us what to do to be saved. It is our responsibility to make sure this is done!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is the “Bread from Heaven” according to John 6:51. God had given the Israelites “Manna” to eat while they were in the wilderness. As soon as they reached the promise land, this “Bread from Heaven” stopped. Jesus is leading us to Heaven. Christians will “consume” Him until they reach heaven where they will be with him forever! Are you a Christian?

## Day 70 Joshua Chapters 8 - 9

History

God allowed the people of Ai to defeat Israel in a battle because of Achan's sin. Now that the sin was purged from the camp, they were told to fight Ai. Joshua could have balked. He could have reasoned since Ai defeated them once, they were sure to do it again. Joshua didn't question God. He went. He won!

The Gibeonites knew the Israelites were coming! They had destroyed the mighty city of Jericho and the city of Ai. They knew they were next! Through a very deceitful plan, they tricked Joshua into believing they were foreigners in the land. They claimed they were just passing through. Joshua promised them they would not be hurt. When Joshua later learned they actually lived in the land, he was angry. However, he kept his promise. The Gibeonites were not killed.

Today, we sin against God. Sometimes this causes us to be knocked down. We fall. We deal with the sin, but are often afraid to get up and try again. Don't be afraid. Keep fighting!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Joshua is a type of Christ. He has made Christians a promise. He will keep it! Are you a Christian?

**Day 71      Joshua Chapters 10 - 11**

History

When the king of Jerusalem heard Jericho and Ai were destroyed by the Israelites, he was afraid. He got angry when he learned Gibeon, a powerful city, had surrendered! A coalition of five kings was formed. They attacked Gibeon. The Gibeonites sent word for Joshua to help them. They begged Joshua to save them. He did! He even asked God to allow the sun to “stand still” until he could finish the job! He did! Joshua defeated the five kings.

Another coalition was formed. It was much larger than the first. God told Joshua not to be afraid. God promised to deliver them all into his hands. Joshua didn't wait for the attack, he attacked them! After Joshua's military campaign was over, he had taken the entire land. Actually he was GIVEN the entire land ... the Promised Land!

Today, we may be up against great odds, but God has promised salvation and He will deliver!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Joshua is a type of Christ. When the Gibeonites asked for salvation, they called the right man! Jesus will save Christians. Are you a Christian?

**Day 72      Joshua Chapters 12 - 14** History

There is a long list of kings Moses defeated before his death. There is a longer list of kings Joshua defeated before his old age. There is an even longer list of the areas yet to be conquered!

Joshua began dividing the land among the tribes. The Levites were the only tribe that didn't receive an inheritance. God had commanded Moses that the Levites were to be the priests and keepers of the law. They were to be supported by the other tribes since they had no land of their own. Joshua and Caleb were the only two of the twelve spies who had insisted God would give the Israelites the land forty years before. Caleb is now eighty-five. He asked Joshua to give him a particular land inheritance. Joshua gave him the land "because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel."

Today, we are expected to be "Holy", but this can't be done unless we are "Wholly" given to following Christ!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Joshua is a type of Christ. Joshua divided the promise land among the Israelites. Jesus will give the "Promised Land" to Christians as He has promised! Are you a Christian?

**Day 73      Joshua Chapters 15 - 17**

History

If you like to read deeds and land descriptions, you will love today's reading. Judah's exact borders and cities are described in detail.

Joseph, Jacob's favorite son, had two boys; Ephraim and Manasseh. Joseph was one of his twelve sons. These twelve sons began twelve tribes. Joshua divided the land between these twelve tribes. Joseph's two sons each had families that were very large. They said they should be given two lots instead of one. Joshua agreed. He pointed out a section of land he would give them. There was a condition. They had to go conquer it! The area was inhabited by particularly fierce people. Joshua assured them they would win, but they would not get the land if they didn't go!

Today, we, as Christians are promised a home in heaven, but don't make the mistake that you don't have to "fight" for it! Rest assured you will receive it, but only if you answer the call to go!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Joshua is a type of Christ. Jesus said, "Come unto me" in Matthew 11:28. There can be no inheritance for those who don't answer this call. Christians answer the call. Are you a Christian?

**Day 74      Joshua Chapters 18 - 20**

History

Five of the twelve tribes had been given their land; Judah, Ephraim, Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad. Joshua asked the other seven why they are “slacking”. They needed to receive their inheritance.

Joshua told the seven tribes to map out the land. After they mapped it out, they met with Joshua who divided it to them by lot. The lots fell in this order: Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan. Then Joshua built his own city in the land. Finally, the land was divided out and given to the people as God had promised. Joshua then set up six cities of “refuge” in the land as God commanded Moses to do. These cities provided a place of refuge for those who have accidentally killed someone. There they would be protected from anyone who sought revenge for the victim.

Today, we certainly don't need to be “slacking”. The word of God is our “Map” to heaven. We have sinned and need “refuge”. If we don't find out what to do to be saved, how can we expect to be saved?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Joshua divided the land at Shiloh. Shiloh means “Peace”. Jesus is the “Prince of Peace”. God told Moses in Genesis 49:10 “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” Jesus is “Shiloh” and He has come to gather His people. Christians are His people! Are you a Christian?

**Day 75      Joshua Chapters 21 - 22**

History

The Levites were not to be given a land inheritance, but they were to be given cities throughout the tribes of all the land. They came to Joshua and asked for those cities. Without hesitation, each tribe gave particular cities to the Levites.

Joshua told the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and one half the tribe of Manasseh that they could leave. They had earlier been given the land on the east side of the Jordan River. He reminded them to keep the commandments of God. As soon as they got to the Jordan River, they built an altar. The other tribes assumed they had built it to false gods. They decided to attack them. Civil war seemed inevitable! Upon further investigation, they discovered that it was not a rebellious act. They had erected the altar as a “Witness” of solidarity between all twelve tribes. They were afraid they would be separated from them as a nation since the Jordan River separated them geologically. Though they meant well, it caused a serious misunderstanding. No battle ensued.

Today, we are to obey God. If we see our “brothers and sisters” doing things that seem to be unauthorized by God, we need to discover their true intent before we take action. We may find out there is no breach at all. We may discover quite the opposite!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Levitical Priesthood is a shadow of Jesus as our High Priest. They were to live among all the tribes. Jesus is in the hearts of all Christians. He “lives” in the Christian. Are you a Christian?

## Day 76 Joshua Chapters 23 - 24

History

Today's reading completes the book of Joshua. He is now 110 years old. He called the people together and encouraged them to keep the commandments of God. He warns them that if they "go back" and follow other gods, God will remove them from the land He had promised them!

Joshua preached a final sermon reminding the Israelites everything God has done for them. He told them to "Choose you this day whom ye will serve". He then added, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord". In response, the people insisted they would always keep God's commandments and serve Him. They didn't!

Today, just as the Israelites, we have been given a wonderful promise, however, we could lose it if we leave God. Our promised land (Heaven) will only be ours if we choose to serve Him! It's certain if we "go back", God will not allow us to receive the promise.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Throughout this book, Joshua is a type of Christ. Today we read of Joshua's death and burial. Jesus also died and was buried, however the significant difference is Jesus resurrected from the dead!! Christians believe this fact with all their heart. Christians choose to serve the Lord! Are you a Christian?



## Day 77      Judges Chapters 1 - 3

History

Joshua died after he had divided the land to the twelve tribes of Israel. However, the land wasn't completely conquered. The tribes of Judah and Simeon united to conquer some of the inhabitants of the land. Other tribes made advances against their enemies. The tribes of Israel were loosely united with no form of central government or king. God had told them not to make any treaties with the people of Canaan, but they didn't follow this commandment. The Israelites allowed many foreigners to occupy the land for the taxes they could get from them. God was very upset. This would cause the Israelites great grief for years to come.

The generation that lived during Joshua's day remained faithful to God, but the next generation did not. They began to serve false gods. As a result, God allowed their enemies to attack them and prevail. When the people cried out to God and repented, He would send a leader, a Judge, to deliver them from their enemy. The first attackers were the people of Mesopotamia. When the people repented, God sent Othniel to deliver them. Othniel kept the peace for 40 years. After his death the people went back to their evil ways. God sent the Moabites. The Israelites repented, so God sent Ehud to lead them. He judged them for 40 years. Soon after Ehud died, the people reverted to their wickedness. God allowed the Philistines to attack them. They cried to God for mercy and He sent Shamgar to save them. This will be the pattern throughout the time of the Judges.

Today, just as the Israelites, we have been given a promise, however, we could lose it if we leave God. Our promised land (Heaven) will only be ours if we choose to serve Him! If we leave God, He will not save us! We will be open to the attack of the enemy!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Throughout this book, the Judges are shadows of Jesus. God has sent Jesus to deliver us from our enemy. Christians repent of our sins and cry out to God for deliverance. Are you a Christian?

**Day 78      Judges Chapters 4 - 6**

History

Once again the Israelites left God. He sent the Canaanites to attack them. When they realized their mistake, God allowed Deborah to lead them to victory. She enlisted the help of Barak and together they united the twelve tribes. The enemy king ultimately died a dishonorable death in the eyes of the nation as he was killed by a woman while hiding in her tent! Deborah and Barak sang a song of victory and praise to God. The country was united in peace under Deborah's leadership for 40 years.

Of course, the people fell away again. God sent the Midianites to subdue them. When the Israelites cried to God, He called Gideon to lead the country. Gideon hesitated. He felt he wasn't equipped to do the job. He made excuses. God assured him it was not about Gideon, it was about God! Still, Gideon asked for signs for proof that God would be with him in battle. God showed him the signs he asked for and Gideon knew God was truly going to be with him.

Today, God will deliver us from our enemies. Sin is our enemy. Satan will launch every attack possible to get us to fall into sin. Let's boldly sing the song "Victory in Jesus" as we praise His name!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Gideon asked for signs. The people of Jesus' day asked for a sign. Jesus told them (and us) in Matthew 12:40 "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Then up from the grave He arose! Here's your sign!!! Christians believe that sign! Are you a Christian?

**Day 79      Judges Chapters 7 - 8**

History

Gideon was certain God was with him. He boldly went to fight the enemy with 32,000 men. God told him he had too many. When he defeated the enemy, they would claim it was by their own strength. God sent the entire army home except for 300 men! Less than 1% of the army was chosen.

Of course Gideon was successful. The Midianites retreated. As he pursued them, the 300 became tired and hungry. Two different cities refused to aid them. They believed the Midianites would regroup and defeat this handful of soldiers. It would put them at odds against the mighty Midianites if they helped the Israelites. Gideon promised to return and punish them after he defeated the Midianites. He did!

Today, we are called to participate in what seems to be an unwinnable battle. Rest assured, though we are “few” (perhaps the 1% crowd), we will win!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Gideon is a type of Christ. Jesus says in Matthew 7:14 “But strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” The “few” that find the “Road to Salvation” and follow Christ will have eternal life! We will not (and cannot) do it by our own strength. The “Victory” is in Christ! Only Christians are in Christ. Are you a Christian?

**Day 80      Judges Chapters 9 - 10**

History

The people enjoyed 40 years of peace during the days of the Judge, Gideon. As soon as he died, however, they turned back to following false gods. This is usually the time when God allows an outside enemy to attack them. This time the enemy comes from within!

Gideon had 70 sons by his wives. He also had a son by a concubine from Shechem. His name was Abimelech. Since Abimelech was Gideon's son in Shechem, he appealed to his kinship with them. They agreed to let him be their leader. Abimelech killed the other sons of Gideon except one, Jotham. He escaped the slaughter. Jotham spoke against what his half-brother did, but could not stop him. In fact, no one seemed to be able to stop the terror of Abimelech. Finally God repaid Abimelech for his wickedness by allowing a woman to hit him in the head with a piece of millstone. To avoid the shame of being killed by a woman, he asked his armor-bearer to kill him. He did. Tola became the next Judge and judged for 23 years. Jair followed him and judged Israel for 22 years. After they died, the people turned away from God yet again! When God sent the Philistines and Ammonites to attack them, they repented. God told them to call upon those false gods to save them. They knew they couldn't. They begged God to send them a deliverer. He did!

Today, when we take our eyes off God, we are subject to the enemies within and without! We must remain faithful.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is the deliverer that God sends to rescue you from sin and death. Are you being attacked by enemies from within? Are you being attacked by enemies from without? Christians cry out to God and know He will save them through Christ. Are you a Christian?

**Day 81      Judges Chapters 11 - 13**

History

The children of Israel turned against God once again. God allowed the Ammonites to attack them. Jephthah was a valiant man, but had a questionable background since he was the son of a harlot. His half-brothers had rejected him. When the Ammonites came, they begged Jephthah to help them. After pointing out their hypocrisy and gaining assurance that they would follow his leadership, he agreed to help. Prayer was his first action! Then he tried to reason with the enemy. They refused to listen. God allowed Jephthah to defeat the enemy. He kept the promise he had made to God though at a great personal cost. Soon after the victory over Ammon, the people of Ephraim, who were part of the national alliance, rebelled. God led Jephthah to victory over them. He judged Israel for six years.

After Jephthah, Ibzan judged Israel for seven years. Then Elon judged for ten years. Following him was Abdon who judged for eight years. Of course the children of Israel did evil again and God sent the Philistines to attack them. Another deliverer needed to be sent. God told Manoah and his wife they would have a child. The child would be dedicated to God as a “Nazarite”. He would deliver Israel from the Philistines. His name would be Samson.

Today, God can use us regardless of our background. If we will remain faithful we can overcome the attacks of our enemies.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus, like Jephthah was rejected by His own. When the time came for deliverance, He was the only possible choice! Christians understand they have been hypocritical and sinful. They turn to Christ for deliverance. Christians follow Christ's leadership. Are you a Christian?

## Day 82 Judges Chapters 14 - 16

History

God sent the Philistines to punish Israel for their sins. At the same time He raised up a deliverer. Samson, under the Nazarite vow, had been prepared all his life to save the Israelites from the Philistines. Even when Samson followed the lust of his flesh to marry a woman of Timnath instead of an Israelite, God used it to set Samson against the Philistines. When they killed his wife and her family, Samson retaliated. One thing led to another and Samson defeated many Philistines and was set up to Judge Israel for twenty years.

When Samson yielded to the lust of his flesh with the harlot at Gaza, God used it to keep Samson “Public Enemy #1” among the Philistines. Even when Samson fell in love with Delilah, God used it to set in order a chain of events that ultimately led to the defeat of the Philistines. It also led to the death of Samson!

Today, God can (and often does) use us regardless of our defiance. We will ultimately be held accountable for our actions, but even our evil actions can work out for God’s good plan.

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Jesus, like Samson, was born to be our deliverer. He was even called a “Nazarene” (Matthew 2:23). He was very much unlike Samson in that He never sinned! Christians are delivered by Jesus! Are you a Christian?

**Day 83      Judges Chapters 17 - 18**

History

There was a man of Ephraim named Micah. He was a religious man. He built a house of gods to worship. He knew there should be a priest, so he consecrated one of his sons to serve as his priest. Everything about his religion was false. One day, a Levite came by. The man remembered God had ordained men of the tribe of Levi to be His priests. Micah hired the Levite to serve him in his house of gods as his priest.

The tribe of Dan had spied out some land and had organized themselves an army to attack the inhabitants. They stopped by Micah's house and took some of his religious items. When the Levite asked what they were doing, they offered him more money to become their priest. They pointed out it would be much more prestigious to be a priest over a whole tribe than over just one man and his family. The Levite was thrilled! He left Micah right away. When Micah went after them, he realized he was no match for the Danites. He went back home empty handed

Today, people are searching for God. Unfortunately they develop their own religious systems and hire their own "priests". Selfish "priests" also sell themselves to the highest bidder! They will go wherever there is more money, power, and prestige. What difference does it make? After all, it's all false. Why not go?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** When Jesus is "missing" people will do what those folks did. During those days there was no king in Israel and "everyone did what was right in their own eyes". Jesus is our KING! If we don't follow King Jesus, we will do whatever we think is right. Christians follow Jesus, the "King of kings"! Are you a Christian?

**Day 84 Judges Chapters 19 - 21**

History

This last section of Judges is difficult to read. The words aren't hard to pronounce, but they are sure hard to speak! It reminds us of the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah against Lot in Genesis chapter 19. The difference is there were no angels there to save them! A Levite had refused to stay the night with his concubine in a "foreign" city. He desperately wanted to stay in a city of Israel. Just as the sun went down, they made it to Gibeah, a city of Benjamin. Little did he know that these men were worse than the "foreign" folks! An older man of the city took him into his home. It was not safe for them to be in the streets at night. During the night, evil men came to the old man's home and demanded he turn the Levite over to them. They wanted to sexually abuse him. The old man, as did Lot in Genesis 19, offered his virgin daughter to them instead. Finally, the Levite gave them his concubine. They abused her all night. When they released her, she made it to the threshold of the door of the old man's house. She died from the abuse!

The Levite found her at the door the next morning. When he got home he cut her body into twelve pieces and sent them to each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The act was so hideous, it incited a civil war. All the tribes turned against Benjamin. They almost annihilated the tribe! Only 600 men were left. It was inconceivable to the Israelites to lose one of the tribes so they made a plan to repopulate it. Two vows had been taken by the tribes of Israel who came against Benjamin. The first was not to give them their daughters. The second was to kill any family that did not come to battle against Benjamin. How could they repopulate Benjamin and not break their vow not to give them their daughters for wives? They decided to destroy a family that had not come out against Benjamin (keeping the second vow). They took that family's virgins, 400 of them, (who had never vowed to not give them their daughters – keeping the first vow)! They gave them to the 600 men. What about the other two hundred? Well, since they vowed not to GIVE them their daughters, they arranged an event that allowed them to TAKE



their daughters! Pretty clever ways to do what they wanted without “breaking” their vows!

Today, folks do the same thing! We figure out what we WANT to do, then find a way to be “right” while we are doing it! How many “hoops” have people jumped through? How many “twists” have people made? How many “interpretations” have people come up with in order to justify their position? No wonder people get so divided. They get so far away from God, they “paint themselves into a corner” and have to come up with ways to justify themselves!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** When Jesus is “missing” people will do what those folks did. They sin! We think if we can just make it to the safety of our own people we will be ok. Unfortunately, we find folks that are worse! Christians repent of their sins and stop trying to justify themselves. They let Jesus justify them through His blood. Are you a Christian?

**Day 85 Ruth Chapters 1 - 4**

History

A famine forced Elimelech out of his home in Bethlehem-judah. He took his wife, Naomi, and his two sons to Moab. While in Moab, Elimelech died. Naomi raised her two sons by herself in a foreign land. They grew up and married Moabite women. Over time, the two boys also died. This left Naomi alone with her daughters-in-law. She decided to go back home. One of her daughters-in-law insisted on going with her. Her name was Ruth.

When Naomi returned home, she gave the bitter news of what had happened to her in Moab. Everyone saw Ruth loved Naomi. They were very impressed with her. Ruth worked hard for Naomi. Every day she would glean the fields for their food. Soon, one of the field owners noticed her. His name was Boaz. He wanted to marry her. According to the law, the closest relative of the deceased husband had a right to marry his widow. Boaz was kin to Naomi and had the right, but there was someone who was more closely related. The only way he could marry her is to “redeem” her, or pay the required price. After negotiating, Boaz redeemed Ruth. They really did “live happily ever after”! In fact, their great grandson, David, became king!!

Today, we all have become stranded in a foreign land, the land of sin! We need to go home!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Boaz is a shadow of Jesus. Just as he redeemed Ruth, Jesus paid the price required for our sins. Romans 6:23 tells us “the wages of sin is death”. Jesus paid that price to redeem Christians. Are you a Christian?

**Day 86      I Samuel Chapters 1 - 3**

History

Elkanah had two wives. One of them was Hannah. Hannah had no children. It was considered disgraceful for a woman not to have sons for her husband. Every year Elkanah went to Shiloh to worship God. Hannah went with him. She prayed earnestly for a child. She made a promise to God. If He would give her a child, she would give the child to Him. As she prayed the priest, Eli, saw her. Eli told her God would grant her request. He did!

Hannah had a son. She named him Samuel which means “Heard by God”. As she promised, she brought Samuel to Eli after he was weaned. She left him there to serve the Lord. Each year she would visit him when they came to Shiloh to worship God. God blessed Hannah with three more sons and two daughters! Samuel served Eli very well. Unlike Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were very wicked, Samuel grew very close to God. One night God spoke to Samuel. Soon everyone knew Samuel was indeed a true prophet. God will use Samuel in mighty ways!

Today, people make all kinds of promises to God. If we do, we should keep them. It may be that God plans to use our promise for His purpose.

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Samuel is a shadow of Jesus. Just as he was given as a gift to Hannah and was given as a gift to God, Jesus was given as a gift to the world and was given as a sacrificial gift to God. Christians understand this awesome truth. Are you a Christian?

**Day 87 I Samuel Chapters 4 - 7**

History

Eli, the priest, was now 98 years old. He was a very heavy man and had become blind. Though God had warned him, he had not stopped the wicked behavior of his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. God allowed the Philistines to organize an attack against the Hebrews. The Hebrews took the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh to protect them from their enemy. As God's priest, Eli was very concerned about the safety of the Ark. When the Ark was brought into the camp, the people shouted so loudly that the Philistines heard them. When they understood the Ark of God was in the Hebrew camp they were afraid. They didn't know that God was using them to punish the Hebrews. The Philistines slaughtered many Hebrews in the ensuing battle. Hophni & Phinehas were killed, just as God had predicted. The Philistines took the Ark of God. When Eli heard about the death of his sons and the fate of the Ark of God, he fell backwards off his seat and broke his neck. God's punishment was complete!

Since they had defeated the Hebrews in battle and took the Ark of God, the Philistines mistakenly believed their god, Dagon, was more powerful than the Hebrew God. They soon learned better! Every city to which the Ark was taken suffered a plague. They realized they had to get rid of the Ark! They didn't want the Hebrew God to destroy them like He had destroyed Egypt with plagues! The Ark was returned to Israel! Samuel gathered the Israelites to Mizpeh and called for them to repent. They did. When the Philistines heard the Hebrew nation was gathered at Mizpeh, they organized an attack. This time God was with His people. They defeated the Philistines.

Today, we are called to repent. Just like with the Hebrews, repentance makes all the difference!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** When the Ark of God was in the presence of God's priest, all was well with the people. When the Ark was among people that had no priest and were not God's people, there was death. Jesus Christ is our priest. If we are "In Christ" we are at peace with God. If we are away from Christ, death and destruction is our future. Christians are "In Christ". Are you a Christian?

**Day 88      I Samuel Chapters 8 - 10**

History

Samuel was the undisputed judge over Israel. When he was old, he had made his sons judges over Israel. Sadly, his sons were dishonest and greedy. The people recognized they were not like Samuel. Neighboring countries had kings to rule over them. The Hebrews decided they should have a king. Samuel was upset because he knew God was their King. God told Samuel He would appoint a king over Israel, but it would lead to great problems for them.

Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. He was head and shoulders taller than anyone! Through God's providence Saul and Samuel meet. God told Samuel to anoint Saul to be king over Israel. Samuel appointed him to be the king in the sight of the people at Mizpeh. Most of the people shouted "God save the king"! This showed they accepted God's choice. Some of them rejected God's choice and asked, "How shall this man save us?"

Today, we have a choice to follow God or to become like the world. God will not stop us from acting like the world, but it will lead to great problems for us!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is the King of Kings! Saul became the first king of Israel. Some rejected Saul and asked, "How shall this man save us?" Most people today reject Jesus and ask the same question about Him! Christians don't reject Jesus. They understand that Jesus saves! Are you a Christian?

**Day 89      I Samuel Chapters 11 - 13** History

Samuel had told the people Saul would be their king. Several rejected the notion. Saul's first chance to prove his ability came soon enough. The Ammonites threatened to attack some of the Israelites. Saul gathered men from all the tribes of Israel to fight the Ammonites. When Saul utterly defeated them, his authority as king was established.

Samuel gathered the people together. He told them they had done wrong in asking for a king. God was their King. However, if they obeyed God they would be prosperous. Even their new king, Saul, would be blessed. If they disobeyed God, both the people and the king would suffer the consequences. It wasn't long until it was discovered which way they would go. The Philistines gathered an enormous army against Israel. Everyone was afraid. Samuel had set up a meeting with Saul to offer sacrifice to God before the battle. Saul saw the people were fearful. He was afraid he would lose control of his army. Before Samuel got to the meeting, Saul offered the sacrifices without Samuel. Samuel arrived and discovered what Saul had done. Saul had no right to usurp the priest's authority in this matter! He told him God would reject him. He would seek another man who would be after God's own heart to become king.

Today, we have a choice to follow God's way or practice what we think is right.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Samuel is a shadow of Jesus! He is our priest. We have no right to approach God without Him! Christians know that no one can come to the Father except through Jesus. Are you a Christian?

**Day 90      I Samuel Chapters 14 - 15      History**

The Philistines had gathered an incredibly large army to destroy the Israelites. The Israelites were very afraid and hid in various caves, mountains, and crevices. They had no swords or spears. They had taken farming tools and sharpened them to use as weapons. The outcome seemed hopeless for them.

Saul's son, Jonathan, trusted God. He wanted the Will of God to be done. He and his armor bearer secretly went behind the enemy lines. God led them to a great victory. He helped them by sending a quaking and confusion among the Philistines. The Philistines began killing each other. When the Israelites saw what was happening they organized themselves and attacked. Saul had made the people take a foolish oath. They were told not to eat anything until the evening. His son, Jonathan, wasn't there when the oath was taken. He heard about the oath and recognized it was not wise. The men needed their strength for battle. Jonathan went against his father. When Saul found out, he ordered his own son's death! Jonathan was the hero of the day. The people refused to carry out the order. This gives us some insight into Saul's heart! When Samuel gave Saul specific instructions concerning the Amalekites, Saul didn't fully obey them. God rejected Saul for his disobedience.

Today, we have a choice to trust God and win the victory or run and hide! To obey God's Will or do our own.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jonathan is a shadow of Jesus! Jonathan said that God's Will should be done. God gave him a great victory. Jesus prayed that God's Will would be done! Christians understand that there is Victory in Jesus! Are you a Christian?

**Day 91 I Samuel Chapters 16 - 17** History

God revealed to Samuel that He would appoint a new king. He would be a man after God's own heart. God sent Samuel to Bethlehem, to the family of Jesse. Samuel asked them to join him in sacrificing to God. Samuel was told by God that one of Jesse's sons would be the next king. Samuel would anoint him. When Samuel saw Jesse's oldest son he knew that he would be the one. He wasn't. God told him not to look at the outside. Instead, look at the heart! Six more of Jesse's sons passed by Samuel and God rejected them all. Samuel was curious. Samuel asked if there were any more sons. Jesse told him about his youngest son who was tending the sheep. They sent for him. When David came to Samuel, God said that he was the one! Samuel anointed him in front of his family. The Spirit of the Lord came upon David.

The Spirit of the Lord left Saul. He became depressed. David was called to play music for Saul to help him during his depression. Saul liked David. The Philistines, once again, gathered themselves an army to fight Israel. They had a champion. He was over nine feet tall! His name was Goliath. No one was willing to face the giant. David did. To everyone's amazement, David killed Goliath! More to the point, God killed Goliath. He simply used the faith and obedience of David to do it!

Today, we face our "giants". If we trust ourselves, we will fear and fail. If we trust God, He may use us to do something amazing!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David is a shadow of Jesus. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the city of David. David saved Israel from a giant. Jesus saved us from sin! David was king, but Jesus is the King of Kings! David was a "man after God's own heart", but Jesus IS His heart! Christians know God through Christ! Are you a Christian?



**Day 92      I Samuel Chapters 18 - 20      History**

King Saul's son, Jonathan, loved David very much. In fact, everyone loved David except Saul! When David came home from battle the women acknowledged Saul had killed thousands, but David had killed TENS of thousands. Saul was very jealous. He was actually afraid of David because he knew the Spirit of the Lord was with him.

Saul became depressed. David played for him as he had done many times before. While he played Saul became so upset he tried to kill David with a javelin! This would not be the last time he would try this. Saul agreed for David to marry his daughter, Michal, if he would kill 100 Philistines. Saul believed the Philistines would kill David if he attempted such a thing. David killed 200 Philistines! This was proof to Saul that the Lord was with David, but he did not care. He ordered Jonathan and his men to kill David. They would not do it. They actually helped David escape. Even Saul's daughter, Michal, helped David. He went to live with Samuel. Saul was so upset with Jonathan he tried to kill him with a javelin! This broke Jonathan and David's hearts.

Today, Christians are hated and hunted by their enemies. They have done nothing wrong. Their only crime is being a Christian. It is likely the enemy is afraid of them because God is with them!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David is a shadow of Jesus. Jesus came to the world to destroy sin and death. His enemies hated Him. Yet when He was put to death, up from the grave He arose! Jesus frees Christians from all enemies. Are you a Christian?

**Day 93 I Samuel Chapters 21 - 24** History

David was on the run! He went to Nob and ask for some food from Ahimelech, the priest. The priest gave him the holy bread used for the Lord's service. David also asked for a weapon. Ahimelech had the sword that David had used to kill Goliath, the giant. He gave it to him since it was, for all practical purposes, his anyway. Doeg was a servant of Saul. He happened to be there that day and witnessed the whole event. He told Saul everything. Saul brought his army to Nob. He ordered Ahimelech to be killed. Doeg executed the order.

David continued to run. He went to Gath where he acted like he lost his mind to save himself from harm. David ran from place to place. He gathered 600 men who were loyal to him. They rescued Keilah, a city of Israel, from the Philistines. The people of Keilah were relieved, but they feared Saul more. They would have turned David over to Saul. David and his men ran into the wilderness and hid among the caves. Saul chased them. Saul briefly left the chase to fend off a Philistine attack, but afterward he was back to the chase! Saul went into a cave to use the "bathroom". It happened to be the very cave that David and his men were hiding in! Everything in the mind of David's men said, "Kill Saul, it's the right thing to do. It must be the Will of God since he chose this cave to go in!" David was under enormous pressure to kill Saul, but he didn't. It was against God's law to kill the king! When Saul learned David had resisted the perfect opportunity to kill him, he acknowledged David's integrity. He knew David would be the next king!

Today, we are under great pressure to think like the world. We are called upon to act like the world. But we don't! Why? The world doesn't do the Will of God. We do!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David is a shadow of Jesus. Though David was persecuted and threatened by Saul, he didn't strike back. Jesus was persecuted and killed, but He didn't resist or fight back. Christians know how to "turn the other cheek". Are you a Christian?

## Day 94

## I Samuel Chapters 25 - 27

History

One verse is given to record the death of Samuel then the narrative continues with the life of David. He has been protecting the shepherds and flocks of a man named Nabal. When it came time to shear the sheep, thus reaping financial gain, David asked for some support. Nabal refused to help David and his men. David was furious. He vowed to kill Nabal and all his men. Nabal's wife, Abigail, brought David a gift and begged for mercy. She said that Nabal's name, which means "Fool", is exactly what Nabal is! She also pointed out that when David became king, people would say he is a "vengeful" man who murders without good cause. David appreciated the wise advice and promised not to kill Nabal. Since, "vengeance belongs to God", God killed Nabal! David married Abigail!

Saul gathered 3,000 men and went on another hunt for David. When Saul was camped, David and Abishai sneaked in and fought him. They could easily have killed him. Abishai begged David to let him. David refused. He would not kill the Lord's anointed king. Instead, he took his spear and a bottle of water and crept away. The next day, David showed Saul, once again, how he had spared his life. Saul promised not to bother David again. Of course David didn't believe that! He took his men away from Israel and lived among the Philistines. David pretended to be in alliance with them. The Philistines gave him Ziklag, one of their cities. For sixteen months David trained and strengthened his army.

Today, we often want to "get even" with folks who have done us wrong. Why don't we try something really radical? Let God handle it!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David is a shadow of Jesus. David was a man without a country. He was a homeless outcast. Jesus was also a homeless outcast. He said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20). Christians, who find themselves to be outcasts, understand they are following in their Savior's footsteps! Are you a Christian?

**Day 95      I Samuel Chapters 28 - 31** History

The king of the Philistines, Achish, was certain David had fully defected from Israel. David and his men had been living in their city of Ziklag for sixteen months and had shown no aggression toward the Philistines. Achish decided to fight Israel and get David to join him! Saul was very much afraid! Samuel was dead so he couldn't seek his advice. He prayed to God, but God wouldn't answer. He didn't know what to do. He decided to turn to witchcraft. He hired a witch of Endor to contact Samuel. God allowed Samuel to speak to Saul from beyond the grave. Samuel told him he and his sons, including Jonathan, would be killed in battle the next day.

The princes of the Philistines didn't trust David. They insisted the king send him back to Ziklag. Achish complied and sent them back. While David and his men were away, the Amalekites attacked Ziklag. David pursued them. He destroyed them and regained everything they had taken. Meanwhile the Philistines attacked Saul and his army. Saul was wounded badly in battle. He didn't want to be captured, tortured, and killed by the enemy, so he killed himself. When the Philistines found his body, they decapitated him and displayed his head among the people in the region.

Today, if God doesn't answer our prayers, or at least doesn't answer them the way we expected, we go to other sources. Be careful! God is the only source we can trust!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David is a shadow of Jesus. David saved his people from the Amalekites. He destroyed the enemy and freed his people. Satan and sin has captured many people. Jesus came to destroy the enemy and free his people. Christians ARE His people! Are you a Christian?

## Day 96      II Samuel Chapters 1 - 3

History

As David rescued his people from the Amalekites, he wondered how the battle went between the Philistines and the Israelites. They met a young man who had just come from the battle field. The young man reported that Saul and his son, Jonathan, were dead. David asked him how he knew. The young man told him he had found Saul mortally wounded. He said Saul asked him to kill him. Since he was sure he couldn't survive, the young man said he killed him. We know from our previous reading that Saul committed suicide. Perhaps the young man thought David would be happy with him if he believed he had killed his enemy. David was not happy at all! He had the young man executed for killing the Lord's anointed!

God told David to go to Hebron. Since Saul and his son, Jonathan, were dead, David was recognized as the rightful king at Hebron. Abner, Saul's captain, didn't agree. He took Saul's son, Ish-bosheth, and set him up as the rightful king. There was a battle between Abner's men and David's men. Joab was David's captain. Though Abner was defeated, he escaped, but not before he killed one of Joab's brothers. For seven years there was conflict between David and the family of Saul. Each of them wanted to control the kingdom. David became stronger and Saul's family became weaker as time went by. One day Ish-bosheth offended Abner. He decided to abandon Ish-bosheth and support David. This was sure to seal David's place as king. Joab didn't care about politics. He wanted revenge. He murdered Abner! Naturally this upset David very much. He knew Joab was going to be a serious problem for him.

Today, we find ourselves in positions that require wisdom and a clear head. Joab allowed vengeance and bitterness to blind him so he could not see the bigger picture. Let's be careful to look beyond the moment of "Now" and see the potential of "Then"!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David is a shadow of Jesus. God anointed David to be king. God set David on his throne in Hebron. People opposed him. Jesus is God's anointed. In fact, the word, "Christ", means, "The anointed one". Many oppose Him. Christians acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ! Are you a Christian?

**Day 97      II Samuel Chapters 4 - 7** History

When Saul's son, Ish-bosheth, heard his captain, Abner, was dead, he was afraid! He knew he stood no chance against David. Two brothers under Ish-bosheth's command also knew David would win. They decided to murder Ish-bosheth and bring his head to David. They thought David would be happy with them. He was not happy at all! He ordered their execution!

David had been king at Hebron for seven years. Now he was the undisputed king of the entire nation of Israel! He moved the capitol to Jerusalem. He reigned in Jerusalem for thirty three years. He was king for a total of 40 years. When the Philistines heard that David became the king of a United Israel, they were livid! They decided to crush him. God didn't allow that to happen! In fact, God gave David peace from his enemies for many years. David wanted to build God a temple. God didn't allow that to happen either, however, He promised that David's son would become king and build a great temple in Jerusalem. David praised God for that promise!

Today, we often wonder if God will ever put us in a position to serve. Just remember that David was a shepherd boy when Samuel anointed him to be king. It took several years before David actually became king. Be patient! Stay busy doing what God has given you to do. Stay on the right path. The end is certain!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David is a shadow of Jesus. David was born in Bethlehem. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. David became king. Jesus is the King of kings! David didn't get to build God's house – but Jesus did! Jesus' house is the Church. Christians, who have been baptized into Christ, have been added to His Church (Acts 2:38 & 47)! Are you a Christian?

**Day 98****II Samuel Chapters 8 - 11**

History

Now that David was the undisputed king of the United Israel he began to expand his borders. Nation after nation attacked Israel only to be defeated. The king of Ammon died and his son took his place. David decided to treat him kindly. He sent ambassadors to Ammon to show his good intentions. The rulers of Ammon thought David was actually spying out the land to plan an attack. They humiliated the ambassadors and sent them home. David was very angry. He defeated the people of Ammon!

Since David's army had grown more powerful than his enemies, he was able to send them to the front lines without going with them himself. He remained home. It was during this time, David had an affair with Bathsheba, the wife of one of his loyal soldiers. She became pregnant! He tried to cover up his sin by eventually having the soldier killed! He married Bathsheba and she had his child. No one knew what had happened - except God!

Today, we can fool all of the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool God! When we stop the work, like David stopped going out with the army, we may find ourselves doing things we shouldn't do! Stay busy with the work of the Lord. An idle mind, truly IS the Devil's workshop!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Uriah the Hittite, Bathsheba's husband, was killed for his loyalty, so was Jesus! Christians are loyal to Christ, even if it kills them! Are you a Christian?

**Day 99      II Samuel Chapters 12 - 13** History

David tried to hide his affair with Bathsheba by having her husband killed. He married Bathsheba. The people, no doubt, thought he was doing a good thing by taking his loyal soldier's wife into his home to care for her. David made an evil act look like an act of kindness! God knew the difference! God sent Nathan to David and exposed his sin. David confessed and repented. Nathan said the Lord had "put away" his sin and he would not die, but there were severe consequences. God told David his kingdom would be plagued with continual warfare. He said David's own family would turn against him. In addition, Bathsheba's child will die!

It all happened just the way God said it would. The child died and war continued. As for his family – it was dreadful! David had many children by several wives. Absalom and his sister, Tamar, was from one wife. David's son, Amnon, was from another wife. Amnon raped Tamar! After two years of seething in a vengeful rage, Absalom murdered Amnon for what he had done to his sister. Absalom ran away. David's heart was broken for both of his sons. He loved Absalom even though he had committed such a horrible thing.

Today, many think there will be no consequences for their actions. There are always consequences for sin. It may take years. It may not even be on this side of eternity, but as we learn in Numbers 32:23, "... be sure your sin will find you out."

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David experienced what Jesus came to do for all of us. God "put away" David's sin that he did not die! The penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23). Those who have been baptized into Christ have had their sins "washed away" (Acts 22:16). Christians, therefore, will not die! Are you a Christian?



**Day 100      II Samuel Chapters 14 - 15** History

God had told David there would be consequences of his sin with Bathsheba. One consequence was that his family would turn against him. His son Absalom had already murdered one of his other sons. He was now banished from the kingdom. David's chief captain, Joab, lobbied for his return. David allowed Absalom to return, but did not allow him to see him for two years.

After two years, David finally meets with Absalom which formally gives him certain authorities. Absalom uses his authority to manipulate the people. His propaganda gradually turns many of their hearts against David. Absalom was very patient while his scheme took root. After some years, he had enough support to carry out an offensive attack against his father, David, in Jerusalem. Even one of David's counselors, Ahithophel, joins Absalom. David retreats from Jerusalem leaving the city to fall into Absalom's hands. David left his friend, Hushai, behind. His orders were to pretend to serve Absalom. He would serve as a spy and inform David of his son's plans.

Today, our sins have caused much heart ache and pain. Though we suffer the consequences of our sins, we can be forgiven through the blood of Christ. Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David was betrayed by his close friends just as Jesus was betrayed by Judas, one of his twelve apostles. David went to mount Olivet, and cried. Jesus went to the same Mount of Olives and wept over Jerusalem. David lost Jerusalem without a fight. Jesus lost his life without a fight. Christians are persecuted and betrayed. They cry over the souls of men who are lost. They understand that freedom from sin is not gained by those who pick up weapons and fight. Freedom from sin can only be found in Christ! Are you a Christian?

**Day 101      II Samuel Chapters 16 - 17** History

David's son, Absalom, took Jerusalem after David retreated. During the retreat, David met Ziba. He was the minister of Mephibosheth, Saul's son. David had treated Mephibosheth very well. He was crippled in his feet and David allowed him to eat at his own table. This was a gesture to show respect for Saul, and Saul's son, Jonathan. David loved Jonathan dearly. Ziba told David that Mephibosheth had stayed in Jerusalem to try to regain the kingdom for himself. This discouraged David very much. David also met Shimei, another member of Saul's family. Shimei ran along the hill top cursing David. David was humbled. He knew this was yet another consequence for his sin with Bathsheba. God had told him many would turn against him.

Hushai was a very close counselor to David. He stayed in Jerusalem and pretended to join Absalom. Another counselor of David, Ahithophel, truly had deserted David. Both men were advising Absalom. Hushai's advice would help David. Ahithophel's advice would destroy David. Absalom chose to follow Hushai's counsel. This probably saved David's life that night! When Ahithophel heard Absalom had not listened to him, he killed himself! Why? This was probably not due to a deflated ego, it may have been Ahithophel knew Absalom had perhaps missed his only chance to kill David. He may have known that David would take advantage of this opportunity and regain the throne. When this happened, Ahithophel would be executed. He decided to do it himself!

Today, people may turn their backs on us and curse us to our face. If we are not cursed by God, we really don't have much to worry about!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David was cursed to his face. Jesus was spit upon and cursed. David surrendered to the curses, so did Jesus. Whenever Christians are cursed, they remember that their Savior suffered far worse. Are you a Christian?

**Day 102      II Samuel Chapters 18 - 19** History

It had to happen. Absalom and his army fought David's army. David had given strict orders not to kill his son, Absalom. When Absalom became helpless, Joab, David's captain, murdered him. David didn't take the news well. He cried bitterly! Joab was furious! He insisted David get back to Jerusalem and regain his throne. David did go back, but he was, no doubt, suspicious of his captain.

Shimei, who had cursed David, begged forgiveness. David spared his life. Ziba had accused Mephibosheth, Saul's son, of treason against David. He denied the accusation. David let the matter go and didn't prosecute Mephibosheth or Ziba. The people began to argue who had more right to David's attention and service. Ten tribes were represented by Israel. Two tribes were represented by Judah. The argument was bitter, but they remained unified under David's kingdom.

Today, people will hurt us. Can we weep for them? People will ask for our forgiveness. Can we forgive them?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Just as David wept over the death of his son, Absalom, though he treated him so badly, Jesus weeps over those who die with no hope. Just as David forgave those who offended and cursed him, Jesus forgave those who abused Him. Christians want to be like Christ, so they forgive those who trespass against them. Are you a Christian?

**Day 103      II Samuel Chapters 20 - 22** History

Though David was the king of the United Kingdom of the Hebrews, there was great friction between the northern section (Israel) and the southern section (Judah). Sheba was of the tribe of Benjamin. He rebelled against David and started a revolution. David realized Sheba would do more damage to his kingdom than his son, Absalom, had done. David had made Amasa captain of his army instead of Joab. Joab was livid. David told Amasa to find Sheba. Joab met Amasa while they were searching for Sheba. Joab murdered Amasa. They found Sheba in a city called Abel. Just as Joab was about to attack, a woman negotiated with him to spare the city. She convinced the citizens of Abel to kill Sheba to save the city. They did.

Chapters 21 through 24 are out of chronological order. These chapters record events that took place throughout David's career. Chapter 21 records a time when David turned seven sons of Saul over to the Gibeonites for execution. It also records a time when David's men defeated the giants of the Philistines related to Goliath. Chapter 22 records a song (Psalm) that David sang when God delivered him from his enemies and from Saul. It's a song of praise and thanksgiving. It is almost identical to Psalm 18. In fact it's probably the same psalm revised slightly as it was published in the book of Psalms.

Today, we may find it is difficult to tell the difference between our friends and our enemies. Sheba and Joab were such folks. One fought against David and the other fought for him, but they were both serious problems for him!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Just as David had a "bad apple" in his circle of "friends" who constantly caused problems for him, Jesus had a "bad apple" among his apostles. Joab and Judas were "bad apples"! Christians may be confronted with "bad apples" but they still sing songs of praise and thanksgiving! Are you a Christian?

**Day 104      II Samuel Chapters 23 - 24      History**

Chapters 21 – 24 are sort of an appendix for II Samuel. They record events which took place throughout David's career. Chapter 23 verses 2-7 record a psalm David wrote. The rest of the chapter records a list of David's strongest soldiers and some of their accomplishments. Chapter 24 records a time when David took a census of the people. This was a sign of self-exaltation. He wanted to see how many people were under his command. God was not happy at all. He gave David a choice of three punishments. David confessed his sin and left the punishment up to God. God sent a plague on the nation for three days. Many people died. David purchased a threshing floor from Araunah (Ornan). He used this place to offer a sacrifice to God so the plague would stop. God accepted the sacrifice and stopped the plague.

Today, we need to stay humble before the Lord. We don't deserve any credit or glory for our accomplishments. God simply uses us to get His Will done. Give God the glory for whatever possession and position we have.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The threshing floor David purchased from Ornan was in the exact same area Jesus was crucified! Just as David's sacrifice at that place saved the people from physical death, Jesus' sacrifice on the cross saves us from spiritual death. Christians trust in Jesus' sacrifice. Are you a Christian?

**Day 105      I Kings Chapter 1**

History

David is now very old. He is on his death bed. His son, Adonijah, decided he should become the next king. He networked with some very influential people, including Joab, David's captain of the army. Adonijah also gained the allegiance of an important priest and other key officials. They invited a large number of people to a banquet to celebrate Adonijah becoming the new king.

Nathan, the prophet, encouraged Bathsheba to speak to David. She had been promised Solomon would become the next king. Nathan and Bathsheba told David what Adonijah was doing. David commanded a coronation ceremony to be organized. Solomon was anointed as the new king of United Israel. When Adonijah and his guests heard the news they were afraid. Surely they would be charged with insurrection. Solomon allowed Adonijah to live on the condition he remain loyal to him.

Today, we need to remain loyal to the Lord. Even at the end of David's life there was drama and turmoil. There was always someone scheming to advance themselves. Let's commit to advancing God's agenda instead of our own!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Just as David fulfilled his promise to Bathsheba that Solomon would wear the crown, Jesus promises a crown of righteousness to all who follow Him (II Timothy 4:8). Christians will wear a crown! Are you a Christian?

**Day 106 I Kings Chapters 2 - 3**

History

Just before David died he gave Solomon specific instructions. He told him to rule with strength like a man and obey the commandments of God. David then warned Solomon about Joab and Shimei. He told him to be kind to Barzillai. In other words, he wanted Solomon to know the difference between his friends and his enemies. After David's death, Solomon "cleaned house"! He executed the ones who were a threat to his throne and the peace he intended to bring to United Israel.

In search for peace, Solomon made a treaty with the Pharaoh in Egypt. To seal the deal he married the Pharaoh's daughter. This alliance jeopardized the purity of the Hebrew religion and led to other alliances that had the same effect. More and more Hebrews began to worship God in ways that were not authorized. Even Solomon worshipped in ways that were not appropriate. One night God offered Solomon anything he wanted. Solomon asked for wisdom! This unselfish request prompted God to give him the wisdom he asked for along with great riches and honor. Solomon exercised this God given gift by making incredibly wise judgments. This caused the nation to deeply respect him

Today, we learned David advised Solomon to do something he had failed to do. He had looked over several "thorns in his flesh" throughout his life which caused him a lot of grief. His advice was to get rid of the weeds! There may be some bad influences in our lives that we need to simply get it rid of. We don't want to take another person's life, but we certainly can remove their influence from our lives.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David was a "man after God's own heart". When he died, he left important instructions for Solomon. Jesus IS God's heart! When He died, and rose again, He sent the Holy Ghost to give important instructions to mankind. Christians understand that the Bible is the work of the Holy Spirit. They follow His instructions. Are you a Christian?

## Day 107 I Kings Chapters 4 - 6

History

Solomon was the undisputed king of United Israel. This portion of I Kings records the official ranking members who made up his administration and the enormous amount of resources it took to support this government. God continued to bless Solomon with more wisdom and understanding than anyone.

Solomon opened up trade with the king of Tyre. This trade agreement allowed him to peacefully acquire the resources he needed to build a great temple to God. Solomon's temple was magnificent. It was perhaps the most spectacular structure of that day and perhaps since. Even with the massive labor force, the incredible financial power, and the specialized skills that Solomon had access to, it still took seven years to build!

Today, we are the Temple of God (I Corinthians 3:6). God no longer lives in a temple made with human hands. He lives in us (if the spirit of God dwells in us)

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Temple is a shadow of Jesus. In that day, the only way anyone could have access to God was through the priests of the Temple. Christians have access to God through Jesus Christ! Are you a Christian?



**Day 108      I Kings Chapter 7**

History

Not only did Solomon build a great temple for God, he built many wonderful buildings and structures. These architectural accomplishments were testimonies to his power and authority.

In Solomon's porch of the temple he set up two large pillars. Names were engraved on them. The pillar on the right had the name, "Jachin", which meant "He shall establish". The name on the left pillar was, "Boaz", which meant "In it is strength". Each time someone looked at the temple of the Lord, they would be reminded that God firmly establishes them by His great strength! Solomon also furnished the temple. Among the contents were the altar of incense, table of showbread, and the candlestick.

Today, we are the Temple of God (I Corinthians 3:6). We have the same promise of security! We are established by His great strength! We certainly are not strong enough to establish ourselves!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The temple's contents are shadows of Jesus. The altar of incense speaks of our prayers through Christ, the table of showbread proclaims Jesus as the "Bread of Life", and the candlestick teach that Jesus is the "Light of the World". Christians worship God through Jesus Christ! Are you a Christian?

## Day 109 I Kings Chapter 8

History

Solomon had finished the temple. It was time to bring in the last piece of furniture – the Ark of the Covenant! The Ark was placed in the Most Holy Place. The only items in the Ark at that time were the two stone tablets upon which God wrote the Ten Commandments. A cloud filled the temple signifying God's presence.

Solomon prayed to God. He acknowledged even the heavens couldn't contain God, much less the temple he had built. God had shown grace and mercy simply by coming into the temple! Solomon begged Him to always listen to the prayers of the people. He asked God to listen when the people prayed during famine, war, or when they asked for forgiveness of sin. After his prayer, he encouraged the people to always keep God's word and obey His commandments.

Today, we are the Temple of God (I Corinthians 3:6). Even though the heavens can't contain God, He has shown abundant grace and mercy by living in us!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Ark of the Covenant foreshadows Jesus. God resided above the Ark. The stone tablets, representing God's covenant with mankind, were in the Ark. The Ark was covered with a solid gold lid called the "Mercy Seat". The blood of a lamb was placed on the "Mercy Seat" signifying the place where God and man are united. New Testament Christians are united with God through the blood of Jesus Christ! Are you a Christian?

**Day 110 I Kings Chapters 9 - 10**

History

After Solomon's temple was completed. God spoke to Solomon the second time. He renewed His covenant with Solomon. God said, "If you will ... then I will..."! God's covenant is conditional!

Solomon's friend, Hiram, the king of Tyre, had traded much of the material Solomon needed for the temple. Solomon paid him with twenty cities, but Hiram was very disappointed in them. He called the cities, "Cabul" which means "Good for nothing"! Solomon must have made it up to Hiram since the two remained allies. As Solomon's fame increased, many foreign authorities visited him. One of his visitors was the Queen of Sheba. At first she had not believed what she had heard about Solomon, but after meeting him, she acknowledged she had not even heard half of his accomplishments! Truly God had fulfilled His promise to Solomon that He would give him riches and fame along with the wisdom that he had asked for.

Today, our covenant with God is still conditional. God has given us the New Covenant based upon even greater promises. However, it is contingent upon our obedience to Jesus. "... Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Mark 8:34. Sadly, there are the "Whosoever won'ts" in the world that refuse to follow Christ!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Solomon is a shadow of Christ. Like the Queen of Sheba, many folks hear about Jesus, but they simply can't believe the things they have been told. When Christians come to Jesus, they discover there is much more about Him than they ever imagined! Are you a Christian?

**Day 111 I Kings Chapters 11 - 12**

History

God had told the Hebrews not to take foreign spouses. He warned they would turn their hearts away from Him and lead them to serve other gods. Surely Solomon, being the wisest man alive, would heed God's warning. He didn't! He married many foreign wives. Perhaps he thought he was wiser than God and could never be turned away. He wasn't wiser than God. He did turn away! As a result, God allowed enemies to come against him. One of those enemies was Jeroboam. God sent a prophet to tell Jeroboam He was about to divide the kingdom. He promised to give Jeroboam ten of the tribes. When Solomon heard this, instead of repenting, he tried to murder Jeroboam! Where was his wisdom? Did he think he could change God's plan by his own actions?

After Solomon died, his son, Rehoboam, became king. Jeroboam tried to negotiate with him, but he followed unwise council. Ten tribes of the north rebelled against the king. They seceded from the union and made Jeroboam their king. Jeroboam knew his people would want to go to Jerusalem to worship. He feared this would compromise his power over them. He decided to form his own religious practices to satisfy the people. This worship was very similar to what they were accustomed to yet it was a blatant disobedience to God's commandments.

Today, we may think we are wiser than God when we do things that are against His will, but we simply aren't! Don't think that you are an exception, you aren't! If God says it will happen, it will! Even to you!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Worship in Jerusalem is a shadow of worshipping Jesus. Jesus said we are to keep His commandments (John 14:15). People tend to want things their way instead of His way. They will change their worship practices to satisfy their own desires. These practices may be similar to the way Jesus ordains, but they are still wrong. Christians love Jesus and keep His commandments. They worship Him the way He wants to be worshipped. Are you a Christian?

**Day 112      I Kings Chapters 13 - 14**

History

Jeroboam was now king in Israel in the north. Rehoboam, Solomon's son, remained the king in Judah in the south. Both of them betrayed God's covenant. God sent a man out of Judah to preach against Jeroboam and the altars he had built in Israel. He prophesied that a king would be born who would destroy the altars. He even foretold his name, Josiah! He also said Josiah would defile the altars by burning the false priests upon them. In II Kings 23:15-16 (about 300 years later) we read this actually came to pass! Jeroboam refused to listen to the prophet. God had told the young prophet to deliver his message and go back to Judah quickly. He was not even to eat or drink until he completed his mission. An old prophet in Israel lied to the young man. He told him God had spoken to him. He said God had changed His mind and would allow the young man to eat with the older man. The young prophet believed the older prophet and ate with him. It cost him his life!

Jeroboam's son got sick. He sent his wife to a prophet to ask God to heal the boy. The prophet gave bad news. God was angry with Jeroboam for his false worship. The boy died. After several years of ruling their respective kingdoms, both Jeroboam and Rehoboam died. There was never peace between them. The United Kingdom had divided!

Today, God has given us His word. We are expected to obey it. If someone else tells us God has given them a different word, don't believe them! It will cost you your soul!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Just as Josiah's birth and work was foretold some 300 years before he was even born, Jesus' birth and mission was also plainly foretold (Isaiah 9:6 and many other scriptures). Christians believe what God says about Jesus! Are you a Christian?

**Day 113 I Kings Chapters 15 - 17**

History

The United Kingdom is divided. It is now Israel to the north and Judah to the south. We will begin reading about the reigns of the kings of both. Notice that the author of I Kings references the Book of Chronicles and the Books of the Kings of Judah and Israel. When we read II Chronicles, we will see more details of the reigns of these kings (primarily the kings of Judah). I Kings bounces back and forth from Judah to Israel. It can be confusing. These chapters cover several kings.

After Rehoboam, king of Judah, died, his son Abijah took the throne. He was as bad as his father. When he died, his son, Asa, became king of Judah. He was a good king! It is refreshing to see this, considering his father and grandfather were so wicked. Unfortunately, we will see in II Chronicles that he falls short at the end. Asa's rule lasts for 41 years. During this time several kings come and go in Israel to the north. Jeroboam's son, Nadab, became the second king of Israel. He was evil. Baasha assassinated him and seized the throne. He proceeded to murder Jeroboam's entire family! Elah, Baasha's son, became Israel's king when Baasha died. Within a year Zimri assassinated him! Zimri proceeded to murder Baasha's entire family. What goes around comes around! Zimri became king of Israel, but in just a few days he was attacked by Omri. Realizing he would be captured, Zimri committed suicide by burning himself up in the palace! Omri was worse than any king of Israel before him. This is saying a lot! However, when he died, his son, Ahab, became king. He was far worse than Omri! Ahab's wife, Jezebel, was just as bad! They both hated God's prophet Elijah. Elijah had prophesied no rain for three years. None came. During the three years, God protected Elijah using nature and using a faithful widow. God would use Elijah to speak powerfully against the king of Israel and his wife!

Today, we still see political unrest throughout the world. Assassinations, coups, conspiracies, and power struggles. None of them are new. God's people should always speak up and trust God to use them!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The horrible actions of these kings teach us that man can't rule themselves. Jesus is in the shadows waiting to be your King! Jesus is the ultimate King whose Kingdom shall never be destroyed. Christians are members of His Kingdom, the Church. Are you a Christian?

**Day 114 I Kings Chapters 18 - 20**

History

Elijah had prayed that it not rain. It didn't. After three years God told Elijah He would send rain. The king of Israel, Ahab, and his wife Jezebel hated Elijah. Elijah came to Ahab and asked one simple question, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Ahab served Baal, a false god. He had 450 prophets of Baal. Elijah challenged them. "If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him." The prophets called upon Baal. Elijah called upon God. God won! Elijah then prayed for rain seven times. After each prayer, he watched the sky to see if the rain was coming. After the seventh prayer and looking at the sky, it rained!

Jezebel was livid! She swore to kill Elijah. He hid. Elijah was discouraged. His country had turned its back on God. He felt alone. God appeared to him. He assured Elijah he was not alone! God insisted Elijah get back to work. There were people to preach to and there were students to train. Don't give up. Train the next generation! He chose Elisha to become his disciple. The Assyrians attacked Israel. God used wicked Ahab to defeat them. When Ahab refused to kill the king of Assyria as God instructed, God told him it would cost him his life! Even if God uses folks to do His Will, it doesn't mean He approves of them!

Today, we see our country turning its back on God. We can run and hide, or we can continue to speak the truth and train the next generation. If God is God, then follow Him.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** God told Elijah He would send rain. Elijah still had a responsibility to pray for it. In fact, he prayed seven times before rain came! God told the world that Jesus would return one day and take us to heaven. Don't give up on Him! We still have the responsibility to watch and pray! Christians are always watching and praying. Are you a Christian?



**Day 115 I Kings Chapters 21 - 22**

History

Ahab continued to govern Israel with selfishness and pride. There was a vineyard that joined his property. It belonged to someone else. He asked his neighbor if he would trade for it or let him buy it. The neighbor said "No". Ahab pouted about it! He went to bed and refused to eat or drink! Jezebel conspired to have the neighbor murdered so Ahab to take the vineyard. God sent Elijah to Ahab and Jezebel to tell them that He would punish them for their wickedness. As cruel and selfish as Ahab was, he humbled himself before God. This moved God to delay the punishment. God shows mercy even to a man as bad as Ahab!

Syria was a bitter enemy of Israel. When it became apparent that Syria was going to destroy Israel, they asked Judah to help them. The country had been divided, yet a common enemy brought them together. Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, was a good king. He asked Ahab, king of Israel, to bring prophets to see what God thought about joining forces to fight Syria. Every prophet told them to go to battle, except one! Micaiah told them God did not want them to fight Syria. He said that all the other prophets had a "lying spirit". If they went to war, they would lose. Ahab was livid! He told Jehoshaphat that Micaiah always prophesied bad things and should not be trusted. They arrested Micaiah and put him in prison. Jehoshaphat decided to join Ahab against Syria. During the battle, Ahab was killed. Micaiah was the only one who was telling the truth. Ahaziah took Ahab's place as king of Israel. He followed in his father's footsteps. Jehoshaphat, the good king of Judah, didn't die in the war. When he later died, his son, Jehoram took his place.

Today, we have so many folks preaching to us and telling us what God says. Then along comes someone who tells us something entirely different! The leaders don't like him, everyone thinks he's crazy, and he may even be thrown into prison for what he preaches. However, he may be right! Read the Bible and test the "spirits". The preachers may be in the "mainstream", but they may be lying!

**In the shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Micaiah is a shadow of Jesus. Everyone was preaching this or that about the Kingdom of God. They believed the Messiah would set up a kingdom on earth with the throne in Jerusalem. Then Jesus came along, claiming to be the Messiah, and said "My Kingdom is not of this world!" (John 18:36). Jesus' teaching was different! "Turn the other cheek"; "Love your enemies"; "Don't divorce your wife"; etc. It was so radical, they killed Him! Christians follow Jesus even though He is different! Are you a Christian?

**Day 116 II Kings Chapter 1**

History

Ahab's son, Ahaziah, was now king of Israel. He fell through a lattice from his upstairs room. He was critically injured. Ahaziah sent messengers to ask a god named Baal-zebub if he would recover. This upset God. Ahaziah should have humbled himself before the true God. He sent Elijah to tell his messengers he would not recover.

Ahaziah was angry. He sent fifty men to capture Elijah. Elijah had found a secure place at the top of a hill. He called fire down from heaven and destroyed the fifty men! Ahaziah sent another fifty. Elijah did the same thing. The third group of fifty took a different approach. Their captain fell down on his face and begged not to be burned up! God told Elijah to go with that captain. Elijah went to Ahaziah and told him face to face he would die. He did! His son, Jehoram, became the next king of Israel.

Today, we know there is a higher power. Jehovah is that higher power! Don't go anywhere else!

**In the shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Luke 9:54 tells us that James and John asked Jesus if they should call fire down from heaven and destroy some folks like Elijah did. Jesus rebuked His disciples! He told them He was sent to save lives, not destroy them! Christians have that same spirit of Christ. Are you a Christian?

**Day 117      II Kings Chapters 2 - 4**

History

God decided to take Elijah from the earth, but not through death's door. He would take him in another way. Elisha saw it. As a result, he received twice the spirit that Elijah had. This is significant! In this reading we see God do marvelous things through Elisha. He miraculously provided a widow with enough oil to pay all her debts and fund her retirement! He predicted that a woman who had helped him would have a child. When the child later died, he raised him from the dead! He even removed poison from a pot of soup and fed it to a group of prophets!

Jehoram, king of Israel, was a bad king, but not as bad as his father. He still didn't truly serve God. When Moab attacked Israel, he asked his neighbors for help. Good king Jehoshaphat, king of Judah and the king of Edom, both agreed to help. Jehoshaphat would not commit to the alliance until he asked God. Jehoram went to Elisha. Elisha told him that if Jehoshaphat wasn't involved, God wouldn't help. God allowed the three kings to defeat Moab.

Today, we need to realize that God's eyes are over the righteous. He blesses entire countries simply because some righteous person is involved. It may seem that bad people prosper and good people suffer, but rest assured, good wins in the end!

**In the shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Elisha is a type of Christ. His miracles showed that God was concerned about people's financial health, social health through relationships, physical health, spiritual health, and much more. Jesus Christ showed the world these things and much, much more! Christians trust Jesus in all these areas. Are you a Christian?

**Day 118 II Kings Chapters 5 - 7**

History

Naaman was the captain of the Syrian army. He had leprosy. A young Israelite slave girl told him about Elisha. He went to Elisha's house. Elisha sent a messenger out to him and told him to dip seven times in the Jordan River. He would be cured. At first Naaman refused, but then was urged to simply obey the command. When he did, he was cured!

God showed remarkable concern for His people by miraculously providing the return of individual property, to miraculously delivering the entire nation from Syria. It seems that the king of Syria wasn't very grateful for his captain's healing. The king of Syria surrounded the town where Elisha was. Elisha's servant was petrified. Elisha assured him by saying, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." The servant's eyes were then opened. He saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire! They won that battle! Later the Syrians surrounded Samaria, the capital city of Israel. It was awful! They were starving them! Then Elijah predicted an overnight defeat of the Syrians. Once again, God proved to be stronger than the Syrians.

Today, when it seems that we are surrounded by certain death and destruction, rest assured that God is in control! Can't you see with the eyes of faith that the mountains are full with His army?

**In the shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Just as Naaman was immersed in the river Jordan for the removal of his physical disease, we are immersed in water for the removal of our spiritual disease of sin. Why? Christ's blood is in the water (Romans 6 & Revelation 7:14)! Like Naaman, some refuse to accept that truth, but when they simply obey the command, they are saved! Christians are washed in the blood! Are you a Christian?

**Day 119      II Kings Chapters 8 - 9**

History

Elisha continued his work in and around Israel. Helping individuals like the woman whose son he restored to life as well as preaching to kings. Even the king of Syria respected Elisha. The king became sick. He sent Hazael to ask Elisha if he would get well. Elisha told Hazael the king could have gotten well, but Elisha knew that Hazael would assassinate the king. Hazael denied this accusation. Yet, when he got home, he did exactly what Elisha had predicted!

This text also covers more of the kings of Israel and Judah. This can get confusing. Read with caution! The next two kings of Israel were Ahaziah and then Joram. The next two kings of Judah were Jehoram and Ahaziah. No, you are not seeing double! These kings had the same names and ruled during the same times over different kingdoms. They were all four bad! Elisha sent one of the prophets to find Jehu. He told him to anoint Jehu to be the next king of Israel. The king of Israel, Joram, and the king of Judah, Ahaziah, joined forces against Jehu. Jehu killed them both! Jehu then had Jezebel killed! When she died, the dogs ate her body, just as Elijah had prophesied.

Today, there are a lot of wicked rulers over the countries of the earth. Make no mistake about it, God knows them! He knows who is good and who is bad. Rest assured, God is watching.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** He is in chapter 8 verse 19. Even though Jehoram, king of Judah, was bad, God wouldn't destroy Judah. Why? God had promised to give David and his children a "light"! He did! Christians understand that Jesus is that light! Are you a Christian?

## Day 120      II Kings Chapters 10 - 12

History

Elijah had told Ahab, king of Israel, that his sons would be killed. When Jehu became the king of Israel, he not only ordered the death of Ahab's wife, Jezebel, but also had Ahab's sons executed. All seventy of them! Ahab and Jezebel had worshipped the false god, Baal. Jehu pretended to be a follower of Baal to lure the false priests to a worship service. During the service, Jehu ordered their annihilation! All this fulfilled God's prophecy given by Elijah. Though God used Jehu to do His will, Jehu was not loyal to God.

After Jehu killed Ahaziah, king of Judah, it left the throne vacant. Ahaziah's mother, Athaliah, seized the opportunity. She became the queen of Judah! To secure her power, she had Ahaziah's children put to death. These were her own grandchildren! One child was spared. His name was Joash (also called Jehoash). For the next six years Athaliah ruled Judah. When Joash was seven years old, Jehoiada, the priest, appointed him the rightful king. Athaliah was executed. Joash ruled well under the influence of Jehoiada, but we will learn from II Chronicles 24:17-22 that when Jehoiada died, Joash stopped serving God.

Today, we must make a decision to serve God for ourselves. We can lean on another's faith and mentoring for a while, but we must choose to serve whether they are with us or not. In fact, someday that faithful, dedicated person in your life may be gone. What will you do then?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Elijah foretold everything that Jehu did even though Jehu was not faithful to God. Jesus foretold everything that happened to Him. It was carried out by very unfaithful people. God even used Satan when he entered into the heart of Judas! Christians are surrounded by unfaithful people, but they are convinced that God is still in control. Are you a Christian?

## Day 121      II Kings Chapters 13 - 14

History

In today's reading we see three more kings of Israel rise and fall. Their names were Jehoahaz, Jehoash, and Jeroboam. All three were bad kings. They all reigned during the reign of Joash, king of Judah. When Joash, king of Judah died, Amaziah, took the throne. He was a good king. After his death, Azariah became king (he is also called Uzziah). He, too, was a good king.

Elisha became sick. One of the kings of Israel, Jehoash (also called Joash) visited him. Elisha prophesied Israel would only have limited resistance against Syria, their enemy. Judah and Israel fought one another again. Israel gained a great victory over Judah. The two kingdoms remained divided.

Today, we see governments rise and fall. Some are good and some are bad. Pray that our leaders are the good ones!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is the one King that will never fall. He predicted the gates of hell will not prevail against His Kingdom. Christians are members of His Kingdom (the Church). Are you a Christian?



**Day 122      II Kings Chapters 15 - 16**

History

In today's reading more kings rise and fall. Three kings of Judah are mentioned, Azariah, Jotham, and Ahaz. The first two were good kings. Ahaz was bad. Judah had been blessed with three good kings in a row! Israel was not so fortunate. In today's reading we are introduced to several kings of Israel. Their names were Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah. All five were bad kings!

We learn from the Chronicles and other scriptures that God sent Amos and Hosea to Israel during these kings. God also sent prophets to the kings of Judah. They were Isaiah and Micah. All of these prophets gave their respective kings instruction and warnings from God. Some listened. Some did not.

Today, God sends His messengers to the world leaders. Some listen. Some do not.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** God's ultimate prophet is His own Son, Jesus. He sent Him into the world to turn man's heart to Him. Some listen. Some do not. Christians listen! Are you a Christian?

**Day 123      II Kings Chapters 17 - 18**

History

During the reign of Ahaz, a bad king of Judah, Hoshea became the king of Israel. He, too, was a bad king. In fact, every king of Israel had been bad. God had sent prophet after prophet to Israel to warn them. None of them listened. God finally had enough. He sent Assyria against them and carried them away into captivity. This ended the kingdom of Israel. Even then, God didn't give up on them. He sent lions among the Assyrians in Samaria because there was no priest to teach His word. The king of Assyria ordered that a priest be brought to Assyria to teach the Word of God! Unfortunately, they still didn't listen!

After Ahaz, the king of Judah died, his son, Hezekiah, became king. He was a good king. Chapter 18 verse 5 says "... after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him"!! That is saying a lot! Assyria decided to go up against Judah since they had taken Israel and other surrounding countries. Their first strategy was to send messengers to discourage the people of Judah with propaganda methods. They told them Egypt or no other nation could help them. They were alone! They told them their God was actually on the Assyrian's side! They lied and said God had told them to conquer them. They appealed to the citizens of Judah to rebel against their good king, Hezekiah. They promised to give them good things and offered them a comfortable lifestyle. They noted they had taken many countries and their gods didn't save them. Why should they think the God of Judah would be any different?

Today, we hear all of the propaganda; "You are alone"; "Your opponents are actually the ones God approves"; "You can have everything you need if you will just leave the good and turn against each other"; "Your life will be so much better"; and "God isn't powerful enough to stand with you". Stay tuned to see exactly what God did for Judah! God is in control!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Even though the whole nation of Israel forsook God and received His righteous judgment, God still sent His man to teach them His Word. Romans 5:8 says "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us". Christians listen to God's Word through Christ! Are you a Christian?

**Day 124 II Kings Chapters 19 - 21**

History

Hezekiah, a good king of Judah, was threatened by Assyria. He called for Isaiah, God's prophet, to plead to God for the nation. Isaiah assured Hezekiah Judah would not be harmed by the Assyrians. They would not even have to fight them! An angel of the Lord came upon the Assyrian army in the middle of the night and killed 185,000 of them! The king of Assyria went home!

Hezekiah got sick. Isaiah told him he would die. He turned to the wall and cried and prayed to God. Before Isaiah could even get out of the courtyard, God told him to go back and tell Hezekiah He heard his cries and saw his tears. He granted him fifteen more years of life! Later Hezekiah showed an envoy from Babylon all the kingdom of Judah. Isaiah was upset. He prophesied God would allow the Babylonians to carry the people of Judah into captivity in the future. (We shall see this is exactly what will happen). When Hezekiah died, his son, Manasseh took the throne. He was very wicked. After his death, his son, Amon, became king. He, too, was evil. After Amon's death, his son, Josiah, became king. Finally, another good king!

Today, we saw a great king, Hezekiah, make a mistake. We also saw the next two generations lead the country to the brink of annihilation. Yet, we will see that a good leader, Josiah, can turn it all around. We are just one or two generations away from going under! The good news is we can return to the Lord and get back on top in just one generation! Who will lead that good generation?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Isaiah is a type of Christ. God sent him to tell Hezekiah news that moved him to tears. God sent Jesus to give us the Gospel. The Gospel moves Christians to tears! When was the last time we prayed and wept before God? Are you a Christian?

**Day 125 II Kings Chapters 22 - 23**

History

Josiah became the king of Judah. This fulfilled the prophecy God gave in I Kings 13:2 (read that again to refresh your memory). Josiah destroyed the false worship centers and the sodomites' houses. He desecrated their false altars by burning dead men's bones upon them. Those bones came from a 300 year old cemetery! They were the bones of the priests from I Kings 13:2! When God says He's going to do something, He is going to do it! It may take Him 300 years, but what is that to God!

The temple was in disrepair. The previous kings had not taken care of it. Josiah invested in the repairs. While working in the temple, they found the Book of The Law! It was Moses' commandments from the first five books of the Bible! When it was read to Josiah, he realized the nation hadn't obeyed these commandments. He (and the nation) repented! They read about the Passover, a holy feast to commemorate their freedom from Egypt. They were supposed to keep it every year. The nation had not kept the Passover since the day of the Judges! No king in Israel or Judah had kept the Passover! Josiah decided it was about time to obey the Bible! He did! When Josiah died, his son, Jehoahaz took his place. He was a bad king. Egypt came up against them and replaced Jehoahaz with Jehoakim. As long as he paid taxes to Egypt they left him alone. He was a bad king too!

Today, God expects us to keep His word! Our nation needs to read the Bible! More importantly, we need to obey the Bible! The Bible is a best-seller, yet the nation is still falling away from God. What does this mean? It means there is a lot of dust on a lot of Bibles!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Josiah is a type of Christ. His birth was foretold and he brought his people back to the Word of God. Jesus' coming was also foretold Matthew 1:21 "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Christians are saved from their sins through Jesus. Are you a Christian?

## Day 126 II Kings Chapters 24 - 25

History

While Jehoiakim was king of Judah several neighboring countries attacked them. Manasseh, an earlier king of Judah, had done so wickedly that God said He would allow Judah to be conquered. Tradition tells us Manasseh had Isaiah, God's prophet, sawn in half! God had told Hezekiah, another previous king of Judah, that it would be the Babylonians that took them into captivity. The Babylonians, which is present day Iraq, besieged Jerusalem and took Daniel and many others away.

After Jehoiakim's death, Jehoiachin, became king of Judah. He only lasted three months. The king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, took him to Babylon and replaced him with Zedekiah. Zedekiah was Babylon's puppet king for several years. He rebelled against Babylon. Jeremiah, the prophet, warned him to not to rebel. He did it anyway. It cost him dearly! The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon's temple. They carried away most of the residents to Babylon to serve as slaves. They left a few poor people to tend the land, but they could never be a threat to the Babylonian Empire. We will learn that Jews, like Daniel, would gain the favor of the Babylonians. Even Jehoiachin would be treated kindly while in captivity! We will also learn Jeremiah had prophesied they would only be in captivity for seventy years. God allowed them to be taken, but He did not forget about them!

Today, we may be going through difficult times. It may even be due to our own poor choices. Rest assured God still cares. Even though he allows some bad things to happen, He hasn't forgotten about us!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Solomon's Temple is a shadow of Christ. Though the world destroyed it, it was rebuilt! By the time Jesus was born, the temple had been rebuilt. After throwing some folks out of the temple, Jesus said in John 2:19 "... Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He was talking about Himself. Jesus was crucified, but in three days He was raised up! Christians believe this with all their heart! Are you a Christian?

## Day 127      I Chronicles Chapters 1 - 4      History

Today we begin I Chronicles. If you like genealogies, you will LOVE the first nine chapters of this book! If you don't care much for genealogies, you will probably do what most of us do – scan these chapters and say that you read them! That's ok, most of us can't pronounce the names anyway. Just remember they are there. Why? It is a great resource. When you do a study of Judah or David, you may find these references helpful and even insightful!

Buried in the long list of names is a guy named Jabez (I Chronicles 4:9-10). Some years ago someone wrote about the "Prayer of Jabez". It is interesting to note that not much commentary was made about most of the other folks, but Jabez's prayer made it into the Bible! He prayed for four things: Blessings, Growth, God's Presence, and Protection. God granted him his requests!

Today, in the midst of great "busyness", don't forget to pray! You can pray for the same things Jabez prayed for. Perhaps God will grant your requests!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Genealogy was very important to God. Why? He had promised the world that the Christ would be born from the tribe of Judah and the seed of David. Preserving these records is one more proof that Jesus was in the mind of God the entire time! Christians believe that Jesus is God's gift to man! Are you a Christian?

**Day 128      I Chronicles Chapters 5 - 6** History

Hang in there! More genealogy! More unpronounceable names! Today you can read about the descendants of Rueben, Gad, and Levi. Since Levi is the tribe of the priests, the records also include Aaron, the first High Priest.

The word Chronicles means: “Historical account of events”. Some newspapers have the name “Chronicle”, indicating they are recording events of the day. I & II Chronicles are simply records of historical events. The Chronicles follow the history of the Southern Kingdom called Judah. I & II Samuel and I & II Kings covered the same history, but since the Chronicles focus on Judah, it records many details that the others left out.

Today, God cares deeply about us. It is awesome to think He knew all of these people by their names! Each of these names represents a life! God knows us by name and He cares about our lives!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Reading genealogy, it may be hard to recognize Jesus! He is everywhere! God promised that Jesus would be born from the Jewish nation. These names represent that nation. God fulfilled His promise to the world through the preservation of those people! Christians believe that Jesus is not only the Savior of the Jews, He is the Savior of mankind! Are you a Christian?

## Day 129      I Chronicles Chapters 7 - 9      History

Last day of reading genealogies and hard names for a while! Today we will see the descendants of Issachar, Benjamin (twice), Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher. We even see the genealogy of Saul (twice) and some of the priests and Levites.

You may have noticed that the records include the sons of Jacob (Israel) except Dan. Where are Dan's descendants? Do you remember what the tribe of Dan did in Judges Chapter 18? They left their land that God gave them for an inheritance and settled other lands. When they established themselves in this "unpromised" land, they worshipped false gods. Since the descendants of Dan rejected God's inheritance, God may have rejected their descendants!

Today, God has blessed America. If we reject Him, what do we think will happen to our descendants?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The house of the Lord in I Chronicles 9:22-34 is a shadow of Christ. The Levites that serve the house of the Lord are like us as we serve Jesus Christ. We each have our "set office" and do our specific "charge". Christians know what their "office" is. They are busy with the "charge" Jesus has given them! Are you a Christian?



**Day 130      I Chronicles Chapters 10 - 12      History**

Remember that the kingdom of Israel was united at one time. Their first king was Saul. Later, the United Kingdom of Israel was divided. The Northern Kingdom became known as Israel. The Southern Kingdom became known as Judah. The Chronicles will record the events of Judah, the Southern Kingdom. After the genealogies of chapters 1 – 9, chapter 10 begins the Chronicles by recording the death of Saul.

Upon Saul's death, David becomes the new king. The records show that David is served by several mighty men of valor. A few of their deeds are recorded as an example of what kind of men they were. After important meetings and political positioning, David became the undisputed king of United Israel.

Today, if you wanted to research your heritage, you may consult the records of those who served in the military. You may find your ancestor's name on the roster of the Mayflower! We are grateful that the names of those who served David are written in the record.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** David is a "shadow" of Christ. Those who serve Christ know their names are written in a special book called "The Lamb's Book of Life" (Revelation 21:27). Are you a Christian?

## Day 131      I Chronicles Chapters 13 - 16      History

David secured his authority as king of the United Kingdom. His first capital city was at Hebron, but he moved it to Jerusalem. David decided to transport the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

During the transport, while David and the caravan were singing and celebrating, a frightening thing happened. The Ark was put on a new cart drawn by oxen. Uzza and Ahio were driving them. The oxen stumbled and Uzza touched the Ark to steady it. God killed Uzza! Only the Levites were allowed to touch the Ark! David was upset and afraid. For a while he didn't allow the Ark to be brought to Jerusalem. Finally, he brought it to Jerusalem with great celebration.

Today, we may have the best intentions in the world in our service to God, but if it is not according to God's Word, it is unacceptable. Knowing God's Word is critical! Obeying it is mandatory! Remember the old saying, "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions"!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Ark of the Covenant speaks of Jesus! Today, God's Covenant is established through Christ. Those who serve Him must keep His commandments. Among other important things, Christians are told to be baptized into Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27; etc.) Have you been baptized? Are you a Christian?

**Day 132      I Chronicles Chapters 17 - 19**      History

David had built himself a fine house of cedar. He was disturbed that the Ark of the Covenant was still housed in a tent. He wanted to build God a house. God said, “No.” He reminded David He had elevated him from a shepherd to a king! God told David that He would build him a house! He promised David He would establish his “house” (family line). God also promised that David’s son would build a great Temple, but it would be after David’s death. David was very grateful for God’s promise.

Many surrounding countries attacked David’s kingdom. He defeated them all. When the neighboring king of Ammon died, David reached out to console his son. The king of Ammon had been good to David. The Ammonites refused David’s kindness. When they saw this upset David, they hired mercenaries for protection. David defeated them all! The people of Ammon surrendered.

Today, we need to remember God has made us great and precious promises. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31)

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** When God promised to establish David’s “house” and his throne, He had Jesus in mind! Jesus is the “Son of David”. Jesus promised to build His Kingdom (the Church) and nothing would destroy it! Jesus did build it. Nothing will destroy it! Christians are members of His Kingdom! Are you a Christian?

## Day 133      I Chronicles Chapters 20 - 23      History

War is a part of David's reign. He is victorious, but he is still burdened with war. Satan attacks! Satan "provoked" David to take a census of Israel. This was an expression of pride and lack of trust in God. God was very upset. He determined to punish David. He gave him a choice between three things: three years of famine, three months of defeat in battle, or three days of "God's Sword" on the people with plague and pestilence. David asked God to choose. He chose the three days and 70,000 people died! David purchased a threshing floor from Ornan. He built an altar there and offered a sacrifice to God. God stopped the death.

David gathered supplies for the House of God. He knew Solomon would be the next king. He knew God promised Solomon would build the Temple. David gave Solomon specific instructions. The Levites were to be in charge of the Temple and its functions. They were to stand before the Temple and offer thanksgiving and praise to God every morning and every evening.

Today, we are under attack! The physical attacks are bad, but it's the spiritual attacks that are the real problem! David withstood the physical attacks, but he fell when Satan showed up! Don't get so wrapped up in the physical that you ignore the spiritual!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Ornan's threshing floor was located in the exact place where Jesus was crucified! Just as physical death stopped at the sacrifice at Ornan's threshing floor, spiritual death was defeated at Calvary! Christians know that sins are forgiven through Jesus' sacrifice. Are you a Christian?

**Day 134      I Chronicles Chapters 24 - 26      History**

Are you ready for more records? Only those of the tribe of Levi could serve as priests. Only those of the family of Aaron, who was a Levite, could serve as high priest. Chapter 24 gives a record of 24 of those sons who served in divisions.

Worshipping God was very important to David and the Israelites. Chapter 25 gives a record of 24 musicians that served in divisions. Each of these had twelve members of his family that served, therefore, there were 288 very skilled musicians that were involved in worship. Chapter 26 gives a record of those that served in three positions: The porters (gatekeepers); the treasurer guards; and the official judges.

Today, worshipping God should be very important to all of us. It is not something that we should take lightly or toss together like we would a salad! Worship should be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40).

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Buried in all the names of the priests we find Abijah in chapter 24 verse 10. In Luke 1:5 we find that John the Baptist was of his division! John the Baptist came to announce the coming of Jesus! Even in the details, God was planning His Son's coming! Christians are looking forward to His Second Coming! Are you a Christian?

## Day 135      I Chronicles Chapters 27 - 29      History

David organized his military. There were 24,000 men on active duty each month. These soldiers served for one month and then rotated off duty allowing the next 24,000 to serve. Since there were 24,000 for each of the twelve months in the year, David's army was 288,000 members strong.

David officially announced Solomon would be his successor. He told the people Solomon would build a great Temple for God. He gave Solomon a serious warning. If he seeks God, he will find Him. If he rejects God, God will reject him. David encouraged Solomon to be strong and do God's work! David gave a large portion of his personal wealth for material Solomon would use to build the temple. The people of Israel followed His example and gave a tremendous amount. Solomon's Temple was sure to be a magnificent structure! David died believing his son would do God's work!

Today, giving to God's work is essential. David acknowledged everything belonged to God. He was simply giving God things that already belonged to Him! Shouldn't we? Let's be strong and do the work God has put us here to do!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Just as David prepared for the building of the Temple, God made detailed preparation for the coming of His Son, Jesus. The world should have received Him, but most didn't. Christians are grateful for God's unspeakable gift! Are you a Christian?

**Day 136      II Chronicles Chapters 1 - 4      History**

Solomon, David's son, became king. He worshipped God. God told Solomon He would give him whatever he desired. Solomon asked for wisdom to rule God's people, Israel. Because he didn't ask for riches, wealth, honor, etc. God promised to give him the wisdom and all of these things as well! God kept His word!

Solomon prepared to build God's Temple. He appointed 70,000 laborers, 80,000 men to quarry the stone from the mountain, 600 supervisors, and one man to craft the art work in gold, silver, iron, etc. The construction site was chosen in Mount Moriah. This was the place Abraham had offered Isaac. It was the place where David sacrificed at Ornan's threshing floor. It will be the same place Jesus would be crucified! In these chapters the building and furniture are described. Two giant pillars were erected on Solomon's Porch. He engraved names on them. One was called "Jachin" which means "He shall establish". The other was named "Boaz" which means "In Him is strength".

Today, we have security in Christ. The Temple is a shadow of the Church. All who serve in Christ's church are assured that "He shall establish" and "In Him is strength". Paul knew this very well (Hebrews 8:6 & Philippians 4:13). So should we!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** He's everywhere! Solomon's Temple, where sacrifice to God was made, was located in the same place where Jesus' ultimate sacrifice was made! The buildings and furniture of the Temple all speak of Jesus! God was thinking of the salvation of mankind through Christ the entire time! Christians enjoy that salvation! Are you a Christian?

**Day 137      II Chronicles Chapters 5 - 7** History

Solomon finished the Temple. It was magnificent. The people gathered together to bring the Ark of the Covenant to the Temple. When it was placed in the Most Holy place of the Temple, a cloud descended and filled the whole Temple. This was the presence of God. Solomon had built a temporary stage in the court of the Temple. It was 7 ½ feet square and 4 ½ feet tall. He stood on this platform and praised God in front of all the people. He noted that God had chosen no city to reside in since He delivered the people from Egypt. That day God chose Jerusalem! This was special indeed! Solomon acknowledged that no building could house God. The heaven is His house! However, Solomon asked God to regard this Temple in Jerusalem as a special place of prayer, praise, and sacrifice. If the people sin against God then repent and pray, Solomon begged God to hear their prayers from heaven, forgive them, and take away any punishment He had administered.

At the end of Solomon's prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the offerings and sacrifices! Everyone saw the fire and fell on their faces and worshipped God! Solomon then sacrificed 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep! Later God came to Solomon and told him He had heard his prayer. He promised to forgive when the people repented. He concluded with a warning! If the people refused to submit to Him, he would destroy Jerusalem and the Temple that Solomon had built! Unfortunately, the folks would later reject God and God would allow the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple!

Today, we need to get on our knees and return to God in prayer! He will hear us, forgive our sins, and restore us to Himself!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** He is the ultimate sacrifice! Though Solomon offered thousands of animal sacrifices, they could never take away sins (Hebrews 10:1). Jesus' sacrifice is far superior and can take away the sins of the world (John 1:29)! Christians are covered by the blood of that sacrifice! Are you a Christian?



**Day 138      II Chronicles Chapters 8 - 10      History**

God had fulfilled His promise to Solomon! He not only granted Solomon great wisdom, He blessed him with Solomon's fame and wealth which continued to grow exponentially! All the kings of the region wanted to hear from Solomon. The queen of Sheba came to visit him. She had not believed what had been told her about Solomon, but when she saw it for herself she acknowledged she had not even heard half of what Solomon had accomplished! His power and authority was staggering! He died after ruling the United Kingdom of Israel for 40 years.

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, became the king of the United Kingdom. He wasn't wise like his father. Jeroboam represented ten of the twelve tribes. They were from the northern portion of the kingdom. He asked Rehoboam to reduce their tax burden. Rehoboam sought counsel, which was a good thing. Unfortunately, he heeded the counsel of the unwise group! As a result, the kingdom split. The Northern Kingdom became known as Israel and was ruled by Jeroboam. The Southern Kingdom was known as Judah and was ruled by Rehoboam. After many years of great prosperity, it only took a few years under the oversight of a poor leader to divide the country!

Today, we need to pray for our leaders. We need great leaders at home, at church, in our businesses, and in our country. Wise leaders foster unity. Foolish leaders bring division.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Solomon is a type of Christ! He is the King of kings! People may not believe His Gospel, but when they come to Him, they will recognize they haven't even heard the half of it! Are you a Christian?

**Day 139      II Chronicles Chapters 11 - 14      History**

When Jeroboam led the revolution to secede from the union, Rehoboam wanted to fight. God told him not to attack. Rehoboam then fortified his holdings and strengthened his kingdom in the South. The tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi were loyal to him. Rehoboam did not remain faithful to God. God allowed the Egyptians to overcome them. Rehoboam and his people humbled themselves before God. This saved Judah. God allowed Egypt to take away some of their valuables, but He didn't allow them to destroy their nation.

After Rehoboam died, his son, Abijah, became king of Judah. He led an offensive against Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Abijah told Jeroboam, the king of Israel, Judah had the moral authority. Israel is the one who seceded from the union. Israel is the one that left God's worship patterns. He urged them to surrender. Jeroboam attacked Judah's army. God allowed Judah to win the battle. Israel was not dissolved, but it did leave them very weak. When Abijah died, his son, Asa, became king of Judah. He was a very good king. He brought national reforms that renewed the kingdom's relationship with God. He trusted God. Asa's army was 580,000 strong. The Ethiopians attacked with 1 million men! Asa acknowledged God could give them the victory over the Ethiopians with few or many. He did!

Today, we need to learn to trust God. God can rise up kingdoms and put them down. He can bring leaders to power and He can take their power away. God is in control, let's be sure we are on His side!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In chapter 11 verse 14, Jeroboam had stopped the Levitical priests from exercising their office. He established his own priesthood. Many remove Jesus from His proper place in their lives and establish their own religious system. Christians are a "Royal Priesthood" (I Peter 2:9). Jesus is their High Priest (Hebrews 3:1). Christians still worship Jesus, though many may try to remove them from exercising their service to Him. Are you a Christian?

**Day 140      II Chronicles Chapters 15 - 18      History**

God told a prophet to tell Asa, the king of Judah, He was with him as long as he sought to please God. If Asa left God, God would leave him. Asa did wonderful things for God for many years. Sadly, at the end of his life he lost confidence in God. Asa put his trust in Syria and formed an alliance with them. This made God angry. He sent a prophet to tell him he had done wrong. Instead of repenting, Asa went into a rage! He finally died after an extended illness. He ruled Judah for 41 years.

Asa's son, Jehoshaphat, became king of Judah. He did many good things for God, just like his father did. His power grew so strong that even the Philistines paid him taxes to appease him. Jehoshaphat made a treaty with Ahab, the wicked king of Israel. They joined together to fight a common enemy. Jehoshaphat wanted to get God's word first. Ahab gathered 400 preachers. They all told them to go fight. They guaranteed success. One man, Micaiah, told them God was not in favor of the battle. Ahab was furious. He threw him in prison! They went to battle on the word of the majority. They lost! Ahab lost his life and Jehoshaphat almost lost his!

Today, we need to understand the majority is not always right! In fact, Jesus taught in Matthew 7:14 there will be few that find the right path! So, if we find everyone going in the same direction we are, perhaps we ought to reconsider our direction!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Early in Asa's reign over Judah the people "entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God ... with all their heart and with all their soul;" (II Chronicles 15:12). Christians have entered into a New Covenant with God through His son, Jesus. They follow it with all their heart and soul! Are you a Christian?

## Day 141      II Chronicles Chapters 19 - 22      History

After Ahab, king of Israel, was killed in battle, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, went back to Jerusalem. A prophet of God met him. The prophet condemned him for making an alliance with the king of Israel. God punished Israel for their rebellion. Jehoshaphat almost died for getting involved with them! The people of Moab and Ammon invaded Judah. God told Jehoshaphat the battle was not theirs, but God's. He told him to gather his people together. God instructed them to "set themselves ; stand still ; & see the salvation of the Lord". God destroyed the enemy in a dramatic fashion! Jehoshaphat ruled Judah for 25 years. At the end, he displeased God when he allied himself with the king of Israel. He had been told he shouldn't do that. God punished him for it.

After Jehoshaphat died, his son, Jehoram, became king. He was terrible! With all the work his father and grandfather had accomplished, Jehoram set the country way back and it only took eight years to do it! The country suffered plagues and lost wars under his leadership. When he died, no one mourned him. They didn't even bury him in the cemetery designated for the kings! His son, Ahaziah, took his place. He was no better than his father. Ahaziah formed an alliance with the king of Israel. They decided to fight together against Jehu. God had ordained Jehu to kill the king of Israel. Since Ahaziah had joined him, Jehu killed him too! When his mother, Athaliah, learned her son was dead, she seized the throne of Judah. To secure her position as queen she murdered all of Ahaziah's children! These were her grandchildren! Only one escaped alive.

Today, we need to realize that if we form alliances with evil, we will often suffer for it. When God executes His judgment upon them, we may get burned by the fall out!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Just like Jehoshaphat and his people, we are to SET ourselves; STAND still; and SEE the salvation of the Lord. Jesus IS our salvation. Christians have set themselves, they stand in the truth, and they see salvation! Are you a Christian?

**Day 142      II Chronicles Chapters 23 - 25      History**

Queen Athaliah had murdered everyone who had a royal right to the throne of Judah. Everyone except one baby, Joash! Joash was raised by his uncle Jehoiada, a priest. When Joash was seven years old, Jehoiada organized a revolution against the queen. He anointed Joash as the rightful king of Judah. They executed queen Athaliah.

Joash was a good king as long as he had the counsel of his uncle Jehoiada. When his uncle died, Joash began to worship false gods. His cousin, Jehoiada's son, condemned him for his actions. Joash had him killed. As a result God allowed a small Syrian army to defeat the larger army of Judah. Jehoiada's sons conspired against Joash and murdered him while he lay on his own bed. Joash was not buried in the kings' cemetery. His son, Amaziah, took the throne. He was also a good king at first. Just as his father, he began to worship false gods. God sent a prophet to condemn his actions. Amaziah was ultimately assassinated by conspirators, just like his father, Joash!

Today, let's not be guilty of serving God only in the beginning of our lives and fail Him in the end. Let's serve Him all of our lives.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus told Philip in John 14:9 that seeing Him was seeing the Father. Like Father, like Son. Today we saw a father and son who followed the same path in their lives. That path led to destruction. Jesus followed His Father's Will (John 6:38). Christians follow the path that Christ followed. That path leads to everlasting life! Are you a Christian?

## Day 143      II Chronicles Chapters 26 - 28      History

After Amaziah turned away from God and was murdered, his son, Uzziah, became king of Judah. He was a good king, at least at first. God allowed him to win wars and increase Judah's military authority in the region. He even promoted technical defense systems. Once he became strong, he thought he could usurp God's Word. He took it upon himself to exercise certain religious roles reserved for God's priests. God struck him with leprosy which he suffered with until his death. Just like his father and grandfather, he started good, but fell away at the end.

Uzziah's son, Jotham, took the throne. He, too, was good. His only recorded flaw was his lack of enforcement for strong religious reform in the nation. He allowed the people to worship to false gods. When he died, his son, Ahaz, ruled. He was a bad king. He engaged in some despicable religious practices. If only his father would have instituted those religious reforms, it may have made a difference. God allowed the Syrians and the Northern Kingdom of Israel to defeat them. In fact, Israel had a mind to force the people of Judah into slavery. God warned them, through a prophet not to do that. There were enough people to stand against their own military to keep them from bringing any slaves out of Judah.

Today, once again we see a good king go bad. Why? Pride! It resulted in his death!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Uzziah tried to usurp the authority of the priests' role. Jesus is our High Priest. Don't be guilty of usurping His authority in your life! Christians surrender to His authority! Are you a Christian?

## Day 144      II Chronicles Chapters 29 - 30      History

After Ahaz died, his son, Hezekiah became king of Judah. He was a good king. He instituted national religious reform. Perhaps he learned from the mistakes of his father!

Hezekiah planned to keep the Passover. This Jewish Holy Day had not been observed in a long while. The people of Judah prepared themselves for the day. There were strict religious ceremonies they had to go through to be considered “clean”. Hezekiah used this opportunity to reach out to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He sent letters inviting them to celebrate the Passover with them. Most in Israel laughed and mocked when they got the invitations. A few humbled themselves and attended the event. Those who came from Israel had not gone through the proper sanctification rituals. Perhaps they didn’t know about them. Hezekiah knew their heart was right so he asked God to forgive them of this failure and accept their worship. God answered Hezekiah’s prayer and forgave them! After all, God is more interested in “Mercy” than “Sacrifice” (Matthew 12:7)!

Today, we are helpless and hopeless without God’s Mercy! We can’t participate in enough “rituals” or “ceremonies” to deserve God’s forgiveness. We don’t know how, nor do we possess the capability! However, don’t make the mistake of thinking that we should make no effort at all. We must humble ourselves, repent of our sins, and seek God in our worship practices. Remember Acts 17:30 “And the times of this ignorance God winked at (overlooked); but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:”!! If we think we can arbitrarily approach God in worship on our own terms and expect God to simply overlook us, think again! Remember the guest who came to the marriage supper without the right clothing in Matthew 22:11-13? We can’t afford to be presumptuous when it comes to our worship, doctrines, and lifestyles!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** The Jewish Passover foreshadowed Jesus! During the Passover, the blood of the lamb

was placed on the door post to save the firstborn from death. From that day forward the observance of the Passover was a Memorial for the Freedom God gave the Jews from Egyptian slavery. Christians are FREE from the slavery of sin. Christ is the Lamb of God that saves Christians from the spiritual death caused by our sins. Are you a Christian?



## Day 145 II Chronicles Chapters 31 - 33 History

Hezekiah's religious reform was very effective. The people donated to the Lord's work in abundance! Hezekiah put his whole heart into every positive reform he implemented. When the king of Assyria organized an attack against Jerusalem, Hezekiah leaned upon God. The Assyrians tried to infiltrate the people's hearts and minds with negative propaganda, but to no avail. God sent an angel to destroy the Assyrian army. Hezekiah was right to have trusted God! Though he struggled with pride for a season, Hezekiah remained faithful to the Lord until his death.

Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, became king when he was only twelve years old. He was a terrible king. During the 55 years that he ruled, he reversed all the positive religious reforms that his father had restored. He even set up an idol in Solomon's Temple! We learn from other scriptures Isaiah prophesied against him. Tradition says Manasseh had Isaiah sawed in half! God punished Manasseh severely. The good news is that Manasseh repented. He even removed the idol from the Temple. After his death, his son, Amon, became king. He followed Manasseh's evil footsteps. In just two years, he was murdered

Today, we know people can change! Some of Manasseh's forefathers were good kings who turned bad late in their lives. Manasseh was a bad king who turned back to God later in his life. It may have been too little, too late, but at least the hope existed!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Temple of Solomon spoke of Jesus. From the Lamp Stand (He is the Light of the world), to the Table of Shewbread (He is the Bread of Life), and to the Ark of the Covenant (He is the Sacrifice of the New Covenant). The world has brought a false god (worship) into the "Temple" to remove the emphasis from Christ. Christians know that worshipping God must be done through Christ! Are you a Christian?

## Day 146      II Chronicles Chapters 34 - 35      History

Amon's son, Josiah, was only eight years old when he began to reign over Judah. Even from that early age he began to seek God. Just a few years into his rule, Josiah began to turn the country around. He crushed the centers of false worship and refurbished Solomon's Temple. During the repairs, they found the Book of the Law in the Temple. They read it to Josiah. He realized the country had drifted far away from God. Josiah repented for himself and the nation.

Passover was organized. Chapter 35 verse 18 records that "there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept ..."! This period covers a lot of years and includes a lot of kings – even Solomon himself! After 31 years, Josiah died from a wound he received in battle. He fought the king of Egypt in the valley of Megiddo. Jeremiah lamented for him. We will read "Jeremiah" and his "Lamentations" later on.

Today, can't we see how the pendulum swings from one extreme to the other? One leader can take the country away from God, another can bring it back. Let's pray the pendulum is swinging in the right direction!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In the Temple they found the "Book of the Law" which is the Word of God that He gave to Moses. This is a shadow of Jesus! He is the "Word of God" (John 1:1, 14). Christians follow the Word! Are you a Christian?

## Day 147      II Chronicles Chapter 36

History

Today we finish II Chronicles. This last chapter chronicles the last four kings of Judah; Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. During these kings, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, established a Super Power. The Babylonian Empire was taking over the entire region. They took Judah into captivity. Isaiah had told King Hezekiah over one hundred years before that God would let this happen. Jeremiah prophesied they would stay in Babylonian captivity for 70 years. The Babylonians were defeated by the Medes and the Persians. Cyrus, the Persian king, signed a decree allowing the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild Jerusalem! Isaiah (many years earlier) prophesied this would happen. He even gave the name “Cyrus” in his prophesy (Isaiah 44:28)!

We have read the Kings (I & II Kings) and the Chronicles (I & II Chronicles) since June 20th! That means we have read 43 days of the history of the Kings of Israel and Judah. We have also read 19 days of I & II Samuel which gave us the history of King Saul and King David during the United Kingdom. I’m sure, after 62 days of reading, you have memorized the order of all the kings! Yeah right! If you are like me, you may need a little help. I have built a little “cheat sheet” that I keep in the back of my Bible. When I study this time in biblical history, it really comes in handy. (*See note on “Appendix A”*)

Today, we can be assured God is in control! He puts kings and kingdoms into place and He can remove them just as quickly!

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Jesus is the King God has put into place who has a Kingdom that will never end (Luke 1:33). That Kingdom is the Church! Christians are a part of that Kingdom. Colossians 1:13 says “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:”! Are you a Christian?

## Day 148      Ezra Chapters 1 - 2

History

The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon's great Temple. They carried the Jews into captivity. Babylon was located where Iraq is today. Jeremiah prophesied they would only be there 70 years. Isaiah prophesied that a man named Cyrus would restore them to their homeland. The Medes and Persians defeated the Babylonians. Persia is the ancient name of Iran! The people of Iran and Iraq have been fighting for centuries! We see in the first chapter of Ezra that Cyrus was the king of Persia. He acknowledged the true God of heaven. By his decree, the Jews were allowed to return to their homeland! Can you imagine an Iranian leader who recognized the Jewish Nation's right to exist?

Ezra records the return of several captives from the exiled region to Jerusalem under the leadership of the Jewish governor, Zerubbabel. The priest of the day was Jeshua (also called Joshua). These men would lead the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem

Today, we should remember God brings kingdoms into power and He can remove them from power. The Middle East has produced world Super Powers! God brought them down to insignificant political communities. Who is to say who God will raise up next? Who is to say who God will put down next?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Ezra chapter 2 verse 63 God told the people to respect the priest who have the "Urim and the Thummim". These words mean "Light and Perfections". Christians recognize that Jesus, the High Priest, is the Perfect Light! Are you a Christian?

**Day 149      Ezra Chapters 3 - 5**

History

Joshua, the priest, and Zerubbabel, the governor, led many Jews from the captivity back to Jerusalem. They worshipped God and laid the foundation of the temple. The regional neighbors were livid! They asked to help them, but their true intent was to stop their rebuilding efforts. Zerubbabel refused to even discuss the matter with them. The region continued to trouble them and look for ways to stop their work.

Finally they appealed to the Federal Government. They wrote letters to the Persian kings. Each king that came to power received letters speaking evil of the Jews. One king, Artaxerxes, ordered a stop to the building. Since the Jews were funded by the Federal Government, the work stopped. Two preachers, Zechariah and Haggai, finally came through and told the people to get back to work regardless of the federal law! When Darius became the king of Persia he was told Cyrus, an earlier Persian king, had given orders for Jerusalem to be rebuilt. If they could find historical legal precedence, it could be proven the Jews had a right to rebuild.

Today, don't you wish our leaders would look at the history of America? They would find plenty of historical precedence to prove that this is a Christian Nation! If the leaders refuse to "hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness", then we can expect to lose these rights!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Joshua, the priest, and Zerubbabel, the governor, are shadows of Jesus! Christians know that Jesus Christ is our High Priest (Hebrews 6:20) and our Governor (Matthew 2:6). Are you a Christian?

**Day 150      Ezra Chapters 6 - 8**

History

Several people in the region around Jerusalem were very upset over the Jews' efforts to rebuild their temple. They persuaded the Federal Government to postpone the work. Darius was a king of Persia (present day Iran). He ordered a search of all the historical records to see if the Jews had legal precedence to rebuild. They found that Cyrus, a former Persian king, had given them the right. Darius not only reinstated the Jews' ordinance to rebuild their temple, he ordered the surrounding region to pay for it with their taxes!

Ezra was still in Babylon during this time. He received permission to go to Jerusalem and teach the law to his people. The king gave him a special grant to return to his homeland. He issued an order for Ezra's work to be funded by the Federal Treasury! There were still many Jews in captivity. The king wrote a decree that allowed them to be freed from their service throughout the Empire and return to Jerusalem at their own volition. Ezra brought many of those captives to Jerusalem with him. Severe penalties were to be imposed upon anyone that tried to stop the Jews in their work to rebuild God's temple!

Today, we know that under good leadership, God's people can not only survive, but thrive! America has enjoyed over 200 years of freedom to serve God. The Government has even issued legislation through tax exemptions, legal protections, certain federal and local benefits, etc. that favored Christians and encouraged them to worship God. Let's pray that God will give us good leadership, not only for America, but for all nations!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Ezra is a shadow of Christ. He came to his people to teach them God's word. Jesus, too, was sent to the world to teach them the truth. Christians believe Jesus' doctrines. Are you a Christian?

**Day 151      Ezra Chapters 9 - 10**

History

An incredible thing is recorded in these last two chapters of Ezra. In Deuteronomy 7:3 God had strictly forbidden the people of Israel to marry women from foreign nations. He warned them they would move their hearts from serving Him and begin to serve the gods of the land. God's people did marry foreign women and they did exactly what God had said they would do! Even Solomon got caught up in this sin! It cost them their freedom!

Ezra discovered the people who had returned from Persian captivity were beginning to marry foreign women. This upset him very much! He couldn't believe they had not learned the lesson of their forefathers. Ezra prayed to God and confessed the sins of the nation. The Jews were pricked in their hearts. They confessed their sins and agreed to put away their foreign wives! Some of them even had children by those wives and they put them away too! Anyone who refused to comply had their property taken away and lost their Jewish citizenship. This seemed to be a radical act, but it certainly displayed their deep dedication to serve and obey God!

Today, we don't live under the Old Law. There is no ordinance that forbids us from marrying women of a different race, culture, or country. However, we may find ourselves in a marriage, a friendship, a business relationship, an activity, a position, or some other situation that is not according to God's Will. If this is the case, are we willing to give up those things for the sole purpose of pleasing God? If we don't, we will lose much more than our property!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Ezra is a shadow of Christ. He came to his people and called upon them to confess their sins! Jesus, too, was sent to free the world from sins! Christians confess their sins and obey God's Will. Are you a Christian?

**Day 152      Nehemiah Chapters 1 - 3**

History

The Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem. They had taken the Jews into captivity and dispersed them throughout the Babylonian Empire. When the Medes and Persians (present day Iran) destroyed the Babylonians, they gave full government support to the Jews to return from captivity and rebuild Jerusalem. Ezra had encouraged the Jews to rebuild the temple, but the walls of Jerusalem were still in ruins. Nehemiah was a slave in the Persian king's court. He was devastated when he heard that the walls of Jerusalem were not being reconstructed. He had a strong desire for the work, but what could he do to get the job done?

First things first! Nehemiah prayed! He confessed the sins of the Jewish nation! Then Nehemiah appealed to God's promises. In his prayer, he asked God to remember what He had told Moses, "If ye trespass, I will scatter you abroad among the nations; but if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments ... I will gather them ..."! What next? Nehemiah took advantage of his opportunity! When the king of Persia spoke to him, he requested to go do the work of rebuilding Jerusalem's wall. He went to the job site. He had to deal with the opposition that came through Sanballot and Tobiah. He surveyed the project. He rallied the people to do the work. Then Nehemiah organized the project by putting the right people in the right places!

Today, we understand God has us doing things that will ultimately be used to give Him great glory. Just do the work God has given you to do.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** God had a plan and fulfilled it when He sent Jesus into the world. Have you got a big project ahead of you? The plan of action that Nehemiah took is a good pattern to follow. Get Ready, Get Set, Go! Christians are always doing the Father's Business. Are you a Christian?



**Day 153      Nehemiah Chapters 4 - 6**

History

Nehemiah and the Jews had made up their minds to rebuild the wall. Their enemies, Sanballet and Tobiah, had made up their minds to stop the project! The methods they used were similar to methods used against us today.

They began by trying to discourage them with hateful words. What was Nehemiah's response? Pray and keep working! Then the enemies conspired to physically assault them. What was Nehemiah's response? Pray, set guards, build defenses, arm the builders, and keep working! When the Jews in the city began to complain, Nehemiah preached to them! He told them to stop complaining, get into the Will of God, and get back to work! He told them to trust and obey God! When none of this deterred Nehemiah, Sanballet and Tobiah offered to meet with him to work out a deal. Nehemiah told them flatly he was too busy to make deals! They began to send out false propaganda and open letters accusing them of criminal intent. Nehemiah told them he could see right through their lies. He didn't let it stop him! The enemies even hired spies to give false advice to Nehemiah. He recognized them right away! Any advice given to him contrary to what God had sent him to do was simply not true! Nehemiah finished the wall in just 52 days! Everyone knew God's hand was in it.

Today, we understand that such a thing could not have been accomplished so quickly without God! He is able to accomplish so much through us if we will trust and obey!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Nehemiah is a type of Christ. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. His enemies, particularly Satan, have used every means available to stop Him. He didn't allow them to win! Christians trust and obey God. They don't listen to or surrender to the enemies' tactics. They are dedicated to the work God has put before them. God can accomplish incredible things through a Christian's life. Are you a Christian?

**Day 154      Nehemiah Chapters 7 - 8**

History

Now that the wall was finished, Nehemiah set up a defense system. He knew their enemies would never quit. Jerusalem was a large city, but the population was relatively small. Chapter 7 gives a census of the names of those who had returned to Jerusalem from exile.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem gathered together to hear Ezra read the Law of Moses. When he opened the Book to read it, the people stood up in respect! Many had been born in a foreign country. The law was written in the ancient Hebrew language. They couldn't understand it. Several interpreters were present so everyone could understand the word. After hearing the word of God, they worshipped! They read about the Feast of Booths that God commanded Moses to implement. During that feast, the people were instructed to live in little homemade booths or tents to commemorate their fathers who wandered in the wilderness after being freed from Egypt. The Jews didn't hesitate. They built booths and lived in them for seven days! During these days, the Law was read to the people!

Today, we can learn a great lesson from these folks. When the Word of God was presented they READ it, the RESPECTED it, and the RESPONDED to it!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Feast of Booths is a shadow of Christ. He came to this world without a place to lay his head. He was a pilgrim wandering in a foreign land. He left His home in heaven to bring us home with Him! He suffered, died, resurrected, and has gone to prepare a place for us. Christians read that message, respect it, and respond to it. Are you a Christian?

**Day 155      Nehemiah Chapters 9 - 10** History

The residents of the city of Jerusalem had humbled themselves before God. They met together to honor God. They read the law for a fourth part of the day. They confessed their sins and worshiped God another fourth part of the day. Then some of the leaders stood up and praised God before the people.

Their praise was very specific. They declared God's power and their dependence upon Him. When they finished, they wrote it all down. Then several of the people signed the document. Just as our American forefathers wrote and signed a Declaration of Independence, these folks wrote and signed a Declaration of Dependence!

Today, we should make our own commitments to God as we acknowledge our personal dependence upon Him.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Declaration of Dependence is a shadow of Christ. Jesus taught us the nature of real surrender as He surrendered Himself to God. Christians are keenly aware of their dependence on Christ and the power in His blood to save them. Are you a Christian?

## Day 156      Nehemiah Chapters 11 - 13      History

Ten percent of all the Jews who came out of exile were allowed to live in Jerusalem. The rest lived in the surrounding region. Chapters 11 & 12 include a record of those who lived and worked in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah had promised the king of Persia he would return to Persia after his work was accomplished. He kept his promise. After a while, Nehemiah was allowed to return to Jerusalem. He was very upset to find that Eliashib, the priest, had made an alliance with Tobiah, one of the enemies who tried to stop the Jews' work! They had given him a home in the court yard of the temple itself! Nehemiah threw him out and cleaned house! He also learned the folks were intermarrying with the foreign nations. He reminded them even Solomon was brought down for doing this very thing!

Today, we may be surprised to see how soon the Jews fell back into sin after such a great revival had broken out in Jerusalem. However, when we look around our own country and communities, can't we see the same thing happening?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Nehemiah is a shadow of Jesus. Just as Nehemiah cleansed the temple area, Jesus literally did the same thing! Jesus was very upset to see such evil taking place in the temple and he "cast out" the money changers. I wonder if they thought of Nehemiah when Jesus threw them out of the Temple. Revival has broken out in the Christian's life and they remain dedicated to God's Will. Are you a Christian?

**Day 157 Esther Chapters 1 - 3**

History

Many believe king Ahasuerus is also known as Xerxes. He was the king of Persia (present day Iran) from 485 B.C. – 464 B.C. About fifty years before, King Cyrus, had issued an executive order to allow the Jews to resettle Jerusalem. This infuriated many regional peoples who hated the Jews. Cyrus allowed Zerubbabel and Joshua to lead 50,000 Jews back to Jerusalem. They built homes and they rebuilt the temple, but the wall was still in ruins. There was just too much opposition! This was a dangerous time to be Jewish!

Xerxes banished his queen for insolence. Coincidence? To replace her, many women throughout the empire were ordered to be brought before the king. He would choose one to be the new queen. Mordecai was a Jew who had been carried from Jerusalem into captivity many years before. He had adopted and reared his cousin, Hadassah. She was very beautiful. She was carried to the king. Coincidence? Mordecai knew the dangers of being Jewish in this political climate, so he commanded her not to reveal her heritage. Perhaps that is why she was called Esther which was a more Persian name. The king chose her out of all the women! Coincidence? Mordecai foiled a conspiracy to assassinate the king. Coincidence? Haman, the king's "right hand man" hated Mordecai because he wouldn't bow to him. In fact, he hated all Jews! Haman told the king the Jews were dangerous. He donated money to the king's treasure if he would order their destruction. The king ordered the annihilation of the Jews. Coincidence?

Today, we may look back over our life and see many coincidences. It could be that one or two were, but after you get to above three or four, wouldn't "providence" be a better word?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** He's everywhere! God had promised Jesus' birth from the Jewish people. If there are no Jews, there would be no Jesus. God, through Esther, is preparing for the birth of His son! Christians appreciate God's providence! Are you a Christian?

**Day 158      Esther Chapters 4 - 7**

History

The Persian king had chosen Esther from among all the women that had been presented to him. He had no idea she was a Jew. Haman, the king's top executive, hated Jews. He had convinced the king to issue a hideous order to extinguish the Jewish race! Mordecai, Esther's adopted father, was terrified to say the least!

These four chapters convey a story that is filled with suspense, love, deceit, fear, hate, envy, embarrassment, tension, shock, awe, twists, turns, surprise, justice, etc. These are things that movies are made of! These are plots that create best-selling books! It even comes with a "happy ending", except for Haman and his family. He is the villain that gets what he deserves! All that needs to be said about these chapters is ... "Read and enjoy"!

Today, we know this is more than a "story". It is a historical record. It is proof that God can put a person in a particular place at a particular time to do a particular thing for a particular purpose! To me, the key to understanding this principle is in chapter 4 verse 14 when Mordecai asked the question, "... who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Esther is a type of Christ! Esther was put in her position by God to save His people from certain death! Consider Christ. God sent Him to the world and to the cross to save us from certain death! Christians believe this truth. Are you a Christian?

**Day 159      Esther Chapters 8 - 10**

History

God had providentially placed Esther in her position as queen. She used this position to influence government policy. Her adopted father, Mordecai, was promoted to the second highest office in the land next to the king himself! Jews suddenly become highly respected throughout the empire. They went from being a hated people, to a revered people. Only God could accomplish such a thing!

There were still those that hated Jews. The evil plot of Haman had pushed through an irreversible law giving Persian citizens the authority to kill all Jews throughout the empire on the 13th day of the month of Adar. Even the king himself could not repeal the law. Many people planned to use the law to kill their Jewish neighbors. They had been given the legal authority to do so! The king issued another law that would counteract the first one. He gave the Jews full authority to defend themselves without fear of government interference. In fact, most people actually stood up for the Jews and fought for them! The Jews were saved from total annihilation! Mordecai declared an annual holiday among the Jews to celebrate their salvation from the “Pur” or “lot” that Haman had devised against them. It would be observed on the 14th & 15th day of the month of Adar (February – March). They called these days “Purim”.

Today, Jews still celebrate Purim. The salvation of an entire race is something worthy to be celebrated! Christians are not obligated or commanded to celebrate Purim. However, we certainly owe God much gratitude in preserving the Jewish race and fulfilling His promise to send His Son through the seed of Abraham!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Purim speaks of Christ! Just as the Jews celebrate the salvation of their race from certain death, Christians celebrate the salvation of their souls from certain death through Christ! Are you a Christian?





## CHAPTER THREE

# The Five Books of Poetry

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Solomon

**Day 160      Job Chapters 1 - 5**

Poetry

For the next eight days we will read the book of Job. For this exercise, let's put ourselves in Job's shoes. Let's pretend we are him. Let's hear what he hears, do what he does, say what he says, and feel what he feels. Perhaps by the end of the book we can learn what he learned!

You are so grateful to God for all your blessings! In addition to your great wealth, you are blessed with a wonderful family. You constantly think about God and ask his blessings upon your family. It's truly a wonderful life! You are not present when Satan and God have a conversation about you! Satan bets against you. God stands up for you. God allows Satan to attack you. You are blindsided when messengers come in one right after the other giving you horrible news. Even your children are dead! You are devastated! Still you acknowledge, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed by the name of the Lord". As incredible as it was, you kept your faith. God then allowed Satan to attack your health. When it seemed it could get no worse, your wife told you to give up! Three of your friends heard what had happened. They came to comfort you. You were so depressed that you didn't speak for seven days. They sat patiently with you. Finally your heart ache and pain was too much. You cursed the day you were born! Eliphaz, the first of your three friends, accused you of some secret sin. Why else would God have done all these things to you? He actually told you to be grateful God was punishing you! You see right away your three friends were going to add insult to injury!!!

Today, we are encouraged to keep the faith no matter what happens. God never promised us a rose garden. Yet we raise the question, "Is God playing games with human lives, specifically Job's life, to prove a point to Satan?" Is this what the book of Job is all about or is there something more?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Job is a type of Christ. Just as Satan tried to get Job to curse God, Satan tried to persuade Jesus to forsake His heavenly Father. Satan attacks believers all the time. Christians still proclaim "blessed be the name of the Lord"! Are you a Christian?

**Day 161      Job Chapters 6 - 10**

Poetry

You are putting yourself in Job's shoes. What are you thinking? You've lost everything. Your wife isn't supporting you. Your friends are there with you, but Eliphaz, the first one who spoke, accused you of doing something wrong! You have lived a good, righteous life. It wouldn't have surprised you to hear that God told Satan, "... Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" After all it's the TRUTH!

When Elphaz finished accusing you of doing something you didn't do, you responded by asking God to take your life! It isn't fair what He has done to you. You denied you've done anything wrong and challenged your friends to prove you have. You insisted you have every right to complain! Bildad, the second friend, speaks up. He is appalled at your words and tone! If you were really righteous, surely God would help you. God just doesn't let good people suffer! You reply to Bildad with a question. You are a good person, so why is God allowing you to suffer? Then you directed your objection to God Himself. You said, "Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand. Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me." You are so confused! Why is God doing this?

Today, we often feel the same way Job must have felt. We do the best we can, but bad things still happen. Why does God let good people suffer? Atheists ask this question all the time to try to "prove" God doesn't exist. We know He exists, but we still ask the question! It's a good question!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Job is a type of Christ. Jesus called from the cross, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Just as God has a purpose for Job's suffering, Christians know that God had a purpose for Jesus' suffering. Are you a Christian?

**Day 162      Job Chapters 11 - 15**

Poetry

As you place yourself in Job's position, you are hurt by what your friends, Eliphaz and Bildad, had said to you. They both accused you of sinning against God. Zophar, your third friend, took his shot. He called you a liar! Zophar insisted you should confess your sin and repent. He assured you that if you would do this, God would make everything right.

What your friends didn't know was you were NOT an unrighteous person. God had already acknowledged you were more righteous than anyone, even these three friends! You became very upset. You accused them of thinking they know everything. You insisted that you know as much as they do! You have believed this doctrine of "God punishes the sinner and rewards the righteous" for many years. Yet, God is punishing you, a righteous person. It made no sense! You told your friends you would like to "reason" with God. You had some questions that need some answers! Eliphaz reminded you that they are much older than your father. They had a lot more experience and knowledge than you had. Their experience told them you must be a sinner!

Today, we often hold to a "doctrine" simply because it's what our fathers believed. However, when we put it to the test, it doesn't hold true. We want to ask God, "What's the big idea"? What we really need to do is listen to God and discover the "Big Idea"!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Job is a type of Christ. Jesus was accused of being a sinner. He was called a liar. The folks were asking Him, "What's the big idea?" Christians know that Jesus IS God's "Big Idea"! Are you a Christian?

## Day 163      Job Chapters 16 - 21

Poetry

As you feel Job's pain, you become angry with your so called "friends"! They kicked you when were down! You told them they were "miserable comforters". If the tables were turned, you assured them you would try to help them and make them feel better! Instead, they falsely accuse you of doing wrong. You continued to insist, "Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure."

Bildad takes his second turn. He basically repeats the doctrine that God punishes wicked people and blesses righteous people. He told you, "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine." You cry out from the bottom of your broken heart, "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." Zophar saw this as his opportunity to put in his second word. He, too, repeated the doctrine of "God punishes bad people". Since you are being punished, you must be bad. It made perfect sense to him. Then you asked some profound questions, "If this doctrine is true, why do wicked people prosper? Why are their families' safe? Why isn't God punishing them?" You told them this doctrine is flawed. Something was wrong with it! They were wrong for using it to condemn you!

Today, we wonder why people aren't more encouraging when teaching people doctrine. If it is true doctrine, then love will certainly be at the heart of it, for all doctrine comes from God and God is love. If it is false doctrine, it can (and often will be) used to bludgeon someone over the head until they yield helplessly or die!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Job is a type of Christ. Job exposed the error of his friends' doctrine with simple questions. Jesus often did the same thing. Christians ask the simple questions. They know they will lead them to great truths. Are you a Christian?

**Day 164      Job Chapters 22 - 28**

Poetry

You have been imagining that you are Job as your friends took turns insisting you have committed some horrible sin. When Eliphaz made his first argument, he insinuated you had a sin problem. In his third argument he said your sins were infinite! You claimed to be innocent all along and your friends didn't believe you! You knew you had done nothing wrong. You couldn't understand why God has let this happen to you. God has not been fair! Then you brazenly said you would go to God's seat and debate the issue with Him!

Bildad took his third turn. You have stood your ground and have made some solid arguments. He simply stated that all men sin, so you should at least admit that. You tell your friend that this fact doesn't explain why God is picking on you! Zophar didn't even bother with a third shot at you. You continued to explain that you have been good and really didn't deserve to be treated like some wicked person!

Today, we wonder why bad things happen to good people. Sometimes we, like Job, even question God Himself! Why did God let these things happen to him? Job was a good man! However, in today's reading some of the reasons God let these things happen are beginning to show themselves. Did you notice there was some arrogance to Job's tone when he said that God's not fair and he would argue with Him about it? Anyone who says they know more about a subject than God has some pride issues!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Job is a type of Christ. Jesus cried out to God, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The difference is that Jesus knew EXACTLY what God was doing! Job is trying to figure it out! Christians have figured out what God has done for them through Christ. Are you a Christian?

## Day 165      Job Chapters 29 - 33

Poetry

As you put yourself in Job's place, you may be a little surprised at what you said in today's reading. "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me"; "The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up."; "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgement was as a robe and a diadem."; "Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel." Then in Chapter 30 you began with "But now ..." as you bemoaned your circumstances. You said, "They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face." In Chapter 31 you used "mine"; "I"; "my"; & "myself" more times than most care to count! These statements may reveal that there was a small kernel of pride hidden in your life. There was no doubt you were righteous, God said so Himself. The problem may have been that you took pride in your own righteousness!

You fell silent and your three friends had nothing more to say. A younger man had been standing nearby and had witnessed the entire debate. He was upset with you because you justified yourself. He was upset with the three older men because they accused you without any real proof. He began to give his opinion on the whole issue. For a younger fellow, his wisdom was pretty sound!

Today, we often compare and contrast where we used to be with where we are or where we want to be. If we are discontent with all or part of our analysis, we may get upset with God. What's the deal with that?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Though Job is a type of Christ in many ways, Jesus' attitude was quite different from Job's in this portion of the book. Here is what Paul had to say about Jesus' attitude in Philippians 2:5-8 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He did this for Christians. Are you a Christian?

**Day 166      Job Chapters 34 - 37**

Poetry

As you imagine yourself to be Job, you listened carefully as young Elihu spoke. He had listened to the debate you and your three friends had completed. They accused you of sinning based upon a long held doctrine that said God punishes the wicked and rewards the righteous. . You knew you were righteous, so you accused God of being unfair by letting you suffer so much.

Elihu disagreed with both sides. He said, “Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgement.”; “Is it fit to say to a king, Thou are wicked? And to princes, Ye are ungodly? How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? For they all are the work of his hands.” Elihu basically said that God is God and He could do whatever He pleased! Elihu didn’t accuse you of sinning, but he warned you not to point an accusing finger at God! He asked you to open yourself to the possibility that God was trying to teach you something. He said, “Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.” Elihu then praised God for His greatness. Perhaps that was his attempt to get you and your three friends to focus more on God and less on yourself!

Today, we would be wise to listen to Elihu. Perhaps he is on to something. At least he is right about God’s power. He also seems to be right about what our attitude toward God should be.

**In the Shadow ... don’t miss Jesus!** Elihu is a type of Christ. He appealed to his friends to give God the glory. Jesus came to glorify His Father, not Himself! Christians do good things, even when they are in tough circumstances, so that men will see their good works and glorify God. Are you a Christian?



**Day 167      Job Chapters 38 - 42**

Poetry

Throughout this book, you have heard what Job heard, you have seen what Job saw, you have said what Job said, you have felt what Job felt. Today, it is hoped you will learn what Job learned.

Everyone has had their say. It's God's turn! He shows up and challenges you to see His greatness and His power. You are humbled as you say, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further." Any root of pride that may have existed in your heart has been expunged! God continued to show His glory. Then you say to Him, "I know thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." Perhaps you finally understood God saw something in your heart that you couldn't see yourself. God was pleased with you. He was still upset with your three friends. He commanded them to offer sacrifices and have you to pray for them. You gladly pray for them. You see them in an entirely different light with your new found enlightenment! God then gives you twice as much as you had before! Why? It's not because you are so good and He owes it to you. Perhaps it's because He had planned to give it to you all along, but He couldn't trust you with it! You had that kernel of pride that needed to be removed. If He had given you more, your pride may have grown and it may have destroyed you! He wanted to prepare you to receive His blessings. The awesome part is that He used Satan to help Him do it! Did you actually think God was playing some kind of game with Satan at your expense? He was simply using Satan to bless you!!

Today, we simply can't see what God sees. We must trust Him. If we do, we may learn what we need to learn in order to receive what He wants to give!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Job is a type of Christ. Job finally recognized God's supreme power. Jesus knew it all along! Christians also trust in the power of God, even under horrible circumstances. Are you a Christian?

## Day 168 Psalms Chapters 1 - 9

Poetry

King David wrote most of the Psalms. These are basically songs and poetry that reveal David's heart and the Heart of God. They are not just works of art, they are Words of God! The language may be hard to follow, but finding the message is worth the effort. Let's give each Psalm a "single line" thought. Of course we realize there are many other thoughts to be gleaned from each song.

Chapter 1: The Righteous will stand, the ungodly will fall

Chapter 2: God will save the world with His Son, The King

Chapter 3: Ask God to save you from your enemies

Chapter 4: The Lord will hear us when we call to Him in prayer

Chapter 5: Commit to God even in the face of opposition

Chapter 6: God have Mercy

Chapter 7: Do the right thing and trust God to help

Chapter 8: God is greater than man

Chapter 9: God is a refuge in troublesome times

Today we realize that David had a lot of tough times, but so do we. Do you think that God cares less about our problems than He did David's?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is the "Son of David". The undertones of all these Songs speak of God's Salvation of mankind through His Son, Jesus. Christians recognize Jesus to be the King of kings! Are you a Christian?

**Day 169      Psalms Chapters 10 - 17**

Poetry

Are you ready to sing a few more songs today? We may not know the melodies, but the messages are inspiring. Here are a few suggested "Titles" for each of Today's songs.

Chapter 10: God rejects the wicked

Chapter 11: God accepts the righteous

Chapter 12: The wicked man's words are worthless

Chapter 13: Trust God even when you wonder where He is

Chapter 14: Everybody sins

Chapter 15: If you want to be with God, be good

Chapter 16: I shall not be moved

Chapter 17: God will take care of you

Wicked people's ways offended David. He was very upset they would do and say the things that they did. He asked God to intervene. Have you seen anything that offended you lately? Why not ask God to intervene?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Look at chapter 16:10, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Peter told us in Acts 2 that David, through the Holy Spirit, was actually talking about Jesus' resurrection! Jesus, the Holy One, did not see "corruption" because he resurrected from the dead before his body decayed! Christians believe in His resurrection. Are you a Christian?

## Day 170      Psalms Chapters 18 - 22

Poetry

What "Song Titles" would you give to these Psalms? They touch different people in different ways. Here are mine:

Chapter 18: My Victories are actually His

Chapter 19: God's sun speaks of His Son

Chapter 20: Trust God to Save You

Chapter 21: God Has Blessed, and He Will Bless

Chapter 22: The World's Most "Bitter / Sweet" Day

David constantly thought about God. Shouldn't I think about God more often?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Look at Jesus in Chapter 22. It is not for the faint of heart! Christians are broken over Jesus' death while healed at the same time! Are you a Christian?

**Day 171 Psalms Chapters 23 - 31**

Poetry

Did you know that Jesus sang a song just before he died? Maybe we should learn songs that will help us in our difficult times! More song "Titles", what would you name them?

Chapter 23: The Lord is my Shepherd

Chapter 24: Who is the King of Glory?

Chapter 25: Forgive Me

Chapter 26: Be the Best You Can Be

Chapter 27: When Everyone Else Leaves Me, God's Still There

Chapter 28: God Saves His People

Chapter 29: Hear the Voice of the Lord

Chapter 30: Thank You God

Chapter 31: You're In Good Hands with God.

The only way David could recognize his need for God was his willingness to recognize his own sins. Do I realize I need God? If not, perhaps I think I'm not a sinner.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Chapter 31:5 we read, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit ...". Jesus quoted that verse just before He died. Just like Jesus, Christians trust the Hand of God! Are you a Christian?

## Day 172 Psalms Chapters 32 -37

Poetry

Do you sometimes feel discouraged, especially when you watch the news and see all the wicked things going on in America today? Do you feel even more despondent when you see the wickedness of the whole world? Sing the songs of David! He saw a LOT of wickedness, yet he knew where to put his trust. How would you title these songs?

Chapter 32: How Do You Spell "Relief" - "FORGIVEN"

Chapter 33: God Is Worthy to Be Praised

Chapter 34: God Sees the Righteous and Hears Their Prayers

Chapter 35: God Knows My Enemies Hate Me for No Reason

Chapter 36: The Wicked Foolishly Reject God

Chapter 37: The Wicked Hate the Righteous, but God Loves Them

David was surrounded by enemies for most of his life. Someone was always wanting to discredit him, de-throne him, or even decapitate him! At times he wondered how long it would take God to help, but he never doubted that God would help. Do I doubt God?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Look at Chapter 34:20, "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken". Through all the torture Jesus endured, not a single bone was broken. God was with Jesus the entire time, regardless of what it may have seemed to others. Christians know that God is with them all the time, regardless of how things may seem! Are you a Christian?

**Day 173      Psalms Chapters 38 - 44**

Poetry

Psalms is divided into five books that correspond to the first five books of the Bible. Today we finish the first "Book" titled "Genesis". It consisted of Chapters 1 - 41. We will begin the second "Book" titled "The Exodus". It covers Chapters 42 - 72. Here are the titles I have given the chapters in our reading today:

Chapter 38: I am pitiful

Chapter 39: I realize my worthlessness

Chapter 40: The pit of pride leads to a pious heart, but praise gives a new perspective

Chapter 41: So called "friends" may stab you in the back, but God is a TRUE friend

Chapter 42: When I get depressed, I pray to God

Chapter 43: No need for depression when God is near

Chapter 44: We will praise God no matter how bad things get

David realized that many of his problems stemmed from his own poor behavior and bad choices. He refused to blame God for those problems, however, he didn't hesitate to ask God to help him recover!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** When we truly accept chapter 39:5 "... every man at his best state is altogether vanity", we are ready to receive Christ! Christians understand that Jesus came to this sin sick world to save sinners. Christians recognize that they are sinners! Are you a Christian?

## Day 174 Psalms Chapters 45 - 51

Poetry

What Titles are you giving these Psalms of David? Go ahead, write them down. If you write in the margins of your Bible, write them there. When you read the Psalm at a later date, it will serve as a reminder for what the Psalm meant to you. Later, as you have more experiences, you may see something else entirely! Here are some titles for today's reading:

Chapter 45: All Hail the King

Chapter 46: Be Still and Know God

Chapter 47: God Is the King

Chapter 48: God Is Our God

Chapter 49: Don't Trust Yourself, Trust God

Chapter 50: Don't Think God Is Like Man. He Is God

Chapter 51: Wash Me Clean

David served Israel as one of their greatest kings. He understands the concept of "King". He knew what it meant to BE one and to SERVE one. He recognizes God as "KING"!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Chapter 45 speaks of the Marriage of the King. The first chapter of The Gospel of John tells us plainly that Jesus is God. He became man. He is the King of Kings. As King, He received a Bride to Himself. The Bride of Christ is the Church. Christians are the church. Are you a Christian?



**Day 175      Psalms Chapters 52 - 59**

Poetry

David's son was Solomon. We know that God gave Solomon great wisdom. When we read what God has given David to write, perhaps God gave Solomon a lot of that wisdom through his father's songs!

Chapter 52: If You Do Wrong, God Will Destroy You

Chapter 53: Atheists Are Foolish

Chapter 54: God Help Me

Chapter 55: It's Bad When Your Enemies Are Against You, It's Worse When Your Friends Are Too

Chapter 56: God Has My Back

Chapter 57: God Loves You When Everyone Else Seems To Hate You

Chapter 58: God Will Destroy the Wicked

Chapter 59: God Will Defend When Men Attack You

David had been in many battles. He called upon God multitudes of times to save him from his enemies. His real pain came when it was his "friends" that tried to harm him. Even then, he trusted God.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus must have felt like David when one of His apostles betrayed Him, one denied Him, and ALL of them ran away when He was arrested. Perhaps that's why Jesus quoted so many of David's songs during those dreadful hours of His crucifixion. Christians understand that Jesus went through this rejection for them. Are you a Christian?

## Day 176      Psalms Chapters 60 - 67

Poetry

King David knows what it feels like when God is near and when God is far away. He knows it is much better when He is near! Here are some suggested Song Titles for today's reading:

Chapter 60: God, Please Come Back

Chapter 61: The Rock That Is Higher Than I

Chapter 62: God Is Our Rock

Chapter 63: When People Seek To Harm You, Seek God

Chapter 64: When Others "Shoot" You Down, God Will "Shoot" Them Down

Chapter 65: God Shows His Power through Nature

Chapter 66: Praise God with Singing

Chapter 67: God Responds To Our Praise

When others have let you down, just remember that God never will. He is the "Rock", men are the "Sand"!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Paul told us in I Corinthians 10:4 "for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." Christians know that Jesus is their ROCK! Are you a Christian?

**Day 177      Psalms Chapters 68 - 71**

Poetry

God was with David when he was a young man. David knew He would not leave him when he became old. What Song titles would you give to the four songs we read today?

Chapter 68: God takes care of those who cannot take care of themselves

Chapter 69: I looked for someone to take pity upon me, no one did, except God

Chapter 70: Rejoice and be glad in the Lord

Chapter 71: God took care of you when you were young, count on Him when you're old

There have been many times in our lives that we just need a little comfort. A lot of those times you couldn't get it from your fellow man. God is the God of comfort, why not go to Him?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Compare Psalms 68:18 to Ephesians 4:8. It was Jesus who David was referencing in his song! Also, notice Palms 69:21. Do you suppose when they gave Jesus vinegar and gall on the cross, the folks who cried "Crucify Him" remembered the words of this song? Christians know that Jesus fulfilled the Psalms! Are you a Christian?

## Day 178 Psalms Chapters 72 - 77

Poetry

David didn't write all the Psalms. Asaph wrote several. We already read one, Psalm 50. We will read his others the next few days. Today we finish the second of five song books. The third song book begins with Chapter 73. Asaph wrote Psalms 73 - 89. God inspired Asaph's powerful songs. We will suggest some titles for them too.

Chapter 72: David's song for Solomon to be a powerful king

Chapter 73: Don't be jealous over what wicked people have

Chapter 74: God, Don't Forget Us

Chapter 75: God Is the Judge

Chapter 76: God Saves the Meek

Chapter 77: I Will Meditate On the Lord

Asaph was a very important member of David's court. He was involved in leading the worship. These inspired songs show us some of God's heart and what our response should be.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Psalms 75:8 we see there is a "cup" in God's hand that is "poured out" upon those against Him. No one wants to drink from that "cup"! Jesus knew when he took the sins of the world upon Himself, he would have to drink from that "cup". Is this the "cup" that Jesus asked to pass from Him? Christians know that Jesus drank from a "cup" that they were spared from. Are you a Christian?

**Day 179      Psalms Chapters 78 - 81**

Poetry

Asaph continues to bless us with his inspired songs. What Song titles would you give to these four of his songs?

Chapter 78: Children, Remember How God Dealt With Your Fathers

Chapter 79: How Long Will God Be Angry With Us? Until We Repent

Chapter 80: Restore Us to Our Former Position with God

Chapter 81: God Wants To Bless You, Don't Turn Him Away

Throughout human history man has sinned against God. When they repent, God forgives them. Soon after being forgiven, man sins again! When they repent, God forgives them again! How deep does God's mercy go?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Asaph's songs reveal that God wants to save us from our sins. Jesus is His gift to man to redeem from sin once and for all! Christians accept His gift! Are you a Christian?

## Day 180      Psalms Chapters 82 - 89

Poetry

Asaph's final songs finish up this third Song Book in the Psalms. As we finish them, we see that God continues to reach out to His people. Consider these Song Titles for these songs:

Chapter 82: God Is a Righteous Judge

Chapter 83: God Saves Us from Our Enemies

Chapter 84: It Is Better To Be In God's House than Anywhere Else

Chapter 85: God Will Forgive Our Sins

Chapter 86: Live In God's Truth

Chapter 87: Zion Is Special To God for A Reason

Chapter 88: Call On God Even When Facing Death

Chapter 89: God Keeps His Promises

God is not willing that any should perish. However, don't make the mistake of thinking God will not withdraw His presence from those who refuse Him.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** We see in Psalms 87 that Zion is special to God. Zion is a shadow of Jesus who comes out of Zion. Jesus gathers God's people to Himself. Christians are God's people (The Church). Are you a Christian?

**Day 181      Psalms Chapters 90 - 97**

Poetry

Today we begin the 4th Song Book found in Psalms. This Song Book contains 17 songs. Today we give our own titles to the first 8 of them.

Chapter 90: God Is Eternal

Chapter 91: God Is Our Refuge

Chapter 92: God Is Great

Chapter 93: God Is Holy

Chapter 94: God Is a Just Judge

Chapter 95: God Is Worthy of Worship

Chapter 96: God Is Worthy of Praise

Chapter 97: God Is On His Throne

Do you suppose these songs are about God? I think so too! We need to think about God more often. We need to praise and worship Him. We should never forget that He will judge us one day!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Speaking of our judgment, notice Psalm 96:13 "... for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth." This is a shadow of Jesus! According to Revelation 19:11-16, God will judge us through Him! Christians will be found "Not Guilty" at His Judgment Seat! Are you a Christian?

## Day 182 Psalms Chapters 98 - 104

Poetry

If we truly believe that God is God, then why aren't we singing His praise? King David understood that God is truly powerful. What really moved David was that God actually cared about him! He cares about all of us! What would you name these next 7 songs?

Chapter 98: Sing

Chapter 99: God Will Answer Our Call

Chapter 100: Make a Joyful Noise unto the Lord

Chapter 101: Do the Right Thing

Chapter 102: In Trouble? Call God

Chapter 103: Bless the Lord

Chapter 104: God Made It All

When we understand that God is who God is and we are who we are, we are in awe that God responds to our worship! Are you in awe?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** It's really all about Jesus! Psalms 102:18 tells us "This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord". Can you believe all this was written for us to learn so we can praise the Lord? Christians learned from the writings of the Old Testament that Jesus fulfilled every word! Are you a Christian?



**Day 183      Psalms Chapters 105 - 107**

Poetry

When we sing the National Anthem it reminds us of our heritage. No doubt, when the Jews sang Psalm 105, they felt that sense of nostalgia. Yet Psalms 106 and 107 would remind them that their history wasn't perfect. Consider these titles for these three songs:

Chapter 105: God's Promise to His People

Chapter 106: God's People Rejected Him

Chapter 107: God Still Loves His People

Romans 9:6 says "... They are not all Israel, which are of Israel..." This shows that God's "Israel" (His People) are not all from Israel. The Jews are not the only people of God under the New Testament. We, who are gentiles, now have access to God! Romans 9:25 says "... I will call them my people, which were not my people; ..." At one time gentiles were not considered God's people, but now they can be! Since most of us are gentiles, I'm sure this is good news to us!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Romans 9:33 says "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed". Israel was chosen to be God's people through Abraham. Today, Christians are God's people through Christ. Are you a Christian?

## Day 184      Psalms Chapters 108 - 116      Poetry

David sang about Jesus! He probably didn't fully realize the full implications himself, but God was inspiring him to give the world a glimpse of His plan through songs! Here are some possible song titles for the next 9 songs?

Chapter 108: God Will Lead Us

Chapter 109: God Rejects the Proud

Chapter 110: God's Priest of Zion

Chapter 111: Wise People Obey God

Chapter 112: Happy People Fear God

Chapter 113: God Can Lift You Up

Chapter 114: Everything Responds To God's Presence

Chapter 115: Idols Are Impotent, God Is Omnipotent

Chapter 116: The Death of Saints is precious to God

God is worthy to be worshiped during our life and trusted at our death. After all, this life is just the beginning of eternity!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Psalms 110:1 speaks of David's "Lord" who sits at the right hand of God. That's Jesus! He is also the priest "after the order of Melchizedek" mentioned in Psalms 110. Hebrews chapter 7 tells us all about that. Christians have a high priest who has offered his own blood and has now sat down at the right hand of God! Are you a Christian?

**Day 185      Psalms Chapters 117 - 118** Poetry

God is forever, don't we want to get in on that? Everything we do in this world will not last. We know that, yet we tend to put them ahead of God. What's up with that? We started the fifth and final Song Book last time. Here are the next 2 song titles:

Chapter 117: God's Truth Lasts Forever

Chapter 118: God's Mercy Lasts Forever

We try everything to make things in this life lasts as long as it can, yet we know they will not last forever. Why don't we sing about our God who does last forever?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Take a closer look at Psalms 118:22 "The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner." This is called the "corner stone". Jesus is the corner stone! Everything else is based upon Him! Christians embrace the corner stone, while many refuse Him! Are you a Christian?

## Day 186      Psalms Chapter 119

Poetry

Do you know what an acrostic is? It's when the first letter in each verse or stanza of a song or poem spell out a word or phrase. In the case of today's song, the first letter in each stanza is a letter of the Hebrew Alphabet!! There are 22 letters in that alphabet. David writes 8 verses for each letter. Therefore, 22 times 8 gives us 176 verses! This is the longest chapter in the Bible. There is a good reason to give it this title:

Chapter 119: The Nature of the Word of God

Every verse (except three) mentions God's Word! It is called His Laws, Ways, Testimonies, Precepts, Commandments, Judgments, Statutes, Words, etc. This song gives a deep insight into what God's Word is and how it should be respected!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** It's really all about Jesus! Jesus IS the Word of God. John 1:1 & 14 tell us Jesus is the Word that became flesh and lived among mankind. Christians follow Jesus! Are you a Christian?

**Day 187      Psalms Chapters 120 - 135** Poetry

Sometimes the shortest songs can be the most powerful ones! Today we will read 16 short songs! Consider these titles:

Chapter 120: Some People Will Lie To You

Chapter 121: God Helps Us

Chapter 122: Be Glad To Worship God

Chapter 123: Have Mercy on Us

Chapter 124: Where Would We Be Without God

Chapter 125: I Shall Not Be Moved

Chapter 126: God Has Done Great Things

Chapter 127: If God Didn't Build It, It's Worthless

Chapter 128: God Will Take Care of You

Chapter 129: We Will Win

Chapter 130: You Can Trust God

Chapter 131: Humble Ourselves Before God

Chapter 132: Put God First

Chapter 133: Unity ... How Sweet It Is

Chapter 134: Bless the Lord

Chapter 135: Bless the Lord Some More

We can't give God more praise than He deserves, but isn't it wonderful to make the attempt?!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Notice Psalms 132:17 "... I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed." God anointed David to be king. He said that a "lamp" would be ordained from him. Jesus is that "Lamp"! Christians know that He is the Light of the World! Are you a Christian?

## Day 188      Psalms Chapters 136 - 142      Poetry

Today we will read 7 more Songs. All of them express Thanksgiving, Praise, and Adoration for the One, True God! Here are some more titles to look at:

Chapter 136: Give Thanks To God

Chapter 137: It's Hard To Sing When You Are Away From What You Love

Chapter 138: God Strengthens Me

Chapter 139: God Knows Me

Chapter 140: God Is My God

Chapter 141: Deliver Me from Evil

Chapter 142: God Is With You

God knows everything about us. Not only is it futile to lie to God, it's robbing us of great peace! Isn't it peaceful to know that there's someone that knows, understands, and cares about you like God does?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Psalms 137 may have been written many years after David died. It was a song concerning the Jews when they were taken into captivity by the Babylonians. The psalmist seems to struggle with singing "God's Songs" while in a foreign land. In fact, it's possible that the Babylonians were craving to hear God's Songs from the Israelites. Perhaps they were looking for the One, True God. Jesus left His home in Heaven and came to this "foreign land". Here He proclaimed the most beautiful truths about God the world has ever heard! Christians sing about those truths to this day. Are you a Christian?

**Day 189      Psalms Chapters 143 - 150** Poetry

Today we finish the 5th Song Book of the Psalms, thus finishing the entire Book of Psalms. We have spent these last 22 days reading songs of Praise and Worship. Let's complete the Psalms with these last 8 suggested song titles:

Chapter 143: I'm Thirsty for God

Chapter 144: Sing a New Song

Chapter 145: God Is Very Close

Chapter 146: Don't Trust Man, Trust God

Chapter 147: God Gives Us What We Need

Chapter 148: Praise Him, Praise Him

Chapter 149: Praise Him Some More

Chapter 150: Praise Him ONE MORE TIME

How fitting to end the Book of Psalms with Praise to God!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Psalms 144:3 we read, "LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!" In Hebrews 2:6-9 we see this was a prophecy of Jesus! Christians believe that God sent Jesus to this world to become a man and die for all men. Are you a Christian?

**Day 190 Proverbs Chapters 1 - 4**

Poetry

Today we begin Proverbs. A "Proverb" is a simple and concrete saying that expresses a truth based on common sense or the practical experience of humanity. Solomon was the wisest man in all the Bible with the exception of Jesus. His wisdom and experience allowed him to observe truths that most of us would gloss over. The Holy Spirit inspired him to write these simple truths in the form of these proverbs.

The first nine chapters addresses "My Son". Solomon gives basic, common sense instruction to serve as a guide for his "son". Chapters 10 through 29 is a collection of Solomon's proverbs. They do not seem to be in any particular order. Most verses are independent of the others. Chapter 30 is from Agur and Chapter 31 is from Lemuel. In today's reading, Solomon pleads for his readers to listen to their fathers. He points out that wisdom is the "principal thing". At the core of wisdom is this truth, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

Today, we would do well to heed God's wisdom.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Man's wisdom is nothing like God's wisdom. It was the wisdom of God that moved Him to give His only Son, Jesus, for sinners like us. How many of us would do that, much less call it "wise"? Christians trust His wisdom. Are you a Christian?



**Day 191      Proverbs Chapters 5 - 8**

Poetry

Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines! He knew a thing or two about women! His wise advice in today's reading is to get as far away from an immoral woman as you can get! Men, drink water from your own cistern and well. If you don't know what that means, Solomon put it another way; be happy with your own wife! In chapter seven Solomon watches a foolish young man be lured into an evil woman's seductive trap. It was like watching a train wreck about to happen!

Solomon went on to tell us we shouldn't be lazy. Work hard to provide for yourself and stay out of debt. If you need any more insight about hard work and preparation, go watch the ants! Solomon also listed seven things God hates in chapter six. We certainly need to take note of those.

Today, wisdom calls out to us just as it has done in all the generations before us. We can either listen or ignore her. The foolish choose to follow their own path.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is calling out to us today. The foolish choose to ignore Him. Christians wisely embrace Him. Are you a Christian?

## Day 192 Proverbs Chapters 9 - 13

Poetry

Before getting into a vast collection of proverbs beginning in chapter 10 and continuing through chapter 29, Solomon gave more advice to be wise, acknowledging that foolish people won't listen to wise counsel. He also made another plea to stay away from immoral women.

As we begin the collection of proverbs in chapter 10, notice that many of them are written as contrast statements. The use of the word "but" shows this. Other proverbs are comparison or complimentary statements. There are far too many proverbs to comment on each one, but with your permission, I will simply quote one or two proverbs to whet our appetites to read the others.

"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety."

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The wise are those who follow Jesus. Christians walk with the wise! Are you a Christian?

**Day 193      Proverbs Chapters 14 - 17**

Poetry

What an eye opening experience it is to read these proverbs! Have you made some changes in your behavior as a result? Don't just read them, LIVE them!

They are all so good, but here are my picks for today:

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."

"He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding."

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord."

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** It probably seemed right to the Jewish leaders to kill Jesus, but it was wrong! They condemned the just one! Christians humble themselves before Christ! Are you a Christian?

**Day 194      Proverbs Chapters 18 - 21** Poetry

God truly blessed Solomon with great wisdom! He sees things that most of us would never notice. Since he has brought it to our attention, why don't we take advantage of it?

Here are some great ones to consider today:

"He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster"

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

"A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived therby is not wise."

"Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles."

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is a friend that sticks closer than a brother! Christians have established that relationship with Him. Are you a Christian?

**Day 195      Proverbs Chapters 22 - 24**

Poetry

What about our relationships? Does Solomon give any advice about how to cultivate them? Does he give any advice about how to respond to certain types of people? Absolutely! We would do well to heed that wise advice. What about this advice?

"A Good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold."

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

"Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go;"

"And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite."

"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: ..."

"Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words."

"Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;"

Today, take a moment to consider these wise words of wisdom. Now think of a way to implement at least one of these proverbs into your day. You will see a difference!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus exercised the Wisdom of Solomon. He would often speak kind words to those with open hearts, but speak harshly to the foolish leaders who refused to listen. Christians are wise to keep their heart and minds open to hear the words of Christ. Are you a Christian?

**Day 196 Proverbs Chapters 25 - 28** Poetry

How should I treat my neighbor? The Poor? My Friend? Strangers? Myself? Solomon has the answers! Hezekiah knew he had the answers. Beginning in chapter 25, we read more of Solomon's proverbs from Hezekiah's collection. Here are some of those proverbs:

"Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; and discover not a secret to another."

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

"Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbor's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee."

"As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly."

"He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears"

"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."

"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

He that rebuketh a man, afterward shall find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue."

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Peter noted in II Peter 2:20-22 that those who know Jesus yet turn from Him are like the dog returning to his vomit! Solomon called this person a fool! Christians aren't fools. Are you a Christian?

**Day 197      Proverbs Chapters 29 - 31**

Poetry

Today we finish Hezekiah's collection of Solomon's proverbs. We also read words of wisdom from Agur and Lemuel. This will complete our reading of The Book of Proverbs.

Agur acknowledges several things on this earth is beyond his comprehension, but he fully understands that "every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him." Lemuel credits his mother's teachings for his words of wisdom. She taught him to stay away from evil women and alcohol. She wanted him to be fair and good. She wanted him to find a virtuous woman. The Holy Spirit inspired him to record these words of wisdom. Obviously God wanted to give us the same warnings!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Solomon is a shadow of Jesus. His words of wisdom are but a foretaste of the wise words of Christ. Christians show great wisdom when they apply Jesus' teaching to their lives. Are you a Christian?

**Day 198 Ecclesiastes Chapters 1 - 6**

Poetry

We have seen the Wisdom of Solomon through his proverbs. We have experienced his deep feelings through his romantic song. Today and tomorrow we will explore his thoughts about the purpose of this life. It is his examination of what "under the sun" has true value. Solomon had virtually unlimited resources. He had keen insight. He was one of the most powerful men on the planet! Solomon was in a very unique position to consider the question: "What is the purpose of life?"

Solomon examined nature, man's experiences, history, education, pleasure, man's accomplishments, wealth, fame, and man's intellectual capabilities. He concluded it was all "vanity" or meaningless. None of these things had lasting or eternal value. They would all be gone someday. Then he examined wisdom and the joy of working and living. He noted there was a time for everything in this life (under the sun). Solomon's quest for purpose forced him to look beyond this life. He acknowledged everyone would die and we would all be judged. Some would listen to wisdom and apply it to their lives, others would not. No one can know what the future holds or how their lives will affect the future. In fact, most will die in obscurity leaving behind no meaningful contribution. Their name will not even be remembered by future generations! Does this mean that their lives were meaningless? If we limit our "meaning" and "value" and "purpose" to this life only (that which is under the sun), we are sure to find it is indeed "vanity" or "worthless". Yet, if we look beyond this life for our purpose, we will see something else entirely

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-21, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Christians don't define their value by earthly measures. They understand that real treasure is stored beyond this life. Are you a Christian?



**Day 199      Ecclesiastes Chapters 7 - 12**      Poetry

Solomon has determined in the first six chapters things of this earth is not the measure of real value. He now shows us the purpose of human life.

A good name is very valuable. Even though good people often suffer in this life and wicked people seem to prosper, we should still do well. Don't look back to yesterday and dwell on past successes or failures. We all have made mistakes! Solomon then defined the life worth living: Give - Work - Enjoy Life - and Remember this life is only temporary! From this perspective Solomon was able to give the answer to the question: "What is the purpose of life?" It's found in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus understood the purpose of life. He knew this world is only temporary and man can only find meaning when he looks beyond this life. Jesus put it this way in Mark 8:36. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Christians find their purpose in their obedience to God through Jesus Christ. Are you a Christian?

## Day 200      **Song of Solomon Chapters 1 - 8** Poetry

Today we read the Song of Solomon. It's a beautiful love song! Solomon had some sort of relationship with 1,000 women, but there was one he was truly in love with. Perhaps it was the Shulamite (a Palestinian young woman) spoken of in chapter 6 verse 13. This romantic song is very graphic. He describes the beauty of his lover by saying she has hair like goats and teeth like shorn sheep! To us it may seem strange, even insulting, but to that culture it was sensual!! Consider this summary.

The king sees no blemish at all in the woman. She is perfect! He begs her to come to him and he will keep her safe. He explains how excited he is to be near her because he loves her more than anything! His lover invites him into her garden which he promptly accepts. He arrives at midnight, but this is not convenient for the young woman. At first she refuses to answer the door, but he continues to call her. Finally she opens the door, but he is gone! She leaves the garden and goes into the city looking for her lover. The watchman of the city attacks her. She turns to her friends. She asks them to help her find her king. At first they refuse to help since she is the one who rejected him. When they see her genuine sorrow and obvious love for him, they decide to help her. She finally finds him in the garden! He never left ... she did!! She wonders if he will take her back. She has been abused by the world. She is bruised, dirty, and wounded. Will he love her now? YES!!! He has been gathering lilies in the garden the entire time waiting patiently for her to return!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Read the summary again. This time imagine you are the young woman and Jesus is the King! Jesus loves us so much! Though we reject Him, and get wounded by the world outside the safety of His church, He will take us back if we are willing to return. Christians open their hearts to Jesus, invite Him into their lives, surrender to His authority, and enjoy the security that is found in Him and Him alone! Are you a Christian?

## CHAPTER FOUR

# The Five Major Prophets

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel

**Day 201      Isaiah Chapters 1 - 4**

Major Prophets

Isaiah preached about 740 years before Christ. He gave his stern warnings to at least four consecutive kings of Judah. His warnings were heeded by some and rejected by others. He pointed out the sins of the country. He pleaded with them to repent and turn back to God.

As you read Isaiah's prophecies and warnings concerning Judah, imagine he is given America these same warnings. Isaiah told them they have left God. Even their worship services are unacceptable to Him. They openly embrace sin, then have the audacity to think God will accept their worship! God tells them to do the right things, seek justice, help the poor, and aid the orphans and widows. This is what God wants from you! He will forgive if you will repent. God told Isaiah He would indeed punish Judah and destroy Jerusalem for their sins. Wake up America! If God will destroy Jerusalem (which He did) surely God will judge any nation that turns their back on Him!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Chapter 2 verse 3 we read, "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Jesus established His Church in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Today many people come to Jesus and are added to His Church. Christians ARE the Church! Are you a Christian?

**Day 202      Isaiah Chapters 5 - 8**

Major Prophets

Isaiah sang a song about a vineyard which represented the nation. He explained God had done everything to give it the opportunity to be fruitful. Yet it was unfruitful and produced sour grapes! As a result, God allowed foreign nations to destroy it. What more could God do to bless this nation? Why do we still reject Him?

Isaiah continued to tell the nation's leaders that the country would be destroyed. In one of his visions he hears the Lord say, "Whom shall I send." Isaiah said, "I, Here am I; send me." God sends him with disturbing news, but there is a ray of hope! A Savior will be sent!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Chapter 7 verse 14 is a prophecy of Jesus, "... Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel". This is great news; however, God explains in Chapter 8 verse 14 "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock offense ..." In I Peter 2:8 we learn "And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: ..." Some will disobey Christ, yet Christians find sanctuary in Him. Are you a Christian?

**Day 203     Isaiah Chapters 9 - 12**     Major Prophets

Isaiah began to preach about 740 years before Christ was born in Bethlehem. He preached to the kings of Judah (the Southern Kingdom). All the kings of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) were very wicked. In 722 B.C. God allowed the Assyrians to conquer them. Isaiah told the kings of Judah this was going to happen. He explained God planned to punish them for their wickedness. They wrote unrighteous laws, oppressed the poor, they didn't stand up for the rights of the widows and orphans (folks who couldn't stand up for themselves). Does any of this sound familiar?

God used Assyria to punish Israel. Assyria began to think they were all powerful. Isaiah made it clear they were not! An axe cannot brag about cutting down the tree! The tree fell because of the one who USED the axe! It was God that executed His judgment on Israel. Later God executed His judgment on Assyria. With all of this war and the fall and rise of governments, Jews began to think God was only interested in worldly kingdoms. This is not the case. These events were only shadows of the Kingdom that God fully intended to set up. The Kingdom that the gates of hell would not prevail against!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** He is everywhere! Even though Israel and Judah were taken captive by foreign nations, they were not left hopeless. Chapter 9 verse 6 & 7 describes the coming of Jesus. Chapter 11 verse 1 also speaks of Jesus. These prophecies, and more, gave the Jews hope for their coming Savior. They expected Him to set up a world government! Jesus explained that His Kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). The Church is Jesus' Kingdom. The Jews, who were waiting on someone to set up a worldly kingdom, rejected Jesus!! Christians understand that Jesus' Kingdom is His Church. Christians ARE the Church. Don't miss it!!! Are you a Christian?

## Day 204     **Isaiah Chapters 13 - 16**     Major Prophets

Keep in mind that Isaiah prophesied to Judah beginning in 740 B.C. In today's reading Isaiah prophesied the Babylonians would be destroyed by the Medes. This didn't happen until 539 B.C. This was about 200 years LATER!! Isaiah specifically prophesied that a Babylonian king would become full of pride and feel as if he were indestructible. Isaiah said God would humble him. He called this king "Lucifer", which means "Day Star". Some think this is Satan's name, but it seems evident in the text that he is speaking of some arrogant Babylonian king. Personally I think it sounds an awful lot like Nebuchadnezzar (compare Daniel Chapter 4). If this was Nebuchadnezzar, or even some other Babylonian king, Isaiah was still predicting something that would not happen for another 200 years!

Today's reading also discusses God's future punishment of Assyria, Palestine, Moab (present day Jordan), and other Middle Eastern countries. All these countries afflicted Israel. God said he would show mercy to Israel even though He would allow them to be taken into Babylonian captivity for their sins. God promised to bring them back to their homeland. Many think this is a prophecy concerning our future and the whole mess that is going on today in the Middle East. However, upon further historical investigation, we learn that in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra, God did allow them to return to their homeland around 444 B.C. Every prophecy in today's reading was fulfilled within 300 years of Isaiah's day. This increases our faith in God's power to keep His promises!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Consider Chapter 16 verse 5 "And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness." Some believe the Savior will literally sit on David's throne in Jerusalem and rule the world. That's exactly the way the Jews of Jesus' day interpreted this prophecy. Yet Jesus was not interested in this at all! In fact, in John 6:15, He avoided this! Christians understand that the Church is His Kingdom and they ARE the Church! Are you a Christian?

**Day 205      Isaiah Chapters 17 - 21      Major Prophets**

Isaiah is telling the kings of Judah what God is planning to do. He explains that the Jews will fall into sin. God will raise up great nations to punish them. God also revealed that He will hold those foreign nations accountable even though He uses them for His purpose. He even names the countries He will bring judgment upon: Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Assyria, Arabia, Babylon (present day Iraq), etc. This gave the Jews hope that God will be with them and help them.

Today we will read about more trouble in the Middle East! These prophecies actually assure us that God is in control. No nation, no government, no organization, no company, no family, no person, etc. can ever forsake God and His principles and expect to be successful in their exploits. It may seem that they are in control, but God reveals that they are absolutely not in control!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Consider Chapter 21 verse 9 "Babylon, is fallen, is fallen." No kingdom on earth operating outside God's plan will stand! In Revelation 14:8 John heard the angel declare that "Babylon is fallen, is fallen". Whether that is the Babylonian of 539 B.C., the Medes & Persians, the Grecians, the Romans, the Germans, the British, the Russians, the Chinese, the Middle East, even America ... if they are outside God's Will they are "fallen"! However, with Jesus' Kingdom nothing will prevail against it (Matthew 16:18)! Christians ARE that Kingdom (the Church)! Are you a Christian?



## Day 206      Isaiah Chapters 22 - 25      Major Prophets

As Isaiah continues to prophesy, he predicts God's judgment on more folks and nations. He is making it clear God is in control. He will hold the world accountable. In fact, in chapter 24 he speaks of the judgment of the whole earth. Everyone will be held accountable to God.

Isaiah 24:23 "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Compare this with Matthew 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." These statements are graphic descriptions of a major event! It will be a major event when God judges the earth!!!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Acts 2:20 we read "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:" In that context, it's a graphic description of the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost. That was a major event! Isaiah 25:8 says "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; ..." Compare that with I Corinthians 15:54 "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory". These are descriptions of the time of judgment. Christians ARE the Church and they are looking forward to Christ's return - a major event indeed! Are you a Christian?

**Day 207      Isaiah Chapters 26 - 28**      Major Prophets

Imagine you are a Jew as you read Isaiah's prophesies. Imagine what you would think when you read Isaiah 26:9 today "... for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." You think to yourself, "That's right! When the Messiah, the Savior, comes to the earth and establishes his kingdom on the earth, the whole world will finally get it!" You then read Isaiah 27:6 "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." You may interpret that to mean that Israel will rule the world! Surely when you read Isaiah 27:13 "... Assyria and ... Egypt ... shall worship the Lord in the holy mount of Jerusalem" you would believe Jerusalem will be the center of worship for the whole world!

The Jews of Jesus' day believed Isaiah was surely teaching there would be a Jewish kingdom on earth where the Savior would rule the world from Jerusalem! When Jesus came, they rejected Him. Why? He was not a General or Captain of an army, He was a carpenter from Nazareth! He couldn't be the one to set up a one world Jewish government! They killed Him!!!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Jews missed the real Messiah, Jesus, because of their misinterpretation of these prophesies. These prophesies were not predicting a one world Jewish kingdom based in Jerusalem. They were speaking of the establishment of Jesus' Church. Read Isaiah 28:16 "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Peter, in I Peter 2:6, made it clear Isaiah was speaking of Jesus. Those who accept Him are assured of salvation. His Kingdom is not of this world! He is not interested in a world government. He is interested in His Church. Christians ARE the Church. Are you a Christian?

**Day 208      Isaiah Chapters 29 - 31**      Major Prophets

Remember that Isaiah is talking to the Southern Kingdom of Judah around 740 B.C. This is about 200 years before God allowed Babylon (present day Iraq) to take them into captivity. In today's reading God prophesied He would judge Ariel. Ariel means "Lion of God" and it is the city where David lived. This is Jerusalem. Though Jerusalem will be destroyed, the Jews will not be annihilated. After 70 years, God will allow them to return to their homeland. He allowed Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah to restore Jerusalem just as He promised through Isaiah's prophecies!

When the time came for God to execute His prophesied judgment, the people will turn to Egypt for refuge and aid. We will see that more clearly in Jeremiah's prophecies. Isaiah saw this would happen years before Jeremiah's day. Isaiah prophesied that Egypt cannot protect Jerusalem, but God will take care of them.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** As we read Isaiah 29:18-19, we see that the deaf, blind, meek, and poor will see the truth from the "sealed book". This reminds us of Jesus' encouragement to John the Baptist in Matthew 11:5. He reminded John the Baptist that the Gospel is being preached to these folks. Christians understand that the restoration of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day is a shadow of the establishment of Christ's Church. Are you a Christian?

**Day 209     Isaiah Chapters 32 - 35**     Major Prophets

Isaiah is prophesying the destruction and the restoration of Jerusalem, however, it is obvious he is seeing a "shadow" of the coming of Jesus Christ and the salvation offered to mankind!

In the very first verse of today's reading we are promised that a "King shall reign in righteousness ..." In Chapter 32 verse 15 we are promised the outpouring of the spirit from on high. In Chapter 33 verse 17 we are told our eyes shall see the king in his beauty. Then in Chapter 34 verse 4 there is a prophecy of the great judgment day of all the earth! These prophecies are speaking of Jesus and His first and second coming! What happens to us at His second coming depends solely upon what we do with His first coming!!!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is everywhere! Notice in Chapter 35 verse 3 that Isaiah tells us to "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees." Compare that with Hebrews 12:12 "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees". The Hebrew writer is giving us some insight on what Isaiah means. The previous verse (Hebrews 12:11) says, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Just as God punished Jerusalem for their sins with the anticipation of their repentance and restoration, God "chastens" us to bring about our salvation. Christians embrace our Father's lessons! Are you a Christian?

**Day 210      Isaiah Chapters 36 - 38**      Major Prophets

Isaiah records the events we read in II Kings 18 - 20 and in II Chronicles 32. Isaiah was there! God inspired him to include this historical event in the middle of his prophecies concerning the Jews and the coming of Christ and His Kingdom.

Hezekiah, king of Judah, asked Isaiah to pray for him and the nation. Don't you wish more people would ask the people of God to pray for the nation instead of trying to expel them from their society? It doesn't matter if they ask us to pray or not ... pray anyway!!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The events of Hezekiah's day moved him to tears. He needed the prayers of Isaiah and the power of God. Christian's sins have moved them to tears. They have found the power of God in the Blood of Jesus! Are you a Christian?

**Day 211      Isaiah Chapters 39 - 42      Major Prophets**

Hezekiah was king of Judah from 728 B.C. to 695 B.C. Isaiah was his spiritual counselor. He brought him God's word. One day Hezekiah was lifted up with pride and bragged about his accomplishments to the king of Babylon. At the time, Babylon was not a very strong country. Isaiah told Hezekiah the Babylonians would take Judah into captivity. In 605 B.C., just 100 years later, that's exactly what happened!

Jerusalem would not be extinguished. They would be restored to their land in 70 years. Isaiah also promised something else. He said in Chapter 40 verse 3 that someone would be sent to prepare the way of the Lord. Matthew chapter 3 tells us this verse speaks of John the Baptist. The seed of Abraham would be spared destruction because God planned to send His Son through the Jewish nation. That's exactly what happened!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Chapter 40 verse 11 Isaiah compared the Lord to a shepherd feeding His flock. In I Peter 5:4 Jesus is referred to as a Chief Shepherd. Isaiah said He would open the eyes of the blind, open the ears of the deaf, and preach the truth to the poor. That's exactly what happened! Christians know that Isaiah was prophesying the coming of Jesus. Are you a Christian?

## Day 212      **Isaiah Chapters 43 - 47**      Major Prophets

God specifically told Israel they were His chosen people. He told them they would be His witness to the world. Then He punished them for rejecting Him! He allowed the Babylonians (present day Iraq) to carry them away into captivity. Yet there was good news. They would not be totally destroyed. They would return to their land.

Isaiah said a king named Cyrus would allow the Jews to go home. In 539 B.C. Cyrus, the king of Persia (present day Iran) issued a law to return the Jews to Jerusalem. Don't forget that Isaiah prophesied around 740 B.C. ... 200 YEARS EARLIER!!! God kept His promise to the Jews! They were a witness to the world that God keeps His promises to His people. In chapter 45 verse 23 God said that "every knee will bow, every tongue shall swear." We can be assured this is absolutely going to happen. We have a choice. Do we bow now or bow later? Our eternity rests on the answer to that question.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Chapter 46 verse 13 God said "... and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." The Jews believed (and still do) that their salvation will come when God brings them in earthly "glory" to rule the planet from Zion (Jerusalem). This misunderstanding caused them to reject Jesus, a lowly carpenter from Nazareth, and crucify Him. God's salvation DID begin at Jerusalem when Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world! It was certainly NOT to set up an earthly kingdom. His Kingdom is not of this world. Let's not make the same mistake the Jews made. The Jews are our witness, pay attention to what they did! God used them to bring Jesus into the world and show us all that He is a Promise Keeper. Don't reject His Promise like they did (and still do)! Christians know that the Church is Christ's Kingdom! Are you a Christian?

**Day 213**      **Isaiah Chapters 48 - 51**      Major Prophets

Israel was God's chosen people. They said they loved God, but they didn't live like they loved Him. They didn't trust Him. As a result, God allowed Babylon (present day Iraq) to carry the Jews into captivity for 70 years. Even though they sinned, God was able to redeem them!

Just as a mother can never forget her child, regardless of what the child did, God would never forget the Jews. Why? He had made a promise to save them ... and He did!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Chapter 50 verse 6 we read "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Sound familiar? This is a prophecy of Jesus' crucifixion. God had just asked the questions in verse 2 "... Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver?" God CAN redeem and deliver! How? He sent Jesus, who is the great Redeemer and Deliverer to save Christians! Are you a Christian?



## Day 214      **Isaiah Chapters 52 - 56**      Major Prophets

Just as God delivered the Jews from their captivity, God is offering us deliverance from our captivity in sin. How? Through Jesus' blood! Chapter 52 verse 14 says "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:" This is a prophetic glimpse of Jesus' crucifixion. God is showing the world just how He planned to deliver us!

In Chapter 54 verse 7 God said "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee." He also said in Chapter 54 verse 17 "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. ...". God was speaking to the Jews, but it was a shadow of the promise of ALL the saved of the earth. Doesn't Chapter 55 verse 3 sound familiar? "...come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." The Jews assumed God was talking ONLY about them. They believed their savior would establish an earthly kingdom and no weapon could stop them! They still believe this! If we were living in that day, we would probably be thinking the same thing. Even the apostles believed this. Yet when you read Chapter 55 verses 8 and 9 you see our "thoughts" and our "ways" are nowhere close to God's! He didn't have an earthly kingdom in mind at all. His Savior would not come on a white horse and deliver the Jews from world governments. His Savior would not sit on a grand throne in Jerusalem and rule the world (as most Jews expected). What would His Savior do? Read Chapter 53!!!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Chapter 53 is a prophetic detailed account of Jesus' crucifixion! God's Savior came to die - and He did! Christians believe that Jesus died, just as Isaiah predicted. They also believe that he resurrected from the dead!! Are you a Christian?

**Day 215      Isaiah Chapters 57 - 59**      Major Prophets

Isaiah pointed out the righteous perish and no one cares! This is the problem with "religion"! People SAY they love God, but they do not obey Him. They don't become LIKE HIM! True religion is not simply keeping ordinances and "rules" (though these things are commanded and should be obeyed). True religion is being merciful and kind to others. Feed the hungry, take care of the poor, and clothe the naked. If we "go to church" on Sunday, yet leave the orphan in the street on Monday, are we really exercising true religion?

James 1:27 says "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Jesus also indicated this in Matthew 25:31-45 as He painted a picture of the Judgment Scene. Only those who exercised "pure religion" were given a home in heaven!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Chapter 59 verse 2 God said, "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." This is man's most serious problem. Thankfully God said in Chapter 59 verse 20 "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion (Jerusalem)..." Jesus DID come to Jerusalem, died on the cross, raised from the dead, and REDEEMED us from our sins. Christians embrace this GOSPEL! Are you a Christian?

**Day 216      Isaiah Chapters 60 - 63**      Major Prophets

"Arise & Shine" my Daddy would say as he called us from a deep sleep! The Jews (and the Gentiles) were in a deep spiritual sleep! We needed salvation, we needed a savior! Jesus, the Son of God, has risen and is shining as the Light of the world! He is our Savior! He is our Redeemer! We need to WAKE UP and see Him!

When Jesus came to the synagogue in Luke 4:18-19 He read from Isaiah's prophecy. He quoted Isaiah 61:1-2. When He finished the reading, He claimed to be the fulfillment of the prophecy. In effect, He claimed to be the Savior, the Redeemer, and the Messiah! What was the people's reaction? They got angry and tried to throw Him off a cliff! They were still "asleep" and couldn't see the Light of Christ!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Chapter 62 verse 11 God promised to send salvation (a Savior) and He will bring His reward with Him. In Revelation 22:12 Jesus said He would return and bring His reward with Him! Only the people who believe on Him and wait for His return will be saved. Only the ones who are spiritually awake! Don't "throw Him off the cliff"!! Christians are watching and waiting. Are you a Christian?

**Day 217      Isaiah Chapters 64 - 66      Major Prophets**

As we finish Isaiah, we are reminded God inspired him to write in 740 B.C. He told the Jews they would fall into Babylonian captivity and they did. He told them God would restore them to Jerusalem and He did. He promised them a Savior and a Redeemer that would not only save the Jews, but would also save the Gentiles. He accomplished that by sending His only begotten Son! In fact, all the prophecies concerning Jerusalem's fall and restoration were a shadow of the restoration of mankind through Jesus Christ!

When the Jews read Isaiah's prophecies they misinterpreted them! They believed they were fulfilled in the short term, but they also believed there was a long term application. They concluded that God would bring the Jews to world domination. The throne of David would be re-established in Jerusalem and every nation on earth would be subject to their Messiah! This became the narrative of the entire Jewish culture from generation to generation. No wonder they rejected Jesus' claims to be the Messiah! He was just a carpenter from Nazareth! Could anything good come from Nazareth!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Chapter 66 verse 1 God shows He did not intend to set up a world government. He said, "... The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" He went on to say in verse 18 that He will "... gather all nations and tongues: and they shall come, and see my glory". He even promised in verse 22 the "... new heavens and the new earth..." The "seed" promised in that verse to "remain" was firmly believed to be the "seed" and "name" of the Jews and the Jews alone! However, Paul explains that the Church is the "seed" promise in Romans 9:8! Not the "seed" of the flesh, but "seed" of PROMISE! Christians are God's "seed" or children! Are you a child of God? Are you a Christian?

**Day 218      Jeremiah Chapters 1 - 3      Major Prophets**

Today we begin Jeremiah. He prophesied from 627 B.C. to 586 B.C. Isaiah had preached about 100 years before. He had foretold the fall of Israel. It happened in 722 B.C. when the Assyrians took them into captivity. Isaiah also foretold the fall of Judah. It had been about 100 years, but it was time for Judah to go into Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah was sent to tell them it was about to happen.

The kings of Israel were all bad. There were several good kings in Judah. Perhaps this is why God prolonged their fall. Judah was spared captivity for around 150 years after the fall of Israel. Sadly, Judah eventually fell away from God. They stopped looking for Him. They began to worship statues made from wood and stone. These false gods could never save them!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jeremiah told them that God would be willing to take Israel back if they would repent of their spiritual adultery. If Judah would repent, He would spare them. For the next 52 chapters Jeremiah will cry and beg Judah to repent. He warned them they would suffer the same fate as Israel if they didn't. This is a shadow of Jesus. He is begging with tears for us to repent of our spiritual adultery. Though we have done horrible things, Jesus will take us back! His blood can wash us clean! Christians are washed in the blood of the Lamb! Are you a Christian?

**Day 219      Jeremiah Chapters 4 - 6      Major Prophets**

Jeremiah is known as the "weeping prophet". He cried and lamented the entire book! He wrote another book in the Bible we will read next called "Lamentations"!!! Why did he weep? He knew Jerusalem was about to be destroyed by the Babylonians in his lifetime. He knew God had prophesied it through Isaiah about 150 years before. When he said, "My bowels, my bowels", he was saying that his inner parts ... his heart ... was breaking!

There was no one seeking God in Jerusalem. The prophets were lying and the priest were in it for their own profit! These were the religious people! The ones who were supposed to be showing the people the way to God. How did they get away with it? It's because "the people loved to have it so"! They hated God's truth. They didn't appreciate Him anymore. In fact, when they did despicable things, it didn't bother or embarrass them. They had lost the ability to "blush"! Sound familiar?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jeremiah is a shadow of Christ! In Matthew 23:37 Jesus wept over Jerusalem. He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Christians are grateful that Jesus shed tears over their sins. They are grateful that He has called them together to Him. Are you a Christian?

**Day 220     Jeremiah Chapters 7 - 9**     Major Prophets

"Amend your ways and your doings!" Jeremiah's message was simple. The people in Jerusalem were doing horrible things. They would then go to the Temple of God and say, "We are delivered to do all these abominations!" In other words, they honestly felt they could get away with murder! They actually believed God was somehow obligated to save them even though they committed atrocities! God made it clear, "Obey my voice and I will be your God".

Even the birds know when it is time for them to migrate. Why doesn't mankind understand what we are supposed to do? They had prophets and priests that told lies to the people. They said, "Peace, Peace, when there is no peace"! Instead of warning them to repent and amend their ways, they told them that they were saved regardless of their lifestyle! They trusted in their wisdom, power, and money. They were commanded to trust in the Lord!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Chapter 7 verse 11 we read, "Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?" Remember Matthew 21:13 where Jesus cast out the moneychangers from the Temple? He said they had made it a "den of thieves"! Times hadn't changed much from Jeremiah's day to Jesus' day. In fact, Christians are saddened even today when they see unrepentant and wicked people using the Church to justify themselves. Are you a Christian?

## Day 221      **Jeremiah Chapters 10 - 12** Major Prophets

Don't follow the customs of unbelievers. Many people in Judah were adopting their neighbors' gods and religious practices. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" so don't listen to them. They would cut a tree from the forest, carve it into a particular shape, decorate it with silver, and mount it in their homes. They would worship it and expect it to protect them. (If you think this is referring to a Christmas tree, then don't have a Christmas tree, especially if you worship it! However, be careful not to judge those who have one, especially if they aren't worshipping it!). The point is that God had delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage, not the false gods of wood and stone. By turning to false gods, the Israelites have put themselves in grave danger. Jeremiah warned them that the Babylonians were about to destroy Jerusalem!

Jeremiah noted that God is always right. Even when it seems that things aren't going the way we think they should. We ask, "Why does the wicked prosper?" Don't worry about it. Mankind simply doesn't understand these things. We can't! Let's just trust God to handle it!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jeremiah told Israel they were about to be carried into captivity. However, God had promised to restore them to their land. He did! Seventy years after Jerusalem was destroyed God brought them back home. This is a shadow of our redemption and restoration. We have fallen into sin. Jesus was sent to restore us to God. Christians embrace Him. Are you a Christian?



**Day 222      Jeremiah Chapters 13 - 15** Major Prophets

God told Jeremiah to put a sash around his waist. He then told him to bury it next to the Euphrates River. After a while, God told Jeremiah to go get the sash. Of course it was ruined. It was good for nothing. This was God's way of explaining what had happened to the Jews. They used to be very close to God like the sash, but they left Him. As a result they became dirty and rotten. Jeremiah told Judah God would allow Jerusalem to be destroyed.

Jeremiah prophesied God would send war and famine to punish the Jews for their sins. He begged them to repent. The prophets and priests disagreed with Jeremiah. They told the people there would be no war or famine. They assured them of peace. Their lies and deception gave the Jews a false sense of security. They continued to rebel against God.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is the Savior, but not everyone will be saved. Even though good men like Moses and Samuel worshipped God, other men like Manasseh rejected Him. Don't think God will save us because we are associated with good people. He will hold us individually accountable for what we do with Jesus. Christians follow Jesus. Are you a Christian?

## Day 223     **Jeremiah Chapters 16 - 18** Major Prophets

Jeremiah continues to predict that very bad things will happen to the Jews and Jerusalem. He reminded them their fathers had rejected God. He told them they had done worse things than their fathers! However, He promised that if they would repent, He would forgive.

God sent Jeremiah to the Potter's house. The Potter was working with his clay on the potter's wheel. As he worked, he ruined it! God noted He was like the Potter. He had the power to build or to ruin. He could change His mind if He wants to. If He had planned to do something bad to a nation, but the nation repented He could change His mind and do good to that nation. If He had planned to do something good to a nation, but the nation sins against Him He could change His mind and destroy that nation. God had planned great things for the Jews in their promised land, but they refused Him. As a result God allowed the Babylonians to take them into captivity.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is calling the world to Him. He died to save mankind from their sins. If we repent, He will forgive. Christians have repented of their sins and changed their lives. Are you a Christian?

**Day 224     Jeremiah Chapters 19 - 22** Major Prophets

Jeremiah continues to predict the destruction of Jerusalem. As an object lesson, God told Jeremiah to get a clay jar. He took it with him as he preached to the people warning them of their impending doom if they refused to repent. At the end of his sermon he threw the clay jar down and it broke into pieces. This was the symbol of what God was going to do to the Jews!

The Chief Governor of the Temple, whose father was a priest, attacked Jeremiah. He arrested him and put him in prison. At first, Jeremiah questioned God. He wondered why he was allowed to suffer while the offenders were free. His cry to God sounded a lot like Job's (Compare Jeremiah 20:14-18 with Job 3:1-11). Of course, like Job, Jeremiah only grew stronger from his persecution.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jeremiah offered the Jews and their kings, priests, and prophets a choice, "Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death." (Jeremiah 21:8). Jesus is offering us the same choice. Christians know that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life\_(John 14:6). Are you a Christian?

## Day 225      Jeremiah Chapters 23 - 26 Major Prophets

The "pastors" (also called shepherds) were the religious leaders of the people. Instead of spiritually feeding them, they had scattered them! They ran them off! The Jews had fallen into sin, As a result, they were carried away into captivity. God left them with a promise. They would be gathered back home to Jerusalem after seventy years. They will have new pastors to lead them.

As another object lesson, God showed Jeremiah good figs and bad figs. They represented the good people God promised to be with and the bad people God promised to destroy. This kind of preaching was very unpopular! The religious leaders threatened to kill Jeremiah. Fortunately, there were some civil leaders and several people among the Jews that disagreed with them.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Jeremiah 23:5-6, God promised to send a righteous BRANCH of David and a KING. His name will be called "The Lord our Righteousness" which is a title reserved for God Himself! Jesus is that BRANCH. He is the KING of kings. He IS God! The Jews rejected Jesus when God sent Him into the world. Why? Jesus didn't measure up to their interpretation of this prophesy. Even today, the Jews don't believe Jesus was the fulfillment of this prophesy. Christians believe it with all their heart and soul!! Are you a Christian?

**Day 226      Jeremiah Chapters 27 - 29** Major Prophets

Just as God had promised, He allowed Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to take many Jews into captivity. Young Daniel was one of these captives. God gave another object lesson. He told Jeremiah to put yokes upon his neck. These yokes were a symbol of the Babylonian bondage that He allowed to happen. He said that anyone who surrendered to the Babylonians would be saved, but those who refused to serve would be killed. God can, and does, use kings and nations to accomplish His will.

This message was not popular! The people wanted to hear a prophet who would tell them that they would be set free from Babylonian captivity. Hananiah did just that. He took the yokes from Jeremiah's neck and broke them. He said the Babylonians would be broken in just two years. God told Jeremiah that Hananiah would die for preaching false prophecies. He did! Jeremiah sent a letter to the Jews who were taken captive. He told them the captivity would last seventy years. They had time to build homes, start families, and plant farms! Shemaiah also sent them a letter. He assured them they would not be in bondage very long. He told them not to listen to Jeremiah. When Jeremiah read his letter, God said he would not live to see God's blessings. He didn't! Do you get the sense that God doesn't like it when preachers preach things that are not true?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jeremiah repeatedly said the Jews would be restored to their homeland seventy years after Babylon took them away. They were restored! This is another object lesson for us. Though we have been lost in sin, God wants to restore us! He can and He will. Christians depend upon their restoration! Are you a Christian?

## Day 227      **Jeremiah Chapters 30 - 33** Major Prophets

If Jeremiah said it once, he said it many times. God would bring the Jews out of Babylonian captivity and return them to Jerusalem. That's exactly what God did! Seventy years after Babylon took the Jews away they were allowed to return. God kept his promise!

Unfortunately, the Jews misinterpreted Jeremiah's prophecies. They read these wonderful promises and assumed God intended to raise an earthly king, a descendant of King David, to rule the world from Jerusalem. If we lived in those days, we may have understood it this way too. In fact, many people still believe it. Fortunately, The Holy Spirit told us what God meant. He inspired New Testament writers to give the real meaning. Explore it for yourself as you compare the references in the next paragraph

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is expressly referred to in today's reading. Compare Jeremiah 31:15-17 with Matthew 2:17-18. The people of Jeremiah's day (and future generations of Jews) interpreted this to mean that God would bring them to Jerusalem to rule the world. In fact, God was explaining He would rescue them from Babylonian captivity as an object lesson. This was a shadow to show Jesus would one day be born to rescue the people from their sins. Compare Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 8:6-13 & Hebrews 10:15-17. The Holy Spirit clearly reveals God was talking about a New Covenant which would replace the Old Covenant. Compare Jeremiah 33:14-16 with Revelation 22:16. The BRANCH of David (his root & offspring) is Jesus! Jesus never came to kill all the Romans and establish His Kingdom with an earthly headquarters in Jerusalem. He came to establish His Kingdom which is His Church. The Holy Spirit explained, through New Testament writers, that's what Jeremiah was prophesying and that's exactly what Jesus did! Christians ARE His Church. Are you a Christian?

**Day 228      Jeremiah Chapters 34 - 36** Major Prophets

Jeremiah was allowed to preach to the kings of Judah. He didn't hold back. He told them exactly what God wanted them to know. Jeremiah reminded them God had commanded all the Jews to set their Hebrew brothers free at the end of seven years. At first they obeyed and set their slaves free, but later they refused. God had freed them from Egyptian slavery, yet they wouldn't free their own brothers! God punished them for their insolence!

There was a family among them called the Rechabites. Their forefather had told them not to drink wine, build homes, or have farms. They obeyed him. That's how that community lived their lives. God used them as an object lesson. He told the Jews the Rechabites listened to their father and obeyed him, yet they would not listen to God. As a result, they would be punished.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** God told Jeremiah to write his warnings and prophecies on a scroll and deliver it to the king. It offended them so badly, they burned the scroll! God told Jeremiah to write another one. He did. You can't destroy the word of God! Jesus IS the Word of God! He offended the Jews of His day so badly they crucified Him. God raised Him from the dead. You can't destroy the Word of God! Christians embrace the Word of God. Are you a Christian?

**Day 229**      **Jeremiah Chapters 37 - 39** Major Prophets

The Jews were so happy when Egypt offered to rescue them from Babylonian rule. Jeremiah warned them not to ally themselves with Egypt. He told them God had ordained Babylon to remain in control of the Jews for a certain period of time. Anyone who tried to resist would be killed. The Jews accused Jeremiah of treason. They said that he planned to defect to Babylon. They put him in prison for crimes he didn't commit. From prison he was transferred to a dungeon where he sank in the mire!

Ebedmelech, an Ethiopian, pleaded for Jeremiah. The Jewish King, Zedekiah, allowed him to remove Jeremiah from the dungeon. Zedekiah asked Jeremiah privately for a true word from God. Jeremiah told him the same truth as before. The Babylonians have been granted power over the Jews. The best course of action was to submit. King Zedekiah was afraid to listen to the truth. He knew the Jews would be furious. He would lose his position. Sadly, he didn't listen to Jeremiah. He resisted the Babylonians. In the 9th year of reign the Babylonians came against Jerusalem a third time. This time they destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple. They took many more Jews away into captivity. They only left the poor and weak. In addition, they killed Zedekiah's sons in front of him, then they put out his eyes. The death of his children was the last thing he ever saw.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** When it came time for God's judgment to be executed, He told Jeremiah Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian who believed Jeremiah's warnings, would not be killed. God promised him deliverance because he had put his trust in Him. Christians are delivered from the penalty of their sins (which is death) because they put their trust in the Lord. Are you a Christian?



**Day 230     Jeremiah Chapters 40 - 43** Major Prophets

The Babylonians allowed Jeremiah to stay in Jerusalem. They had appointed Gedaliah to be the governor of Judah for the Babylonian Empire. Jeremiah stayed with him. He advised Gedaliah to submit to the Babylonian authority. Ishmael disagreed. He and his men felt they should revolt against the Babylonians. They assassinated Gedaliah and murdered many others

Johanan was terrified. He was sure the Babylonians would hold them accountable for Ishmael's insurrection. He asked Jeremiah what they should do. He and his team promised to obey whatever word Jeremiah received from God regardless whether they liked it or not. Jeremiah asked God what they should do. God told them to stay in Jerusalem and not fear the Babylonians. Johanan and his men were shocked. They just knew that evacuating to Egypt was the best plan and God would give them the confirmation they were looking for. They accused Jeremiah of lying to them!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jeremiah is a shadow of Jesus. Jesus told the world the truth, but the world had their own ideas of what God's Will was. The world is not looking for truth, they are looking for affirmation and justification of what they already believe. Christians believe Jesus whether they like it or not! Are you a Christian?

## Day 231      **Jeremiah Chapters 44 - 47** Major Prophets

When the Jews evacuated Jerusalem and ran to Egypt they took Jeremiah with them. They thought he was a traitor. They believed he would tell the Babylonians where they had gone. Jeremiah had no choice where they took him but they couldn't silence him. He continued to preach the Word of God in Egypt!

Jeremiah begins a series of prophecies against the nations surrounding Israel. He begins with Egypt. He prophesied the Babylonians would defeat them. He also had bad news for the Jews that took refuge there. All but a few would be killed. Jeremiah predicted the Philistines (present day Palestinians) would also be destroyed. Gaza would not stand a chance against the Babylonians (present day Iraq). Jeremiah gave hope to the Jewish nation. He promised God would not destroy them though He would punish them for their sins. Jews like Baruch, who faithfully copied Jeremiah's prophecies onto scrolls, were promised salvation.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Jeremiah 46:11 Jeremiah said there was no balm (medicine) in Gilead (a place known for its medical resources) that could save Egypt. There is an American Folk Hymn titled "There is a Balm in Gilead" which refers to Jesus' power to heal the sin sick soul. Christians have been washed in the Blood of Jesus and have been forgiven of their sins. Their sin sick soul has been healed! Are you a Christian?

**Day 232     Jeremiah Chapters 48 - 50** Major Prophets

Jeremiah continued God's prophecies concerning the countries surrounding Israel and Judah. After he finished with Egypt and the Philistines (present day Palestinians) he prophesied against Moab, Ammon, and Edom (areas in present day Jordan). Jeremiah then condemned Damascus (present day Syria). He turned his attention to Kedar and Hazor (present day Arabia). He promised destruction on Elam (present day Iran). All these areas would be defeated by the Babylonians (present day Iraq). Many of them, however, were promised they would return from captivity when Babylon was destroyed.

Jeremiah spent a lot of time prophesying that Babylon would be defeated from a country from the north. Many people believe that this will happen in our future. Since Russia is located north of Iraq, they assume that Russia will be that country. However, we will learn in chapter 51 that Jeremiah specifically says it will be the Medes. The Medes were located in north western Iran. This happened just as Jeremiah prophesied. The Medes and the Persian formed an alliance and conquered the Babylonians. It was under their reign that the Jews were allowed to return to their homeland, along with many of the other countries mentioned above. This happened seventy years after the Jews were taken into captivity just as Jeremiah had prophesied!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** God's judgment upon the nations is a shadow of Jesus' ultimate judgment upon the entire world. We will give an account of our response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christians have obeyed the Gospel. Are you a Christian?

## Day 233      **Jeremiah Chapters 51 - 52** Major Prophets

Jeremiah finishes his book with the promise that the Babylonians will be defeated by the Medes. They will be punished for their actions against God's people, the Jews. Jeremiah recounted the fall of Jerusalem. He recounted the destruction of Solomon's Temple. He wrote of how the Babylonians removed the sacred candlesticks, basins, bowls, utensils, etc. from the Temple. They were made of gold, silver, and brass and were very valuable. However, this was not the reason they were taken. It was a symbolic gesture to show they believed the gods of the Babylonians were stronger than the Jewish God, Jehovah. Years later they will be drinking and eating from these utensils in defiance. God will show up and prove He is the real power of the universe. (Daniel chapter 5)!

Jeremiah's prophecies were terrifying to the Jews, but he left them with the hope of their restoration. God will punish them, but He would not totally destroy them.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jeremiah has been a shadow of Jesus throughout this book. He was sent to preach the truth of God to the Jews who had turned their back on God's word. Today the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the truth. We will accept it and be saved, or we will reject it and be lost. If we learn from the example set by the folks of Jeremiah's day, we will accept Him! Christians heed the call. Are you a Christian?

## Day 234      **Lamentations Chapters 1 - 2** Major Prophets

Jeremiah wrote Lamentations. The root word is "lament" - to cry or wail. Jeremiah is known as "The Weeping Prophet". Why was he lamenting? He had just witnessed the fall of Jerusalem! His home had been invaded by a foreign country and his fellow Jews had been carried away! Anyone would weep over such a thing!

The Book is actually 5 poems. Each chapter is an acrostic poem. The Hebrew alphabet has 22 letters. Each verse of these poems begins with a letter of that alphabet (very much like Psalm 119). Notice chapters 1, 2, 4 & 5 each have 22 verses. In Chapter 3 Jeremiah devoted three verses for each letter, therefore it has 66 verses.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Lamentations 2:15 it is sadly noted people mocked Jerusalem when it fell. They said, "Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?" Jesus was born just outside Jerusalem in Bethlehem, He was crucified outside Jerusalem's gates on Golgotha, and ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives next to Jerusalem. The most important events in world history took place in and around Jerusalem. It turns out that Jerusalem is "Perfection of beauty" and the "Joy of the whole earth?" Christians understand REAL "Perfection" & "Joy" comes through Jesus Christ! Are you a Christian?

## Day 235      Lamentations Chapters 3 - 5 Major Prophets

As we read the last three chapters of Lamentations we feel the sorrow that Jeremiah and his fellow Jews experienced as they suffered the punishment for their sins. God loves them, but they had blatantly refused Him. He allowed the Babylonians, a wicked and ruthless nations, to overpower them. For years they would be under harsh rule.

If we think God wouldn't do it again, we'd better think again. There is no doubt that God has blessed America. We are citizens of an exceptional nation. This world would look remarkably different if America didn't exist! We have made a positive impact on the entire world. Why? How? Strictly because we embraced Christianity in our infancy. Christianity was part of the very fabric of our Constitution, Education, and Family Values. It only took a generation or two for the Jews to forget God. God took away their freedom. How many generations has America been slipping away from our founding principles?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jeremiah begged his people in chapter 3 verses 40 & 41 "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens." Jesus is calling upon us to do exactly the same thing. Christians do! Are you a Christian?

**Day 236      Ezekiel Chapters 1 - 4**      Major Prophets

Today we begin Ezekiel. For the next couple of weeks we are going to read some bizarre visions that Ezekiel had. They will sound very much like the visions that John saw in the Revelation. Ezekiel's visions may help us understand John's and vice versa.

Ezekiel was believed to be about 25 years old when he was taken into Babylonian captivity in 597 B.C. He opens his book recounting a vision he had while beside the river Chebar at Tel Abib. This was just south of present day Bagdad. In the vision he saw a scroll and was told to eat it. The scroll was filled with all sorts of lamentations, mourning, and woes against the Jews. The scroll may have looked very much like Jeremiah's writings! Ezekiel was told to provide the Jews with an object lesson. He built a replica of the city of Jerusalem on a clay tile. He then lay down on the ground with his back to the replica for a number of days. This was to show that God had turned His back to the Jews. During that time, he ate bread cakes that had been cooked with manure! This represented the abominations that the Jews were involved in. This was a very graphic way of teaching about very serious judgment.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Ezekiel 1:26-28 Ezekiel was introduced to the Throne of God! Jesus Himself is ever present at the Throne. Ezekiel may not have understood, but when John saw Jesus at the Throne of God, he knew Him. John was one of Jesus' apostles. John recognized the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lamb of God (Revelation 5:4-10). Christians are washed in the Blood of the Lamb! Are you a Christian?

**Day 237      Ezekiel Chapters 5 - 8      Major Prophets**

Another object lesson. God told Ezekiel to cut off his hair and beard. He instructed him to divide the pile of hair into four parts. Ezekiel then was told to destroy most of the hair. Part of the hair was to be saved. In fact, only a few hairs were ultimately saved and even some of them suffered affliction. What did this mean? God plainly said it was Jerusalem. The reason God destroyed it was because of their sins. Yet, as was promised by Jeremiah, a remnant will be saved. Ezekiel also preached against the mountains of Israel and the surrounding land of the Jewish country. All Jews were affected by God's judgment, but there was always the promise that a few would escape.

The Jews in Babylon thought all hope was lost. They were carried away captive into a foreign land and their city and fellow Jews were conquered. Ezekiel acknowledged that God did, in fact, exercise judgment, but these prophecies gave them hope of restoration for the remnant.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Chapter 8, Ezekiel has another vision. He was in Babylon, but in the vision he was carried back to Jerusalem. He was shown the horrible sins and abominations of the city, the court of the temple, and the temple itself. No wonder God executed His judgment. This is a shadow of our soul's condition. The good news is that a few, a remnant will trust and obey Jesus. Christians are that "remnant"! Are you a Christian?



**Day 238      Ezekiel Chapters 9 - 12**      Major Prophets

Ezekiel is in the middle of a vision. He has been transported from Babylon to Jerusalem to witness their sins and their judgment. Ezekiel saw six men approaching the city. They were carrying weapons. Their mission was to slaughter the residents of Jerusalem. Prior to the attack, one of them was told to go through the town and put a mark on the forehead of every person who was saddened by the sins of the people. These were the true believers. When the men were allowed to attack, they were strictly commanded to spare the lives of the ones who had received the mark. As the majority of the people died, Ezekiel cried, "Ah Lord God!"

Then Ezekiel saw four cherubs (angels) standing in the Holy of Holies of the Temple. Each one had a particular face which, no doubt, represented something specific. He saw incredible scenes of wheels by their sides and hands coming from under their wings. However, don't miss the central point. Ezekiel saw the cloud fill the Temple, which is the presence of God. As Ezekiel watched, he witnessed a very sad sight! The cloud left the Temple ... God was gone! The sins of the city had separated them from God. Ezekiel then saw 25 men. Two of them were identified by name as princes of the people. These were the wicked men who were causing the people trouble. As Ezekiel prophesied against them, one of them dropped dead. Ezekiel cried, "Ah Lord God!"

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** As the vision was about to end, God promised He would bring His people out of captivity and return them to Jerusalem. That's exactly what He did as we saw during our reading of Ezra and Nehemiah. This is a shadow of what God has done for us through Jesus. When we sin, God leaves us. At that point we should say, "Ah Lord God!" Our only hope for restoration is found in Jesus. Christians, though they have been captivated by sin, are restored to God through Christ! Are you a Christian?

**Day 239      Ezekiel Chapters 13 - 15**      Major Prophets

Ezekiel was among many Jews who had been carried away captive. The Jews were losing hope and even blaming God for their situation. God showed Ezekiel it was their sins that had caused their calamity. They had brought it upon themselves! God had warned them through Isaiah and Jeremiah. They didn't listen. God's punishment was just. He sent war, famine, wild animals, and disease upon them. "Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth ..." (Ezekiel 14:22). God always promised the hope of restoration.

Ezekiel had prophesied against the princes of Jerusalem, now he turns his attention to the prophets! They were preaching things that weren't true. They claimed to have heard from God, but God never told them anything! They gave the people false hope saying "Peace" when there was no peace. Isn't this exactly what Jeremiah had prophesied? Even Isaiah prophesied these things. Ezekiel showed the people that God did what He said He would do.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** God asked Ezekiel what a vine can be used for. You can't build anything with its wood. You can't even make a peg with it to hang pots and pans. It is good for nothing except to be burned. God told Ezekiel that's exactly what Jerusalem had become ... good for nothing! He promised to destroy it. He did! Jesus told His followers they were the "salt of the earth" in Matthew 5:13, but if they lost that value, they would become "good for nothing"! He warned mankind in Matthew 13:49-50 that there was coming a day of judgment. The "good for nothing" folks would be burned! Christians are followers of Christ! They are the few, the remnant, that have hope in Jesus' power to restore them. They will be saved! Are you a Christian?

**Day 240      Ezekiel Chapter 16**

Major Prophets

You were a helpless baby who had been discarded. Your umbilical cord was not even cut off. You were not cleaned or even clothed! It was just a matter of time that you would die. God said the Jews were like this baby. When He saw them, He took them in. He adopted them as His children. He taught them, clothed them, fed them, and took very good care of them. He promised to be their God and keep His covenant with them, but they rejected Him. They even took the blessings He gave them and used them to serve other gods! He promised to punish them and He did. Nevertheless, He fully intended to keep the promises He made to them Ezekiel 16:60.

Let's think now. Imagine you were a Jew in that day. You are being punished for your sins. You have lost all hope of going home to Jerusalem. Then you read Isaiah and Jeremiah. They accurately prophesied this would happen to you. They promised God would not leave you in Babylonian captivity. Then along comes Ezekiel. He is with you in captivity. God spoke to him. He reminded him that His punishment upon you was justified, but He would not forget the promise He made to restore the Jews to Jerusalem. This is wonderful news!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Read Ezekiel 16:62. When He promised to keep His covenant with the Jews, He was foreshadowing a greater covenant established through Christ (Hebrews 8:6). By the time Jesus was born in Bethlehem the Jews had misinterpreted Ezekiel's prophesy. They had come to believe God was actually promising to give the Jews a world kingdom. They believed (and still do) that God would elevate the Jews above all the people of the earth. If you were a Jew, living in those days, you would probably have believed that too. God was simply teaching the promise of restoration through Christ by allowing the Jews to be carried away captive and restoring them to Jerusalem 70 years later. When Jesus told them that He, a carpenter from Nazareth, was the fulfillment of God's promises (Matthew 26:64-66), it was ridiculous to them, so they killed Him! Christians accept Jesus to be their only hope of restoration. Are you a Christian?

**Day 241      Ezekiel Chapters 17 - 19**      Major Prophets

By now we know that Ezekiel is teaching the Jews that God is a covenant keeper. He had promised them restoration even though they had sinned against Him and were being punished by the Babylonians. Chapter 17 teaches this lesson showing that a "twig" was carried away and the seed would be established. Of course they would be punished for trying to reach out to another kingdom for help (Egypt), but eventually they would get to go home to Jerusalem. They were restored only 70 years after they were carried away.

Chapter 19 teaches the same lesson in a different way. The Jewish nation (the lioness) had kings (cubs) that God allowed to be carried into captivity. One of the kings grew pretty strong, but God allowed him to be carried into Babylon. The Jews were under God's hand of judgment. There was no escape. Even though the Babylonians were ungodly, they were being used by God to accomplish His Will

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Chapter 18 God foreshadows His relationship with mankind through Christ. When Christ established the Church, each member is personally accountable to God through Him. It doesn't matter what the actions of your parents, your place of worship, your community, or your country were, you are responsible for your own actions! If the wicked repent, they will not die. If the righteous turn away from their righteousness, they will die. God is not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9), but He will hold us accountable based upon our individual behavior. Christians have chosen to obey and follow Christ. Are you a Christian?

## Day 242      Ezekiel Chapters 20 - 23      Major Prophets

The Jewish leaders wanted to hear from God. They came to Ezekiel for a word, but God said He would not listen to them! They had rebelled against Him time after time throughout their history! He had decided to punish them. God described the punishment in terms of a sharp, polished sword being drawn from its sheath and going forth to destroy. God allowed them to be scattered throughout the nations! However, He promised He would allow them to return to Jerusalem. Seventy years later, the Jews were restored to their land and offered sacrifices to God once again.

God didn't want to punish them. In His Mercy, He wanted to forgive them. In His Justice, He had to punish them. Since God is a God of Mercy & Judgment, the question was, "Which will He exercise? Mercy or Judgment?" The answer is found in Ezekiel 22:30-31. He looked for just one person praying for the country. If someone would stand in the gap for them, He would exercise His Mercy. One of the saddest statements in the Bible is "I found none!" So, He exercised His Judgment! Chapter 23 tells the parable of two sisters. Both were prostitutes. One was Samaria (Capital of Israel) and the other was Jerusalem (Capital of Judah). They committed spiritual adultery against God by playing the harlot with the foreign countries around them. God allowed Assyria to take away Israel and Babylon to take away Judah. It is a serious thing to be unfaithful to God!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Ezekiel 21:26 God made a profound statement. The crown belongs to the lowly, not the high. While Jews of Jesus' time had misinterpreted Ezekiel thinking they would be crowned with a worldly kingdom, Jesus understood the real meaning of Ezekiel. God had promised restoration to the hopeless. That's why Jesus said in Matthew 23:12 that the ones who humble themselves will be exalted. Christians have learned the lesson of restoration through Christ. Jesus is "standing in the gap" between them and God. They have humbled themselves at the feet of Jesus. They will wear a crown! Are you a Christian?

**Day 243      Ezekiel Chapters 24 - 26**      Major Prophets

God gave the Jews another parable (a story that has a greater meaning). When the king of Babylon "set himself against Jerusalem" meaning he surrounded the city with a siege, it was like boiling meat in a pot! The Jews thought that was a good thing! In Ezekiel 11:3 they believed the symbolism of being meat in a pot meant prosperity and safety. They were untouchable! God had a different meaning! He explained they would be carried away out of the pot (Jerusalem) one piece at a time. The pot was full of rust which represented the sins of the people. It would be put on the fire and melted down. That's exactly what happened. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, carried the Jews into captivity one wave at a time and destroyed Jerusalem.

The next object lesson hit Ezekiel very hard. Ezekiel's wife died. He told Ezekiel not to mourn. This represented how God would not mourn over the destruction of His "wife", Jerusalem! The Jews would not be the only nation to fall under the Babylonians. Several surrounding nations had mistreated the Jews over the years. They would be punished for that. Ezekiel prophesied against the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Philistines, and Tyre. God allowed all of these countries to be conquered by the Babylonians.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Over the years, the Jews have come to believe God would one day restore them to Jerusalem where they will rule the world under the leadership of their Messiah. They rejected the notion that Jesus, a carpenter from Nazareth, could be such a world king, so they killed Him. Jesus didn't come to set up a world government. He came to save the world from sin and establish His Church (Matthew 16:18). That's exactly what He did. The Body of Christ is the Church (Colossians 1:18). Christians are members of the Body (Romans 12:5). Therefore Christians ARE the Church. Are you a Christian?

**Day 244      Ezekiel Chapters 27 - 28**      Major Prophets

Ezekiel had prophesied against many of the cities who had mistreated the Jews, God's people. In Chapter 26 he had prophesied against Tyrus (located in present day Lebanon). Tyrus was an incredibly wealthy city. They had established a strong trade network that had made them the wonder of the region. Their success had made them self-indulgent and proud. They believe their own wisdom and ingenuity was the reason for their greatness. They claimed they were "wiser than Daniel". Even more abominable, they said, "I am a god, I sit in the seat of god." Ezekiel predicted they would be utterly destroyed! Ezekiel wrote this prophesy in 586 B.C. The Babylonians attacked Tyrus and the neighboring city, Zidon, a few months later just as Ezekiel said. They spoiled their goods just as Ezekiel predicted, but they didn't utterly destroy them. Was Ezekiel's prophesy wrong? In 333 B.C. (about 250 years later) Alexander the Great attacked Tyrus and utterly destroyed them! If God says He will do something ... He will do it, even if it takes Him several years!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Revelation Chapter 18 God foreshadows the destruction of another city that was described very much like Ezekiel described Tyrus. John, who wrote Revelation, called the city "Babylon". The people of the first century knew exactly which city John was talking about. They also knew what God had done to Tyrus. They were 100 percent assured God was able to keep His word! Christians are 100 percent assured that God will keep His word to save them through Christ. Are you a Christian?

## Day 245      Ezekiel Chapters 29 - 31      Major Prophets

Ezekiel continued to prophesy against the neighboring countries. Today's reading is extensively dedicated to the prediction of the fall of Egypt. It was a major power in the area, but God said the Babylonians would also defeat them.

The Babylonians (present day Iraq) conquered all the area. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia ... the list goes on! Many believe this was a prophecy of something still yet to be fulfilled. However, it is a matter of historical record that the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, fulfilled Ezekiel's predictions against Egypt. God used the Babylonians (a very wicked nation) to punish the region for their sins. If this is not speaking specifically of our future, what value is it? What can we learn from it? We learn that God can do whatever He wants, whenever He wants, for whatever reason He wants! If, in our future, God decides to use Iraq, Iran, or even ISIS to punish people for their sins, He can do it! The lesson of Ezekiel is certain! Is ISIS or Iran a specific fulfillment of Ezekiel? Not necessarily, but the principles are absolutely true!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** God gave hope of restoration to the Jews of Ezekiel's day. He fulfilled that promise by Nehemiah's day. Though the specific promise may have been fulfilled, the lesson is eternal. God will hold us accountable for our sins, but offers hope of restoration! Jesus is that hope. Christians embrace that hope. Are you a Christian?



**Day 246      Ezekiel Chapters 32 - 33**      Major Prophets

When Ezekiel finished his prophesy against Egypt, he turned his attention to Jerusalem. God told Ezekiel he must warn the Jews of impending judgment. If Ezekiel, or any watchman, saw trouble coming, he was responsible for warning the people. When trouble is coming, there would be one of three outcomes: 1) The watchman wouldn't warn the people. The folks would die and the watchmen would be punished for his negligence. 2) The watchman warned the people, but they wouldn't listen. The people would die, but the watchmen would be spared since he did his job. 3) The watchman warned the people, the people listened, and all would be saved, including the watchman.

Jerusalem had become wicked and sinful. Ezekiel was charged with the task of warning them of their impending judgment. What happened? Outcome #2.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** God told Ezekiel each person would be judged based on their response to the warning (Ezekiel 33:18-19). If you are righteous, it is possible to fall into sin. Heed the warning and stay righteous. If you are wicked, you have the opportunity to repent and become righteous. The principle is simple. Unfortunately, there are those that think their past righteousness will save them. There are also those that think their past sins can't be forgiven! Jesus offers everyone the hope of restoration (Matthew 11:28). Are you a Christian?

**Day 247      Ezekiel Chapters 34 - 36**      Major Prophets

God was very upset with the shepherds of Israel. They were feeding themselves, but didn't feed the flock. They didn't help them, strengthen them, or heal a single sheep! These shepherds represented the Jewish leaders. God promised to punish them, but He would preserve the nation.

God also promised to punish the countries who had mistreated the Jews. He promised to punish Mt. Seir and Idumea. These were the descendants of Esau. Esau was Jacob's brother. Jacob's name was changed to Israel. The Jews were his descendants. The people of Mt. Seir and Idumea were the Jews' cousins! They should have helped their family, but they didn't!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** God promised to restore His people. In doing so, He promised to give them a new Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:23). This is a shadow of Jesus Himself who said He was that Shepherd (John 10:11). As part of the restoration promise, God said He would give His people a "New Heart" and a "New Spirit" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Paul said this is fulfilled through Christ (II Corinthians 3:3-4). The Jews assumed their "restoration" meant a world government powered by the Jewish people. Even the Islamists are looking for a Caliphate that will lead them to world domination. Christians are already "restored" through Christ. They are already part of Jesus' Kingdom, the Church that He built. That Kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). Are you a Christian?

## Day 248      Ezekiel Chapters 37 - 39      Major Prophets

The Valley of Dry Bones! If you were a Jew at the time of Ezekiel you would be comforted by this vision. You had been carried away captive because of your sins against God. You feel your nation is nothing more than a "valley of dry bones". How happy you are God promised these "bones" shall live! God can ... and DID ... bring the Jews out of captivity (only 70 years after the destruction of Jerusalem).

Who is Gog? He is the ruler of Magog. He is the prince of the cities of Meshech and Tubal (some have included Rosh). These areas are the descendants of Noah's son, Japheth (Genesis 10:2). Some believe that Japheth is the father of most European nations. There is disagreement where the land of Magog and these cities were actually located. Some say in modern day Russia, maybe even Georgia. Others say they were in modern day Turkey (which is most likely). As we have seen, Ezekiel has prophesied against most of the surrounding nations. They had mistreated the Jews, God's people, and were going to be held accountable. The Babylonians conquered them all, just like God said. Gog would rise up against Israel too. He would represent all the nations that wanted to destroy the Jews. Sheba and Dedan (believed to be modern day Arabia) would question Gog's motives. They were afraid Gog of Magog would attack them too. God would not allow Gog to defeat Israel. Why? The primary reason is found in Ezekiel 39:27-28 ... that the world may know that God is Lord!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Ezekiel 38:15-18 says Gog of Magog would attack Israel "in the latter days" and he would come "out of the north" with his army. Many have concluded that Gog would be a Russian leader (perhaps Vladimir Putin) who would attack Israel at the end of time. The Arabian countries would object. They will assume Russia actually wants to take "spoil" from them (perhaps "oil" would be a better word)! The Arabians and their allies (the "young lions" of Ezekiel 38:13 - perhaps America and others) will stand up against Russia for their invasion. This would lead to a great battle that the Russians will ultimately lose. While all this may take place - or

not - the message of Ezekiel is far less complex! God punishes the sins of His people but offers hope of restoration and will protect His people from the enemy. The Jewish nation foreshadowed the ultimate people of God ... Christians. Today, there is no difference between Jew and Non-Jew (Romans 10:12)! We are "all one in Christ" (Galatians 3:28). Christians have been "baptized into Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Regardless what happens in the Middle East with Israel, Christians can rest assured that God is in control! Are you a Christian?

**Day 249      Ezekiel Chapters 40 - 42**      Major Prophets

The Jews had been in captivity for 25 years. We know they will remain there for 70 years. Ezekiel had another incredible vision. It reminded Ezekiel of the vision he had had in Chapter 1, only this time it was significantly different. In the first vision Ezekiel witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem. In this vision he witnessed the restoration of Jerusalem. Incidentally, this is the entire message of Ezekiel - it is coming full circle!

Ezekiel watches as the Buildings, Gates, Porches, and the Temple itself were measured! Jerusalem is rebuilt! What a wonderful sight it must have been! What a wonderful message this vision sent to the Jews in captivity! Hope of restoration!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** This vision foreshadowed Jesus and His Church! Jesus IS the hope of our restoration. He didn't come to this world to build Jerusalem, He came to build His Church (Matthew 16:18)! In fact, Jesus predicted the DESTRUCTION of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:1-2 and Mark 14:58). The Jews had misinterpreted Ezekiel's message. They were looking for a Messiah, a Savior that would give the Jews world power. The capital city would be Jerusalem! In Jesus' day, they had a spectacular Temple, remodeled by Herod. It wasn't as grand as Solomon's Temple, but they believed it would be the place where the Messiah would come and rule the world! No wonder they killed Jesus when He predicted it would be destroyed. Sure enough, in A.D. 70, it was destroyed. Jesus was right all along! Christians don't look for a temple on the earth. Christians ARE the temple of God (I Corinthians 6:19). Are you a Christian?

**Day 250      Ezekiel Chapters 43 - 45**      Major Prophets

Ezekiel is still describing his vision. The Jews had been in Babylonian captivity for 25 years. Things were looking hopeless. After seeing the rebuilding of Jerusalem, he now witnesses the most hopeful sight of all. The Glory of the Lord returned! He also saw the re-establishment of the sacrifices and Jewish worship. He watched as the land was redistributed to the Jews! It was a wonderful and hopeful thing to watch.

Jerusalem is a most holy place to the people of God, the Jews. It was destroyed because of the sins of the people. Seeing the hope of its restoration was truly great news! God restored the Jews to their land only 70 years after they were taken captive. The temple was rebuilt along with its wall. God kept His promises!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Jews weren't satisfied with their restoration to their land. They believed Ezekiel's vision meant something greater. They believed that Messiah would come and set up a world kingdom and rule from Jerusalem. They were only half right. Ezekiel's vision DID mean something greater. However, it was not a prediction of a world kingdom. It was a foreshadowing of Christ's Kingdom, the Church! Some are looking forward to a restoration of Jewish rule and the re-establishment of animal sacrifices. The Hebrew writer makes it perfectly clear that animal sacrifices were NOT able to take away our sin (Hebrews 10:4). They only pointed to Jesus, whose death on the cross, DID reunite God with man (Hebrews 10:10-12). Christians are not waiting on the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of Jerusalem. They don't place any value on animal sacrifices. Christians are ALREADY a part of the Kingdom of God, saved by the ULTIMATE sacrifice! Are you a Christian?

## Day 251      Ezekiel Chapters 46 - 48      Major Prophets

Today we finish Ezekiel. He is still recording his final vision. After seeing the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the re-establishment of Jewish worship, and the Jewish resettlement of the land, Ezekiel witnesses a wonderful thing! Waters begin to flow out of Temple. At first it is ankle deep, but soon it is knee deep. The waters continue to flow until they are waste deep. Finally they become a great river flowing from the Temple of God and covering the land. Ezekiel and the Jews in his day are thrilled! They had been in captivity for 25 years. They believed there was no hope for their nation. This vision gave them a clear hope that the Jews would be restored. They were!

The twelve tribes of Israel were listed as their lands were being redistributed to them. Ten of those twelve had been carried away into Assyrian captivity. The other two, Benjamin and Judah, had been carried into Babylonian captivity. They were hopelessly lost. God promised they would be restored to their homeland even in the face of such hopelessness.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Notice Ezekiel 44:2-3. There was a door reserved for the "Prince". It was to remain shut except for Him and those close to Him. Jesus is the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). He is the "Door" (John 10:9). No man can come to God except through Him (John 14:6). He is the "Water of Life" (John 4:14). It seems that Jesus had an entirely different view of Ezekiel's prophecy than the Jews of His day. That's the reason the Jews rejected Him (and still do). Don't make the same mistake they made. Don't wait for Jesus to come riding on a white horse to stop a Russian attack against Israel in the Middle East. Become a Christian today!! Are you a Christian?

**Day 252 Daniel Chapters 1 - 2**

Major Prophets

Daniel was taken into Babylonian captivity along with his three friends and many others. These Jewish boys were forced to become eunuchs and serve the king of Babylon. Jews weren't the only young men taken from the region. There were those from Moab, Edom, Jordan, etc. The king wanted his slaves to be strong so they were fed the best food available. The Jews, however, were forbidden by God to eat the meats the Babylonians gave them. Daniel and his three friends asked to be fed vegetables instead. The guardian of the eunuchs was reluctant. He would be held responsible if they became weak and sick, but he liked Daniel and gave him a chance to prove his diet would be best. After ten days, the Jews looked better than the others! This proves that if you do what God says, whether it seems right to you or not, He will bless you!

Daniel's wisdom was recognized immediately! He was regarded among the wise. When king Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream, he expected his wise men to interpret it for him. The problem was he had forgotten the dream! He was so upset, he ordered all of his wise men to be killed unless they tell him what the dream was and the interpretation! God gave Daniel the answers. Nebuchadnezzar had seen a statue in his dream. It had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thigh of brass, legs of iron with feet of iron mixed with clay. A large stone was miraculously carved out of a mountain. It hit the statue's feet causing the entire thing to crumble. What did this mean?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Nebuchadnezzar had seen Jesus' Church! Daniel said the head represented the Babylonian Empire. There would be three other World Kingdoms following them. The breast and arms was the Medo-Persian Empire, the belly and thighs was the Grecian Empire, and the legs of Iron was the Roman Empire. During the days of the Roman Empire, a large Stone, which represented the Church, proved itself to be more powerful than all kingdoms of the earth. It was a kingdom that would never be destroyed (Matthew 16:18). Jesus will "crush" all those who refuse Him (Matthew 21:42-44). Christians accept Jesus as their King! Are you a Christian?



## Day 253 Daniel Chapters 3 - 4 Major Prophets

Daniel had revealed the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The Head of Gold on the statue represented Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. The remaining image represented other World Empires that would be established until the Church was established during the days of the Roman Empire. Nebuchadnezzar wasn't satisfied! He built a statue 90 feet tall. Not only was the head made of gold, the ENTIRE statue was made of gold. It was, no doubt, a representation of his desire to be completely in control forever! He commanded everyone to worship the image. Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, refused. When Nebuchadnezzar threatened them, they confidently said God was able to deliver them, but even if God didn't save them, they would still refuse to worship false gods! He had them thrown into a furnace of fire, yet they were not harmed! They walked right out of the fire without even being singed! Nebuchadnezzar commanded his entire kingdom worship Jehovah!

Chapter Four is actually a testimony from Nebuchadnezzar. He explained he had dreamed of a strong, tall tree that provided shade, fruit, and security for many. The tree was cut down, but the stump and roots were left. Daniel interpreted the dream. He said Nebuchadnezzar was the tree. He was powerful and provided for a large number of people. He would be "cut down", meaning he would lose his mental faculties. After a while, living like an animal, he would be restored as the stump and roots indicated. One year later, Nebuchadnezzar boasted of his power. While the words were in his mouth, he lost everything! Later, his power was restored just as Daniel had predicted! This motivated Nebuchadnezzar to praise Jehovah!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** While Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were in the furnace, a fourth man could be seen! It was the Son of God (Daniel 3:25). Much speculation has been made over this, but I believe Jesus was right there! In fact, He has been in the Shadows all along! Christians see Christ throughout the pages of the Bible! Are you a Christian?

**Day 254 Daniel Chapters 5 - 6**

Major Prophets

Daniel had been taken into captivity around 605 B.C. He served Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon whose reign ended around 562 B.C. If Daniel was a teenager when taken captive, he would be in his 60's by then. Nebuchadnezzar had a few successors. Belshazzar was one of them. In 539 B.C., while Daniel was probably in his 80's, Belshazzar had a large banquet. To boast of his power, he had the dishes from Solomon's Temple brought to the party where he and his guests could drink from them. Suddenly, a hand appeared and wrote a message on the wall. The king sobered up quickly as his knees knocked together and he lost control of his bodily functions! Daniel was called in to read the writing. It was a prediction of God's judgment on Belshazzar and Babylon. The Medes and Persians would take the city that very night. That's exactly what happened!

Daniel's wisdom was recognized by Darius the king of the Medes. He appointed three overseeing presidents to be over 120 princes which ruled the entire kingdom. Daniel was the highest ranking of all three presidents! This upset the other rulers. They devised a plan to trick king Darius to have Daniel executed. They knew Daniel would always worship Jehovah, so they enticed Darius to sign a law forbidding anyone from worshipping their God for thirty days. Of course Daniel worshipped God. Darius was very upset realizing he had been tricked, but had no choice but to condemn Daniel to be thrown to the lions. God saved Daniel! This impressed Darius so much, that he ordered Daniel's accusers and their families to be thrown to the lions. They were consumed before they hit the floor of the den! Darius also ordered the entire kingdom to worship Jehovah!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Daniel is a shadow of Jesus! From the time Daniel was a teenager until he was in his eighties, he put God first! Though Jesus was crucified in his thirties, He put The Father's Will above His own (John 6:38). Christians put God's Will ahead of their own! Are you a Christian?

**Day 255 Daniel Chapters 7 - 8**

Major Prophets

Daniel is now probably in his 80's. It is the 1st year that Belshazzar became king of Babylon. We saw in chapter 5, Belshazzar will lose the kingdom to the Medes and Persians. When Daniel was a very young man, he had interpreted a dream for Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2. This dream predicted four World Empires that would have power until the Church was established. In today's reading, some sixty years later, Daniel has a vision. He sees four beasts. These are the same four kingdoms. The Lion was Babylonian Empire, the Bear was the Medo-Persian Empire, the Leopard was the Grecian Empire, and the "Dreadful and Terrible" beast with iron teeth (like the iron legs of Nebuchadnezzar's statue) was the Roman Empire. Daniel saw all these kingdoms of the earth "cast down" when the "Ancient of Days" sat upon His throne. His Everlasting Kingdom was given to the "saints" (Daniel 7:27). This is a shadow of the Kingdom of God, the Church, which we Christians are now a part (Colossians 1:13)

Two years later, Daniel had another vision. He saw a Ram fighting with a Goat. The angel, Gabriel, was sent to explain the meaning of the vision. He said the Ram with two horns is the Medes and the Persians. The Goat is the Grecian Empire. The horn between the Goat's eyes is the first king of the Grecian Empire. We now know that was Alexander the Great! The Grecian Empire was broken up into four parts and was ultimately defeated by a very powerful entity - The Roman Empire!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Daniel 8:23-25 Daniel saw the powerful kingdom (The Roman Empire) stand up against the "Prince of princes" and "broken without hand". This foreshadows Jesus who set up His Kingdom, the Church, during the days of the Roman Empire. The Romans crucified Jesus, but like the "Stone" from the mountain in Daniel 2:34 that crushed the kingdoms of the world, His Kingdom has proven to be stronger than them all! Christians are a part of that Kingdom! Are you a Christian?

**Day 256 Daniel Chapters 9 - 10** Major Prophets

The Medes and Persians have conquered the Babylonians. Daniel was very old. He found a copy of Jeremiah's prophecy (Daniel 9:2). He discovered that Jeremiah prophesied the Jews would be in captivity for 70 years. Daniel may have read Jeremiah 29:10 among other parts of Jeremiah's book. Babylon took the first captives in 606 B.C. Seventy years from 606 B.C. would be 536 B.C. Daniel wrote Chapter 9 in the "first year of Darius ... of the Medes". That was 539 B.C. Daniel did the math!! He knew that the 70 years would be up in about 2 or 3 more years! The Jews would go home to Jerusalem! What did Daniel do? He confessed his sins and the sins of the people (Daniel 9:20). He knew it was sin that put them into captivity! He wanted God to know they had learned their lesson! The angel, Gabriel, was sent to give Daniel special understanding. He told Daniel that 70 WEEKS would be "determined upon" the Jews. These were not literal WEEKS. They were symbolic of a predetermined period of time. He said there will be 69 WEEKS (7 WEEKS + 62 WEEKS) from the time the commandment was given to rebuild Jerusalem to the birth of the Messiah. The commandment was given to rebuild Jerusalem by Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-2). This was in 536 B.C. just as Jeremiah had predicted! After the 69th WEEK, the Messiah would be "cut off" or killed. Jesus was crucified just as Daniel predicted. That happened in A. D. 33. ONE WEEK later, the Temple would be destroyed. This happened in A. D. 70 when the Roman Emperor, Titus, destroyed Jerusalem. Jesus also referred to the destruction of Jerusalem. Compare Daniel 9:27 with Mark 13:14. If Daniel and Jesus were talking about the end of the world, there would be no need to flee to the mountains! Since they were talking about the destruction of Jerusalem, this made perfect sense. That's exactly what they did just before Titus destroyed Jerusalem.

Daniel had been shown the future rise and fall of physical kingdoms throughout this book. In Chapter 10, Daniel is shown there is also a spiritual warfare being waged! Paul reminds us of this truth in Ephesians 6:12

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** He is EVERYWHERE in this section of Daniel. Jesus is the Messiah that Daniel predicted would be born and killed. The good news is that Jesus risen from the dead never to die again! Christians know this is the "Gospel"! Are you a Christian?

**Day 257 Daniel Chapters 11 - 12** Major Prophets

Daniel was shown some more things that will happen in the future. The rise and fall of earthly kingdoms. He saw four kings in Persia. The fourth was Xerxes (486 B.C. - 465 B.C.). He will attack Greece. A "mighty king" will rise up (Daniel 11:3). This was Alexander the Great. He established the Grecian Empire. Daniel had been shown this several times in this book. After Alexander the Great dies, the Grecian Empire would be divided under four generals (Daniel 11:4). It was! There would be battles, wars, and fighting throughout the region. Everyone would volley for power. Eventually, a "vile person" will stand up (Daniel 11:21). In 175 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes gained control. He attacked Jerusalem and sacrificed a pig in the Temple! This was an "abomination that maketh desolate" (Daniel 11:31). He set himself up to be a god (Daniel 11:36)! Eventually God raised up the Romans to defeat him and all other regional leaders. The Roman Empire was the fourth kingdom that Daniel had seen throughout this book.

In Chapter 12 Daniel is reminded of the REAL battle. It is not a battle for world domination and earthly kingdoms. It is a spiritual battle that is waged for the souls of men! One day everyone will be resurrected. Some will be raised to "everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt". When will this occur? Daniel was told that the words were "closed up and sealed" till the end times. There will be righteous folks and wicked folks throughout time. The wicked won't understand, but the wise will

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** God planned the salvation of man from the very beginning. He knew exactly what events had to occur before He sent His Son to the earth. He knew which Empire would be in control at that time. Even now, He is fully aware of who will be in control of world kingdoms, how much territory they will control, and how long they will be in control. Every event that takes place in world affairs is under the eye and hand of God for His purpose! Was the prophecies of Daniel specifically speaking of Antiochus Epiphanes? Was he referring to Nero Caesar? What about Adolf Hitler? Could it be

Barack Obama? How about some future "Anti-Christ" or "Beast"? Regardless who has world power, it was, is, and always will be, to fulfill God's purpose! What is that purpose? To save mankind. Period. The wicked will not understand it. They will not believe it. They will not receive it. The wise will see it. They will understand that Jesus Christ is God's Salvation! Christians are wise! Are you a Christian?





## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Twelve Minor Prophets

Hosea

Joel

Amos

Obadiah

Jonah

Micah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

**Day 258      Hosea Chapters 1 - 7** Minor Prophets

Hosea preached from 755 BC to 725 BC. Hosea and Amos were co-workers. They may have went on preaching tours together. They were warning Israel (the Northern Kingdom) God was about to destroy them if they refused to repent of their sins. They didn't repent. In 722 BC, just three years after Hosea's ministry, the Assyrians took Israel into captivity.

God told Hosea to marry a prostitute named Gomer. She had three children. They were given names that reflected God's warning against Israel. "God Sows / Scatters"; "No Mercy"; and "Not My People"! Imagine spending your life with names that meant such things. It was a constant reminder that God was going to send judgment upon Israel. Eventually Gomer left Hosea and went back to prostitution. Sadly, she was put up for sale by those with whom she prostituted herself. Hosea bought her back! This was an object lesson to Israel. God had taken them to Himself as a "wife". They left him and began to trust in the power of the Egyptians and Assyrians. The Assyrians would take Israel into captivity. God would restore Israel (buy her back)! That is exactly what happened

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Some say the restoration of Israel foretold by Hosea is a prophecy of the End Times when Israel will rule the world from Jerusalem. Paul didn't interpret it this way. In Chapter 9 of his letter to the Romans, Paul explained that Israel foreshadowed the true people of God. They would be called His "children". Compare Hosea 1:10-11 with Romans 9:26. Hosea is a shadow of Jesus Christ, our redeemer! We have "prostituted" ourselves with the world. We were held captive by sin and death. He purchased the Church with His own blood (Acts 20:28)! Christians are like Gomer and have been redeemed! Christians ARE the Church! Are you a Christian?

**Day 259      Hosea Chapters 8 - 14**      Minor Prophets

In the second half of Hosea he continues to outline the horrible sins and atrocities Israel has committed. The warning of impending judgment is the central theme. We've already seen from Hosea 4:6 that ignorance of God's law is the primary reason for their sins. Faith comes from hearing God's word (Romans 10:17). How can you have true faith if you don't know God's Word? The fact is you will believe and practice horrible things if you don't know the truth. That's what was happening to Israel in Hosea's day (Hosea 4:13). God wanted the Israelites to be faithful, and merciful, and really know God instead of just practicing religious ceremonies (Hosea 6:6). They thought that as long as they were doing religious things, they could live any way they wanted. God punished them for that mistake!

The amazing thing in today's reading is that God still wanted them back (Hosea 14:1)! Remember the lesson of Amos and Gomer? No matter how bad we get, if we are willing to repent, God is willing to forgive (Hosea 14:4)!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Hosea 11:1 God noted that He loved Israel very much. He rescued them from Egypt. He even called them "My Son". Many believe Hosea's book prophesied a future kingdom on earth where Israel will be in control from Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit told Matthew exactly what God meant by Hosea 11:1. In Matthew 2:15 it's revealed that Hosea actually foreshadowed the coming of Christ and the events surrounding His birth! Hosea thought he was just warning Israel of impending judgment. He didn't know he was foretelling about Jesus! Christians believe Jesus was in the shadows of Hosea's writings because Matthew told us so! Christians simply let the Bible interpret itself. Are you a Christian?

**Day 260      Obadiah & Joel**

Minor Prophets

Obadiah wrote a harsh rebuke to the people of Edom about 850 B. C. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau. The Israelites were the descendants of Jacob (Israel). Jacob and Esau were twin brothers. These people were cousins! Through their forefathers they were brothers! Sadly, the people of Edom mistreated the Israelites in their time of need. God was very upset with them and promised to punish them. God also promised a blessing upon the Israelites

Many believe Joel wrote his book about 830 B.C. The Jewish nation had divided. The Northern Kingdom was called Israel and the Southern Kingdom was called Judah. Joel preached to the Southern Kingdom during the days of a very wicked ruler. His message was simple, "Repent or Perish". If he wrote in 830 B.C. the folks must have listened because for the next 100 years, Judah was ruled by four consecutive good kings!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Joel gave the people of Judah a glimpse into the future! He showed them Jesus' Church! In Joel 2:28-32 he predicted a day of great power and deliverance for Jerusalem, the capital city of the Jews. Some conclude that this a prediction of the End Times when the Jews will rule the world from Jerusalem. In Acts 2:16 and the verses following, Peter was in Jerusalem in A. D. 33. He said that Joel's prediction was talking about what was happening to them! What was happening? The Church was being established! Peter preached the first Gospel sermon and about 3,000 people were baptized. From that day forward the Church has been growing and the Lord adds people to it every day (Acts 2:47)! Later these baptized believers were called Christians (Acts 11:26). Are you a Christian?

**Day 261 Amos Chapters 1 - 5**

Minor Prophets

Amos prophesied from 810 B. C. to 785 B. C. He warned several nations of the judgment God had planned for them. Amos warned Damascus, Gaza, Tyrus, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and Judah, but his strongest and most specific message was for Israel. He began his prophecy against each one of them by saying, "For three transgressions ... and for four" which is a way of saying that they were guilty of so many sins you couldn't count them all!

God was especially disappointed with Israel. They were His people. His children! He had chosen them specifically from all the families of the earth to be their God, yet they had left Him. Did this special relationship cause God to ignore their sins and spare their punishment? Absolutely not (Amos 3:2)! In fact, God told them He would cause them to go into captivity beyond Damascus (Amos 5:27). History tells us they didn't repent. In 722 B. C., just 60 years after Amos' ministry, the Assyrians took Israel into captivity!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Amos prophecies, though harsh, reminds us of the hope we have in Christ. Amos said if Israel would Seek God, they would live (Amos 5:4). Jesus said in John 11:25 that if we believe in Him, we shall live! Christians believe in Jesus. Are you a Christian?

**Day 262 Amos Chapters 6 - 9**

Minor Prophets

As we finish Amos, we learn a bit more about him. He was not a preacher nor did he come from a family of preachers! He was a simple shepherd, but God called him to go preach (Amos 7:14-15). He did! He was from the Southern Kingdom of Judah and was sent to preach to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Can you imagine a southern shepherd trying to tell the northern elite they were doing wrong? Perhaps we need more farm boys speaking out against the sins of the nation!

Amaziah, the priest, told Jeroboam, the king of Israel, that Amos had conspired against him. God was very upset with Amaziah. He was supposed to be a man of God and preach God's Word to the people. Instead he was trying to silence God's Word. As a result, God promised to take away His word from them (Amos 8:11-12). Without the guidance of the word of God, the people would be lost. They would follow after any religion that come their way. Without the truth to guide them, they would fall into decay and ruin. Sound familiar? Where are the preachers today? Why aren't they crying out against the national sins of America on their television shows and radio programs? Perhaps there is a "famine" of the word of God in the land. Don't you think we could use another Amos?

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** At the end of Amos' book God gave him a glimpse of the future. Though God told Amos He would destroy Israel, He further promised to restore Israel (Amos 9:11 - 12). Many see this as a prophecy of the End Times when Israel will rule the world from their capital city of Jerusalem. That's not what James, the half-brother of Jesus, said this meant (Acts 15:13-18). He believed Amos was talking about the Church (the ultimate Kingdom of Christ) where there would be no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles! Christians are not looking for an earthly kingdom and a "Restoration" of Israel. They know that the Church IS the Kingdom. Are you a Christian?

## Day 263      **Jonah & Nahum**

Minor Prophets

Jonah could have been written as early as 820 B. C. God sent him to preach to Nineveh and warn them He had decided to destroy them. Here's the problem, Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria! They were mortal enemies to Israel! Jonah knew if he preached to them, they could very well repent of their sins. If they repented of their sins, God would forgive them. Jonah didn't want God to FORGIVE them, he wanted God to DESTROY them! Jonah decided not to offer the people of Nineveh any hope of salvation. He went in the opposite direction! With some serious persuasion from God, using a terrible storm and a large fish, Jonah changed his mind! He preached to Nineveh. Guess what? They believed him! The king ordered everyone to humble themselves in the sight of God. To Jonah's dismay God didn't destroy them. God was upset Jonah wasn't merciful to other human beings

Nahum was sent to Nineveh around 660 B.C. This was about 160 years after Jonah preached to them. Apparently their national reform only lasted a few years. Nineveh had forgotten God's warning and had went back to their wicked ways. This time God promised they would be "laid waste" (Nahum 3:7)

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus Himself said Jonah's experience in the belly of the whale was a shadow of His death, burial, and resurrection (Matthew 12:40). Christians are like the people of Nineveh who repented when they heard Jonah preach the truth. Non-Christians are like the people of Nineveh 160 years later who rejected Nahum's preaching. Are you a Christian?

**Day 264      Micah Chapters 1 - 3** Minor Prophets

Micah's ministry spanned from 736 BC to 710 BC. He preached at the same time Isaiah preached. They both warned Israel and Judah of God's judgment against them. The Northern Kingdom (Israel) would be carried into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 BC. The Southern Kingdom (Judah) would be carried into captivity by the Babylonians in 605 BC.

The problem was they **THOUGHT** about evil things while lying on their beds then carried them out when they woke up (Micah 2:1). Why? Because they had the power to do it! God granted them the power and blessings because He loved them. They abused that power because they lost their love for God. The preachers were preaching for money! (Micah 3:11). They told the people what they wanted to hear to secure their positions. This infuriated God. God had given them their power and position. God could take it away. That's what He did.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** In Micah 2:12-13 God promised to bring together the "remnant" of Israel. He promised their King would pass before them. The Jews of Jesus' day were certain this was God's promise to unite them under the leadership of a mighty king and give them world power. Jesus didn't fit their idea of a king. When Jesus described the Kingdom in spiritual terms (Luke 17:21), the Jews decided He was a false prophet. They killed Him! Don't make the same mistake they made. Christians understand the Kingdom of Christ is the Church. It is Spiritual. It is "inside them". Are you a Christian?



## Day 265      Micah Chapters 4 - 7      Minor Prophets

The second half of Micah promises wonderful things for God's people in the "last days". There was a promise of great peace where the people could "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks" with no wars between nations (Micah 4:3). This peace would be initiated when people would flow into a great kingdom originating from Jerusalem (Micah 4:2). The Jews believed God would send a great king to the earth to bring peace on earth and good will to man. This king would rule the world from Jerusalem.

The Jews were half right. God did promise remarkable things to their forefather, Abraham. However, they were expecting it to be fulfilled in a physical world kingdom. Luke recognized the fulfillment of that promise was in Jesus Christ (Luke 1:72-73). He did bring peace on earth and good will to man (Luke 2:14). Mathew explained the great ruler prophesied by Micah in Micah 5:2 was Jesus (Matthew 2:4-6). He went on to explain that the family tension spoken by Micah in Micah 7:6 was fulfilled when families disagreed about Jesus (Matthew 10:34-36). Peter's first Gospel Sermon in Acts 2 was preached in Jerusalem. Many people were baptized that day (Acts 2:41). God then added to the church daily (Acts 2:47). From that day until now people have been flowing into that Kingdom (The Church). It all originated in Jerusalem, just like Micah said it would!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** He is everywhere! The Jews read Micah's prophecy from a physical mindset. When Jesus came and preached the true spiritual nature of the Kingdom and told them the Kingdom was at hand (Matthew 4:17), they couldn't accept it. Jews today (and even many believers in Jesus) think that God still has a plan to set up a worldly kingdom in the "last days". The Hebrew writer explained we are already in "the last days" (Hebrews 1:2)! He went on to explain throughout his letter that Jesus is the center of all God had planned. If we miss Him, we miss it all! Christians believe on Jesus and have been baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). They have ALREADY been added to the Kingdom! Are you a Christian?

**Day 266      Zephaniah & Habakkuk**      Minor Prophets

Zephaniah preached in 630 BC. Habakkuk preached twenty years later in 610 BC. Both men were sent to beg Judah to repent of their national sins. Jeremiah was also preaching at the same time to the same people warning them about the same things. If they refused, God would send the Babylonians to defeat them and take their people into captivity. With at least these three preachers warning the Jews, God hoped they would repent. History bears out that they didn't. The Babylonians carried their first captives from Judah in 606 BC, just a few years after Habakkuk began to preach.

In Zephaniah 1:7 and Zephaniah 1:14 he told the Jews God's judgment was getting very close! They didn't have much time to mend their ways! One of their major problems was wealth. In Zephaniah 1:11 and Zephaniah 1:18 it was clear the Jews trusted in their commerce and economy. Their money could not save them from God's judgment. Another national problem was revealed in Zephaniah 3:4. The preachers weren't speaking out against the people's sins. In fact, they were participating in them! Habakkuk questioned God's use of an evil nation like Babylon to punish the Jews who were more righteous than they were (Habakkuk 1:13). Nonetheless he acknowledged God's authority to do whatever He pleased (Habakkuk 2:20)!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Zephaniah 3:13 tells us God promised a "remnant" would be restored. Jeremiah had promised the same thing. Isaiah had even foretold this one hundred years before. God fulfilled that promise when He brought the Jews back from Babylonian captivity after just seventy years. He restored them to their homeland. This foreshadowed the ultimate restoration that sinners have through Christ. Unfortunately only a few (remnant) will be saved (Matthew 7:14). Christians ARE the restored remnant! Are you a Christian?

## Day 267 Haggai

Minor Prophets

Haggai preached in 520 BC. Jeremiah had prophesied that the Jews would be in captivity for 70 years. True to His Word, God allowed them to return to Jerusalem. They built themselves homes to live in, but they ignored the Temple of God! The Temple that Solomon built had been destroyed by the Babylonians. It was still in ruins!

Zerubbabel had been appointed governor of Jerusalem. Joshua was the high priest. They were the political and religious leaders. It was their responsibility to organize the people to rebuild Jerusalem. God was not happy they chose to build themselves homes while ignoring His Temple. He sent Haggai to tell Zerubbabel and Joshua to get to work on the Temple. They did! Some of the older Jews remembered how beautiful Solomon's Temple was. They simply didn't have the resources to build another one like that one. God told them not to worry about that. He would fill this new Temple with His glory and it would be greater than old one! This made the Jews very happy.

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Temple is a shadow of Jesus Christ! Jesus' is called Emmanuel (Matthew 1:23) which means "God with us"! When the Temple of God was filled with His glory, God was with the people. When Christ was sent to earth, God was with us! In fact, Christians ARE the Temple of God (I Corinthians 3:16). Christ dwells in the Christian (Romans 8:10). Are you a Christian?

**Day 268 Zechariah Chapters 1 - 6** Minor Prophets

Zechariah and Haggai preached together around 520 BC. They were both sent to Jerusalem. Haggai had told the Jews to rebuild the Temple. Zechariah continued encouraging them to do so. He used much more symbolism in his message, but his message was clear, "God is watching over the Jews"! Zechariah 1:12 reminds his readers of the promise of restoration after seventy years as prophesied by earlier prophets. They had begun receiving that promise. The four horns of chapter one represented the kingdoms that had harmed the Jews. The good news was the four carpenters that represented God's rebuilding of the nation! Zechariah reminded the Jews that they were the "apple" of God's eye (Zechariah 2:8). God will take care of them.

Joshua was the high priest at that time. Zechariah saw him in a vision. He was wearing filthy clothes. God commanded Joshua to be given new clothes. Joshua represented the people of Israel. The dirty clothes were their sins. The changing of his clothes showed that God forgave them! They have been restored. There was a condition given in Zechariah 3:7. They had to obey God. Zechariah's encouragement continued in chapter four when he told of his vision of the candlestick or lampstand which was given perpetual oil from the two olive trees. He was told it represented the Word of God given to Zerubbabel, the appointed governor of Jerusalem, with a promise to rebuild the Temple (Zechariah 4:9). The vision of the woman in the ephah (basket) represented the Jews being carried away into captivity, but the four chariots of chapter six showed God was watching over them the whole time!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Joshua, the high priest, was a shadow of Jesus. We see he received a crown (Zechariah 6:11) and became a "priest upon his throne" (Zechariah 6:13). This represented Jesus who is the true Priest (Hebrews 8:1) and King (Revelation 19:16). Jesus has also made Christians kings and priests (Revelation 1:6). Are you a Christian?

**Day 269 Zechariah Chapters 7 - 10** Minor Prophets

Zechariah's book is full of encouragement, but it contains warnings. Zechariah reminded them they had refused to fast to God during the seventy years they had been in captivity (Zechariah 7:5). He also reminded them this is why they had been sent to captivity in the first place (Zechariah 7:11)! Yet God had been thinking of them the entire seventy years (Zechariah 8:1). He kept his promise to bring them back to Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:8). This encouraged the Jews very much, but there was a greater promise made!

Zechariah 9:9 is a "Messianic Prophecy", a prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah. We know this prophecy is referring to Jesus (Matthew 21:4-7). He continued to encourage the Jews by saying God would save them (Zechariah 9:16)

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** The Jews concluded from Zechariah's prophecies that the Messiah would one day come and lead them to world domination! He would be their king and sit upon David's throne in Jerusalem. Jesus taught that His kingdom is spiritual (Luke 17:21) and that the Messiah is GREATER than David and his heritage (Matthew 22:41-46). His point was that David's throne was not His objective. Christians believe that Jesus accomplished His true objective by building His Church (Matthew 16:18). Christians ARE the Church. Are you a Christian?

**Day 270      Zechariah Chapters 11 - 14** Minor Prophets

Today we finish Zechariah. He has been so encouraging. He told the Jews how much God loved them and made so many wonderful promises to them. Today he has some bitter-sweet words. Zechariah 11:6-7 warns God will no longer protect those who refuse Him. The two staves indicated He would send a great Shepherd, but Zechariah 11:10 showed the covenant with the Jews will be broken. Then He prophesied the betrayal of the Shepherd, the Messiah, in Zechariah 11:12-13. He even prophesied what would happen to the betrayal money! That's exactly what happened (Matthew 27:6-7)! Furthermore, Zechariah prophesied what they would do to Jesus, their Messiah, in Zechariah 12:10. That's exactly what they did at His crucifixion (Luke 24:40). Those wounds (Zechariah 13:6) were in the mind of God before they were in the hands of Jesus! Yes, Zechariah prophesied they would "smite the shepherd" (Zechariah 13:7) and scatter the sheep. That's what happened when Jesus was crucified. His disciples were scattered (Matthew 26:31)! Jesus knew He was about to fulfill Zechariah's prophecy.

Zechariah chapter 14 gets back to the good news! Though Jesus the Shepherd was "smitten", God promised He would be King over all the earth (Zechariah 14:9). The events in chapter 14 were written to folks that couldn't possibly understand the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of Christ. God explained it in physical terms. He described it as an earthquake that would change the landscape of the Mount of Olives located just outside of Jerusalem. It would split the mountain into two and create a deep valley between them. This would cause "living waters" to flow out of Jerusalem and flow into the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. He explained the physical plagues that would come upon those who refused Jesus. If they didn't come to Jerusalem to worship, they would be punished with draught (Zechariah 14:16)

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Jesus is EVERYWHERE! The Jews interpreted all this to be promises of a physical Jewish Kingdom with the capital city in Jerusalem. Jesus thought otherwise. When He spoke

of the "Living Water" in John 4:10 to the woman at the well she thought He was talking about physical water. Jesus went on to explain He had "Spiritual" things in mind (John 4:23-26). The woman was expecting the Messiah to come, but she was looking for a physical king to conquer the world. Jesus told her He was the Messiah. She believed Him! So, will the Mount of Olives be split in two with a great earthquake? Maybe, maybe not. One thing is for certain. Jesus IS the King! If He wants to split the mountain He certainly can, but He is not interested in a physical world kingdom. If the Son of God was physically on a physical throne in physical Jerusalem, does it sound reasonable the only punishment He would execute against those who refused to come to Jerusalem to worship Him would be draught? Christians have already been translated into the Kingdom of God's Son (Colossians 1:13)! Are you a Christian?

## Day 271 Malachi

Minor Prophets

Malachi wrote around 430 BC to 400 BC. Just one hundred years before, Haggai & Zechariah had encouraged the Jews to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Ezra was sent in 458 BC to set up the religious ceremonies as the Jews finished the Temple. Nehemiah had come to Jerusalem in 444 BC and organized an incredible effort to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem in just 52 days!

Now Malachi comes to town. The wall had only been up a few years. The worship in the rebuilt Temple had been in place for only a few years before that. God's promise to restore the Jews to their home after their extended captivity had been fulfilled! You would think they would be excited and dedicated. Yet Malachi had to warn them! Why? Their priests were corrupt! Instead of offering their best, they offered the worst (Malachi 1:13). They should have been getting closer to God, yet they had gotten farther away (Malachi 2:7-8). They had only been home a short while and were already going back into the very sins that caused their captivity in the first place!

**In the Shadow ... don't miss Jesus!** Malachi prophesied God would come to His people. He said there would first be a "messenger" that would "prepare the way" before He came (Malachi 3:1). This messenger would be Elijah the prophet (Malachi 4:5). John the Baptist was that messenger. He was the one who prepared the way of the Messiah (Matthew 3:1-3). Jesus said that John the Baptist was "Elijah" (Matthew 11:14). Who did John the Baptist prepare the way for? Jesus Christ! Therefore, the "coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" happened when Jesus came to the earth in the first century. Jesus is the "Sun of righteousness" and there is "healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2 & Matthew 4:23). Christians have been healed! Are you a Christian?



## CHAPTER SIX

# The Four Gospels

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

**Day 272      Matthew Chapters 1 - 4**

Gospels

As you read Matthew's Gospel, pretend you are a Jew. You believe God has promised to send a chosen deliverer into the world. You call him the "Messiah". As a Jew, you firmly believe the Old Testament is God's Word. These Holy Scriptures tell how God sent deliverers to the Jews throughout history. Men like Moses, David, and even Samson were sent to rescue the Jewish nation from its oppressors. The "Messiah" would be greater than all the deliverers. He would sit on David's throne in Jerusalem and rule the entire world. All the nations would bow before Him. The Jews would be the world's dominant people under His authority. This is what you have been taught since you were a child. This doctrine is part of your heritage. Since the Romans were the current oppressors, you prayed every day for God to send the "Messiah" to deliver your nation from the tyranny of the Roman government. Then you read Matthew.

Matthew is a Jew. You have no respect for what he did for a living. He collected taxes from his native people for the Romans! You called him a "Publican", a "sinner"! He quit his job one day to follow a preacher. The preacher's name was Jesus. Matthew claimed Jesus was the promised "Messiah". You would laugh if it wasn't so serious. Why should you believe Jesus, a carpenter from Nazareth, is the "Messiah"? Despite your disdain for Matthew's past work, you decide to read his "Gospel" (a term meaning "Good News"). After all the Romans have done to suppress the Jews, you could use some good news!

Could Jesus really be the "Messiah"? The first four chapters are filled with proof texts from the Holy Scriptures! Jesus' genealogy beginning with Abraham would certainly match what the Messiah's would be. Over and over you read the phrase "That it may be fulfilled" or "It is written". Everything Matthew said about Jesus fulfilled what the ancient Holy Scriptures said about the Messiah! The events surrounding his birth. The "voice of one crying in the wilderness" that would precede His coming. The area where He lived and preached. All of it was foretold! When

the crowds came to hear Jesus preach, He said, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Could it really be Him? Could He be "The One"?

If Jesus is the "Messiah", which we believe Him to be, then shouldn't we repent, obey His teachings, and be a part of His kingdom? Matthew will tell us how!

**Day 273     Matthew Chapters 5 - 6**

Gospels

As a Jew, you are skeptical that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. Matthew has already made a compelling case. Jesus has already fulfilled many of the prophecies about the Messiah and he was just a baby! Even where he grew up and where he preached are the exact places it was prophesied concerning the Messiah. Your curiosity is piqued. You are beginning to entertain the thought the Jesus could be the Messiah. Many have come to hear him preach.

Then you read what he preaches! You are amazed! His Sermon on the Mount moved you beyond expression. Jesus began by describing the kind of person who is truly "Blessed" or happy. Those who recognize their Spiritual Poverty (Poor in Spirit). Those who are able to mourn over their spiritual condition. Those who are meek and humble enough to repent. Those who truly desire to be right. Those who show mercy to others. Those who have pure motives. Those who seek man's peace with God. What kind of people are these? The world hates these kinds of folks! They remind the world how truly dark their own lives are! The people Jesus described in his opening remarks are the "salt" and "light" of the world. The ones the world rejects are the very ones who can help them!

The people with these attributes are the only ones who will comprehend the rest of the sermon! They will understand when Jesus said he came to fulfill the law. Jesus contrasted the Holy Scriptures with the lifestyle that He was calling for. "Ye have heard it said" contrasted with "But I say unto you". The Law called for no killing. Jesus got to the root of murder by calling for no anger! He raised the bar! The Law called for no adultery. Jesus called for no lust in the heart! After several of these contrasts, Jesus called on His listeners to "Love your enemies"! Incredible indeed! He went on to explain the standard He called for in worship (giving, praying, and fasting). His model prayer in Chapter 6:9-13 teaches that it is "Our Father" in heaven who deserves praise, is in control, blesses, forgives, and leads. Jesus then calls for man to forgive others! He called for man to serve

and trust God instead of being anxious over their own self interests.

You see, it is the heart of man Jesus is describing. We must take a serious self-inventory. Do we possess the qualities Jesus explained at the beginning of His sermon? If not, we really can't understand the high standards He is calling for. They don't make sense to us! It's beyond our comprehension to love our enemies, much less forgive them. Jesus is calling for a high standard of living. It can only be achieved by people with this kind of heart. Are you the kind of person who will understand and accept Jesus? Are you are Christian?

**Day 274      Matthew Chapters 7 - 9**

Gospels

The Jewish Holy Scriptures advocate an "eye for an eye" and "destroy my enemies". Jesus' teachings were radical! What did he mean "turn the other cheek" and "love your enemies"? How is that even possible among the human race? In today's reading we see the last chapter of the Sermon on the Mount. In it Jesus explains how men should treat their fellow man. He summed it up by saying we should do unto others as you would have them do to you! You may ask, "How can we treat everyone this way. Is everyone good? Does everyone deserve good treatment?" "Certainly not", is Jesus' definitive answer. He acknowledges that there are indeed false teachers in the world. Not everyone that pretends to be right is right. Some will be saved, others will be lost. Let God deal with those folks! After Jesus finished the sermon, many were astonished at His doctrine!

Matthew has impressed you! He asserted that Jesus is the Messiah with prophetic proof and powerful preaching! Matthew is not finished. He now shows that Jesus has personal power. You cringe in your flesh as you read Jesus fearlessly touches a man with leprosy. Then He heals him! You cringe in your spirit as you read Jesus offers to go to the house of a Roman centurion. Then He heals his servant! Jesus is expressing His personal power! He demonstrated He has power over disease by healing Peter's mother-in-law. He noted His power over nature as he stills a storm. He showed His power over the spirit world as He cast out demons. Jesus taught that His power extended to His ability to forgive sins! In chapter 9 verse 9, Matthew testified that he, himself yielded to Jesus' power. When Jesus raised the ruler's daughter, He proclaimed power over death itself! The blind eyes and the mute's mouth were opened. Jesus was moved with compassion as He saw all that needed the touch of His hand! He prayed for laborers for the great harvest!

What is defeating you? What seems to have claimed you? Jesus has power over it! Christians listen to His astonishing doctrine and surrender to Him. They labor in the work God has called them to do. Are you a Christian?

**Day 275      Matthew Chapters 10 - 12      Gospels**

You are imagining that you are a Jew reading Matthew's Gospel. He has presented extremely powerful proofs that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Messiah that the Holy Scriptures promised would come. Many people have followed him and listened to his preaching. These people were called "Disciples" which means "students" or "learners". Jesus chooses twelve of these disciples from among the group. They are called "Apostles". He gave them a specific mission. Then Jesus explained the mission would be dangerous. They would be persecuted. This should not be surprising since Jesus Himself, their "Master" and "Teacher" would be persecuted as well. Why? They are bringing a message to the world most Jews would reject. They expect the Messiah will bring peace on earth. This is simply not true! Anyone who accepts Jesus is likely to be hated by non-believers. You, as a Jew, are surprised! Ever since you were born, you have been taught that Messiah would sit on King David's throne and bring peace and security to the entire world! How could Jesus claim to be the Messiah and promise conflict? You find yourself doubting that Jesus is the Messiah, though you can't deny the strong evidence that has already been offered by Matthew.

John the Baptist, a very influential, Jewish preacher took the question out of your mouth. "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus' answer surprises you! He claims that John the Baptist is Elijah! You recall the prophecy from Malachi 4:5 promising to send Elijah before the Messiah. If John the Baptist is Elijah, then Jesus could be the Messiah! This is almost too much to take in, you think to yourself. Jesus then notes that those who claim to be wise on earth simply won't believe. The believers will be the "babies" of the world! Those who can humble themselves and remove all prejudice from their minds. When Jesus challenges the Jewish beliefs about the Sabbath Day and ideas about Gentiles, you are offended. When Jesus uses the Holy Scriptures to prove He is absolutely right, you find yourself at a loss! Then Jesus cuts to the chase. Your heart

is either "good" or "evil"! You will either accept Jesus, or you will reject Him. All the "proof" in the world won't change your mind if you are not willing to listen!

The most powerful proof that can be offered is Jesus' resurrection! Jesus is alive and well! His "family" are those that submit to Him. He is pleading with you in chapter 11 verse 28 ... "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Have you come to Jesus? Are you a Christian?



**Day 276      Matthew Chapters 13 - 14      Gospels**

Jewish theology has taught you at least two things about God's Kingdom. First, any Jew who surrenders to God's authority would be considered part of the Kingdom of Heaven. After all, a Kingdom is all that is under the authority of its King. Second, the Holy Scriptures had promised the coming of the Messiah (The Anointed One), who would sit on King David's throne in Jerusalem and bring peace to the world. Surely this was the Kingdom of Heaven that all Jewish followers of God would enjoy. As you imagine you are Jewish, you are upset that Jesus didn't promise peace, but a sword! This section of Matthew's Gospel challenges your thinking about the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus taught with stories called "Parables". The first parable explained that only certain people will be able to hear and understand the teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven. They have to have the right "ground" (mind / heart). If they don't have the fourth type, they would not be able to "know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven". You are really interested in the next six parables He tells. You know they are teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven. What you find surprising is there is no mention of a throne in Jerusalem. There is no mention of conquering the Romans and the rest of the Gentile world. There is complete silence about the battle to end all battles that will bring peace on earth! Instead there is shared occupation of the earth by "wheat" and "tares", with a promise that the "wheat" will be saved. There is small "seed" and "leaven" planted in and among the other, with a promise of future greatness. There is a dedication to obtain this "hidden treasure" and "pearl of great price", with a promise of their great value. There is the "net" full of "good" and "bad", with a promise that the "bad will be destroyed. The Christian accepts Jesus and obeys His Gospel. They are added to His church. Given that Jesus died for the Church, the Church is indeed valuable! It has grown into the greatest institution in the world! At the end of time, the Church will be separated from the world and be rewarded, while the world is lost! Then there is the seventh "parable". He doesn't teach about the Kingdom of

Heaven here, He teaches about the man who is instructed concerning the Kingdom of Heaven. You have just been instructed, therefore you are the "householder". You must look into your "treasure" (where you store your thoughts, beliefs, values, understandings, etc.) and "bring forth" or "birth" this "new" understanding as it relates to your "old" understanding. Most can't (or won't) do that!

As expected, most rejected Jesus. He then heard the news about the death of John the Baptist. He tried to be alone to pray, but a crowd of more than five thousand found Him. Jesus, though fatigued and saddened, preached. He had compassion on them and healed them. He even fed them all! Ultimately He sent His disciples away by boat while He found some quiet prayer time. Later that night He came to them, walking on the water! After Peter's short walk and quick sinking, Jesus asked him a most important question: "O thou of little faith, why did you doubt?" Jesus' teachings can sometimes be hard to understand, much less put into daily practice, but the Christian believes and "walks on life's water" with Jesus! Are you a Christian?

**Day 277      Mathew Chapters 15 - 17** Gospels

Matthew's evidence that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah is very convincing. Just when you think you may believe, you, as a Jew, are offended by what Matthew writes here. The scribes and Pharisees are respected among the Jewish community. How dare Jesus call them hypocrites! As you read Jesus' reasoning, you begin to understand. They are hypocrites! You are also offended that Jesus would be kind to a Canaanite woman. As you read of her faith, you understand Jesus' actions. Jesus continued to teach, heal, and even feed the crowds. Jesus warns His disciples about the Jewish sects. They have tried to discredit Jesus, but to no avail. Could Jesus really be the Messiah?

Then Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, said plainly, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Wow! What a confession! Jesus explained this revelation was true. In fact, it was given to Peter by God Himself! If this wasn't shocking enough, what Jesus says next is incredible! He promised to build His Church which He called the "Kingdom of Heaven" when He promised Peter the "keys" to it. There it is again. Then Kingdom of Heaven, the Church. Inseparable. As you imagine yourself a Jew, you have wanted to be part of the Kingdom of Heaven for your entire life. You just learned that if you are added to the Church of Jesus Christ, you will be part of His Kingdom!

Peter is no doubt excited about the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. He has been waiting on this since he was a child. He can just imagine Jesus sitting on King David's throne in Jerusalem with him at His side. Suddenly Peter's day dream burst like a bubble. Did Jesus just say He would be killed? Impossible! Jesus told Peter he was thinking as a man thinks. All followers of Jesus must be willing to die in order to live! Non-believers simply can't comprehend this. The Holy Scriptures of the Law and the Prophets (Moses & Elijah) have foretold the coming of Jesus. Do you believe them? Christians do! Are you a Christian?

**Day 278      Matthew Chapters 18 - 20**      Gospels

As you imagine you are a Jew reading Matthew's Gospel, you are having serious trouble with Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of Heaven. You have always believed it to be an earthly Kingdom. Those who fight alongside the Messiah will be handsomely rewarded. They would be given great and honorable positions in the Kingdom. You are not surprised Jesus' disciples were also wondering who would be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. What does surprise you is Jesus' answer. "The one who humbles himself as a child", Jesus explained. He went on to tell them His mission was not to conquer the lost, His mission was to SAVE the lost! Jesus taught his disciples to do everything in their power to reconcile differences with their brother. Peter wondered how many times he should forgive his brother. Jesus raised the standard high when He said, "Every time"!!

The unbelieving Jews still sought ways to discredit Jesus. They asked Him very difficult questions. Questions that they debated even among themselves. Perhaps if they could show the crowds that Jesus had no more wisdom than anyone else, they would never believe Him to be the Messiah. To their dismay (and the crowds astonishment), Jesus answered their questions with truth, wisdom, and authority. Jesus challenged all who listened to dedicate themselves to obey God in their marriages by being faithful to their commitments. Whatever you do in life, dedicate your service to Him! The Rich Young Ruler sought Jesus' teaching, but was simply not willing to do put God first in his life.

Jesus acknowledges your dedication will be rewarded, but not because you killed your enemies or overthrew a government. Your service will be rewarded because you serve others! You may think you deserve more than others. Let God worry about the reward! Those who are in the TRUE "Kingdom of Heaven", the church of Jesus Christ, will receive God's reward. Isn't that more than we deserve? Are you humbly serving others in childlike fashion? Are you looking forward to your reward? Are you a member of Christ's Church? Are you a Christian?

**Day 279      Matthew Chapters 21 - 22      Gospels**

There that phrase is again, “that it might be fulfilled”. You have been seeing it over and over as you read Matthew’s Gospel. As you imagine you are Jewish, that phrase is extremely important. You would never believe the claims of someone to be the Messiah unless they fit the description foretold by the Holy Scriptures. Some people may fit one or two. It would be remarkable if someone fulfilled four or five. Jesus is fulfilling them all! You are stunned as you read the fulfillment of Isaiah, Zechariah, Jeremiah, and the Psalms as Jesus came riding on a colt; praised by crowds saying “Hosanna”; crowds Jesus described as “out of the mouth of babes” (just as psalms said)!

Even when he cast out the money changers you recalled the prophecies! As he cursed the fig tree, you clearly see the parallel of cleansing the temple. They both looked like they were producing fruit, but they were both dead! Jesus explains that without faith, we are beyond hope! Even when the Jews asked hard questions designed to back Jesus into a corner, He answered by quoting the prophets. His parables showed the Pharisees fulfilled the prophecies themselves by rejected Him as the Messiah!

The parable of the Marriage Feast described the “Kingdom of Heaven”. You have already learned that Jesus’ concept of the Kingdom was different from the one you believed. He was talking about the Church that He would establish. At the conclusion of the parable He plainly stated, “Many are called, but few are chosen”. Those who think we can get into the “feast” (the Kingdom of Heaven / the Church) through some other way than Jesus are mistaken. These folks asked Jesus more provocative questions, but Jesus answered them all with clarity and truth. They refused the truth! When Jesus asked them one question, it put them to silence! They pretended to know and understand, but they were ignorant of God’s true message. Christians accept Jesus as God’s truth without “twisting” the truth or presenting misleading questions. Are you one of the "few"? Are you a Christian?

**Day 280      Matthew Chapters 23 - 24**      Gospels

As you imagine you are Jewish, you are offended by Jesus' blatant criticism of your most prestigious religious orders, the scribes and the Pharisees. He noted they teach others to do things they themselves are not willing to observe. Jesus said they love to be "seen of men" and enjoy prominent positions. They get personal satisfaction of being called "Rabbi", "Master", or even "Father"! Jesus called them "hypocrites"! He went on to pronounce several "woes" on them calling them "fools", "blind", and "serpents"! As you consider the evidence Jesus gives for making these remarks, you realize He is absolutely right! Their attitude is in stark contrast to the humility Jesus is calling His followers to have.

This did not sit well with these leaders. They wanted Him dead! When Jesus left the Temple, the disciples commented on the elaborate structure of the Temple. Jesus plainly told them the Temple would be destroyed! You gasp as you read this portion of Matthew's Gospel! Surely the Temple would not be destroyed, yet you recall that Solomon's original Temple had been destroyed. Is it possible that this one could be destroyed too? The questions are crowding your mind. The disciples asked those questions. When will the Temple, along with Jerusalem, be destroyed? What signs or warnings would there be before this happens? Will there be any signs or warnings before the end of the world? We know from history that Jerusalem was indeed destroyed in A.D. 70, less than forty years after these questions were asked. Jesus' answer gave an exact description of the events that would occur before A.D. 70. What about the end of the world? Jesus answers that one too. Only the Father knows! There will be no warning signs. Just like in the days of Noah before the flood. The only warning they had was Noah's preaching! They refused his message. When the flood came, they were caught unprepared.

Jesus said that all who obey God are faithful and wise. When the end comes, though they don't know when that will be, they will be caught doing God's Will. Unfortunately, many ignore the

preaching about His coming. They live their lives doing their own will. They will be alongside the hypocrites (perhaps a reference to the scribes and Pharisees) who pretend to be followers. There will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth”! Matthew 24 is sometimes considered to be dreadful to read, but to the believer, it is a message of hope and expectation! The Christians will be with Christ forever. Are you a Christian?

**Day 281      Matthew Chapters 25 - 26**      Gospels

You are nearing the end of Matthew's Gospel. You are not surprised to see more "Kingdom of Heaven" teaching. Christ's Kingdom is the Church He will establish on the earth and ultimately redeem from the earth. He will bring His Church to His Father in Heaven as a groom brings his bride to his father's house. It has been a recurring theme throughout the book. Both of the parables here teach we must prepare ourselves to be a part of the Kingdom. How fitting the first speaks of a groom coming to the wedding! The second speaks of "talents" (weights of money) that is put in the servants' trust. When Jesus comes he will separate the believers from the unbelievers as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats! Those who are in His Kingdom, His Church, will be rewarded. Those who are not will be condemned. It begs the question ... who are the saved? It's the servants! The ones that do God's Will. They feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and take care of the sick! Only the humble servants will be saved!

The Jewish authorities had heard enough of such teaching! They now were actively searching for ways to have him killed. When Jesus went to a friend's house in Bethany, just outside of Jerusalem, a woman showed her love for Him by pouring expensive ointment on his head. This was the last straw for Judas, one of the twelve apostles! Jesus has been teaching non-sense about the Kingdom of Heaven, certainly in Judas' opinion. He had been talking about his own impending death. Now He was wasting precious money! This ride was over! Judas was getting off the bus! He plotted to turn Jesus in for money. On Thursday night, as they were eating in an upper room, Jesus taught the disciples to eat unleavened bread and drink "fruit of the vine" in a special showing of Jesus' body and blood. It was a reference to His death! He told them they would all forsake Him. Peter tried to object, but Jesus told him he would even deny that he knows Him! As you read, you are reminded of the prophecy in Zechariah 13:7 that said the sheep would indeed be scattered! Even at the end of His life, prophesy is still being fulfilled! Your heart breaks



as Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss! As a Jew reading Matthew, it is clear the subsequent trial is a mockery! False witnesses are brought in, the trial is in the middle of the night, and protocol was not followed. It was a set up! Jesus was sentenced to death! Whether you believe Him to be the Messiah or not, you are dismayed the Jewish High Court would have such disdain for their fellow Jew!

Peter, witnessed it all and said nothing in Jesus' defense! Just a few hours before, he offered to die for Jesus. Now he denies he even knows him, just as Jesus predicted! Deny or Die was the choice Peter was given that night. It is actually the choice we are given. The Kingdom of Heaven is prepared for all Christians who have prepared themselves to serve ... even unto death! Are you a Christian?

**Day 282      Matthew Chapters 27 - 28**      Gospels

Throughout this reading, you have imagined you are a Jew. This last section of Matthew's Gospel horrifies you, yet enlightens you! You can't believe the Jewish counsel delivers one of their own fellow Jews to Roman Gentiles! Since you feel this strongly, you somewhat understand Judas' remorse. He tried to return the thirty pieces of silver he received for his betrayal then he hanged himself! Suddenly, it hits you ... Zechariah 11:12-13! It was foretold this would happen! Jesus has fulfilled so many of the Messianic prophesies! The evidence is overwhelming. You decide He must be the Messiah. You finally believe!

Why didn't your Jewish leaders see it? Even the Roman Governor recognized Jesus' innocence. He tried to have him released, but the non-believers were intent on seeing him crucified! As you see the scene in your mind's eye tears fill your eyes. You quote Psalms chapter 22. It is an exact description of Jesus' death on the cross! Jesus is the Messiah!

Then on the third day Jesus resurrected from the dead! He met his disciples. Matthew was among them. He gave them this commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" You realize this is exactly what Matthew has been doing through his Gospel ... teaching you! As a result of his teaching, you have become a believer! Are you ready to be baptized? Don't wait another day to become a Christian. Are you a Christian?

**Day 283      Mark Chapters 1 - 3**

Gospels

Mark is also called “John Mark” in the New Testament. Many believe the Last Supper was held in the upper room of the house where he lived. It is also believed he was the young man who ran away naked when they arrested Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. John Mark was an early follower of Jesus. He tried to work with Paul, but they separated. He probably spent most of his early ministry with Peter. Peter even called him “my son” (I Peter 5:13).

As you read this gospel, imagine you are a Roman soldier. Your job has been to patrol the streets of Jewish communities throughout the empire. You were there when they crucified Jesus. It has amazed you that a large movement has grown out of this man’s teaching and work. You read Mark’s Gospel with great skepticism. Mark begins by simply stating that John the Baptist and Jesus fulfilled Jewish prophecies. This intrigues you, but you are not sold. Jesus started his following by choosing just a few men. It’s not much of an army, you think to yourself, but your interest is piqued when you learn He has power over demonic spirits. You knew evil spirits have been a serious problems for a long while. The people who saw it asked the same question you were thinking, “What new doctrine is this?” Jesus fearlessly touched people with dreaded diseases! Then Jesus said something that surprised you, “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee”! Wow! A teacher claiming the power to forgive sins!

Why would Jesus offend His fellow Jews by healing on their sacred Sabbath? His logic was solid, but His conclusion was profound, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” Your jaw drops! This man was teaching that all men (even the Romans) were created for a special purpose, not just to be a “puppet” in the hands of an unapproachable being. Jesus explained that everyone must choose – Satan or God. A house divided can’t stand! If you choose God, you are His FAMILY! Are you part of Christ’s family? Are you a Christian?

**Day 284     Mark Chapters 4 - 5**

Gospels

As you imagine yourself to be a Roman soldier, you know many of your Roman friends and relatives believe Jesus is the Son of God. That's why you have agreed to read Mark's Gospel. You have been duly impressed with Jesus' power over disease and unclean spirits. Today you are introduced to some of His teaching.

He told stories to get His message across. The story of the sower who went forth to sow captures your mind. Your experience told you people in the world are indeed different. Their hearts and minds do fall into the categories Jesus placed them. Only certain folks are prepared to believe Jesus' teaching. You wonder if your heart is "good soil". Jesus came to share the light of God's Word to the world. People will either accept it or reject it. Regardless what choice the masses make, Jesus predicted His teachings would greatly impact humanity. You can see it already has.

You are very impressed with something you read today. Right in the middle of showing His power over nature by stilling a storm, exhibiting His power over the spiritual realm by casting out demons, and demonstrating His power over life by raising the dead, He did something truly amazing. He showed His concern for an individual faithful woman with a secret illness! It amazed you that with all His power and authority, He condescended to the lowliest person! You never saw a king do such a thing! Perhaps He even cares for you. With a savior like that, don't you want to be a Christian?

**Day 285      Mark Chapters 6 - 7**

Gospels

Jesus knew a person's own family is the hardest to convert, but He "marveled" at the extent of their unbelief. These are the very people that should believe! As you imagine yourself to be a Roman soldier of the day, you are very much aware of King Herod's power. After what he did to John the Baptist, he was fearful of Jesus.

Jesus was deeply moved by John's death. He spent a lot of time in prayer. It was the best way to recover from the stresses and pain of this life. He needed some time in prayer. Unfortunately, the people needed Him. He sacrificed His own needs for them. When he fed the entire crowd (both spiritually and physically), He demonstrated His care for the masses. He dismissed the crowds and spent some much needed time in prayer. Somewhere between 3:00 am and 6:00 am, during a storm, Jesus walked on the water to his disciples who were on a boat in the middle of the sea. He calmed the storm! His power over nature was once again exhibited.

The crowds began to grow even larger. Jesus' popularity was incredibly high, but not everyone appreciated Him. The Jewish Pharisees wanted to find fault with Him. When they accused Him of allowing His disciples to eat without washing their hands, Jesus exposed their error. You are taken aback when you heard Jesus' conclusion that a person's heart is the measure of their righteousness. Jesus showed His true heart when He healed a Syrian woman from Phoenicia! Jews considered them worthless. Jesus could see her value through His heart! He can see your value too. Are you a Christian?

**Day 286      Mark Chapters 8 - 9**

Gospels

Earlier Jesus had fed a crowd with five thousand men! In this portion of Mark's Gospel, He feeds another crowd with four thousand! You are stunned! Over 9,000 people have been physically fed by Jesus, but what really stunned you is when the religious leaders asked Him for a "sign from heaven"! You heard about the "bread from heaven" (Manna) which God gave the Hebrews in the wilderness. Why couldn't the religious leaders see the parallel? Wasn't it obvious?

Jesus warned His disciples about the religious and political leaders. Even they didn't understand His references. A lack of faith was beginning to infect the population. When Peter acknowledged Jesus was the Christ, he turned right around and doubted when He told them He must die. Jesus told them not to doubt. They would live to see His Kingdom (the Church) established. To cement Peter, James, and John's faith, they were allowed to see Jesus "transfigured". They saw Moses and Elijah speaking with Him. Even with such a revelation, they misunderstood, questioned, and doubted.

In the middle of teaching and healing, Jesus made a most fundamental observation, "... all things are possible to him that believes"! You completely understand the response by the one who cried out, "help thou mine unbelief"! If Peter and the other apostles were struggling to believe, how could you? Then Jesus exposed the root of the problem for the unbeliever. Doubters want to know who is the greatest! Jesus explained if anyone wants to be first, they must be everyone's servant! Hell will be full of prideful unbelievers! Jesus called for peace among the believers. Humility is the only path to true faith! As Christ humbled Himself, true believers will humble themselves. Are you a Believer?

**Day 287      Mark Chapters 10 - 11**

Gospels

You learned in the last two chapters that humility is the fundamental ingredient for faith. Without it, doubt will always take control. Proud religious leaders wanted to treat their wives with irreverence and disrespect. They used Moses' writings to justify themselves. Jesus clearly pointed out the true nature of marriage is for one man and one woman to be dedicated to each other for life. Pride and arrogance will cause folks to change this holy definition of marriage!

When a rich, young, ruler arrogantly announced he had kept all the commandments, Jesus told Him to humble himself! Unfortunately, the young man went away grieving. Between the Pharisees' visit and the young man's visit, Jesus gave an object lesson using little children. He taught that if people aren't willing to humble themselves, they will not enter the kingdom!

With that teaching in mind, Peter noted that they have sacrificed everything. He wanted to know what they will get in return. Jesus said they would truly receive much, but not to forget the "first shall be last; and the last first." It was no wonder everyone was upset (perhaps even Jesus Himself) when James and John's mother asked for her sons to have the most prestigious positions. Jesus had to remind his disciples that whoever wants to be great, must be servants! That's why Jesus cursed the fig tree and cast out the money changers! He wanted to teach His disciples about faith. Though some things (and people) may LOOK fruitful and faithful, often they are really not! "Have faith in God" was His plea. Whatever you ask for, believe you will receive. However you must remember if you aren't willing to forgive (and one must humble themselves to forgive), then you can't be forgiven! Believers are humble! Are you a Believer?

**Day 288      Mark Chapters 12 - 13**

Gospels

You are imagining you are a Roman soldier reading the Gospel of Mark. As a Roman, and a Gentile, you are shocked to see what Jesus says to his fellow Jews in this portion of the Gospel. They were furious about the story He told of the landowner who leased his property to some tenant farmers. They realized Jesus was making reference to them! He accused them of murdering the Messiah! They would have killed him then, but they feared the crowd that believed Him.

As a Roman, you know how the Jews hated paying taxes to Caesar. When the religious leaders tried to trap Jesus between the Jews and the Romans by asking His position on tax payments, you were impressed with His wise answer. Other religious leaders tried to pull Him into a divisive debate. Jesus, once again, answered marvelously! Someone from a third group was fascinated with His answers. He asked a sincere question. He wanted to know which commandment was the most important. Jesus explained that a person must love God and love their fellow man. The questioner agreed with Him! When Jesus asked the religious teachers a question, they were stumped! The crowd loved it! Jesus warned the people about the real intentions of these so called religious men.

You know this upset them badly! You felt that Jesus virtually signed His death warrant! However, you find yourself believing Him! Then He prophesied the destruction of the Jewish Temple! This, of course, would include the fall of Jerusalem itself. This, no doubt, would infuriate the Jews. It would alienate the crowds. As you see the climate of the Roman and Jewish relationship, you believe it will indeed happen. (In fact, in A.D. 70 it actually DID happen)! Jesus further explained His second coming is sure to happen also. There would be no warning! He advised everyone to simply watch. Today, the Believers are watching and waiting. Are you a Believer?



**Day 289      Mark Chapters 14 - 16**

Gospels

You, as a Roman soldier, understand the events written in this portion of Mark's Gospel are purely politically motivated. You are very surprised at the speed in which it is carried out. Jesus once again predicted it would happen. One of His own apostles, Judas, betrayed Him. Another of His disciples, Peter, denied Him. All of His disciples deserted Him. The Jewish religious leaders orchestrated a ridiculous trial and condemned Him. The Roman governor, Pilate, delivered Him to be crucified! Joseph of Arimathea donated a tomb and the women buried Him. It all happened so fast, even Pilate "marveled"!

Three days later, Jesus resurrected from the dead! Witnesses saw Him! Before He died, Jesus instituted a "memorial meal"; "communion"; also called "The Lord's Supper" to commemorate His "Death, Burial, and Resurrection". Christians have been worshiping Jesus by "breaking bread" together every Sunday since!

Witnesses also saw Jesus ascend into heaven to sit on the right hand of God. Just before His ascension, He told His disciples to "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". You realize Mark has done this for you as you read his Gospel record. Jesus also said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." You have been given a choice. You have chosen to believe! You want to be saved! When will you be baptized? When will you become a Christian?

**Day 290      Luke Chapter 1**

Gospels

A gentile is anyone who is not Jewish. Luke was a gentile. He was the only gentile writer in the New Testament. Luke also wrote ACTS. He was a physician. Luke spent much time with the apostle Paul. In fact, Luke was probably with Paul when Paul was executed. Luke wrote to someone named Theophilus whose name means “Friend of God”. It’s possible Theophilus had a high-ranking position. Perhaps Luke wanted to show him that Christians are not a threat to the Roman Empire. Followers of Jesus are peace seekers. Christian principles would actually enhance a nation’s strength.

In this first chapter Gabriel, an angel who stands in the presence of God, makes some incredible announcements. Gabriel’s name means “Mighty Man of God”. He was sent to announce the births of John the Baptist and Jesus. In Judaism, women and children have less significant roles in the society. Notice how much of the narrative Luke gives to Elizabeth and Mary, the MOTHERS of John and Jesus. Although Luke explains Jewish prophecies and how they were fulfilled in Jesus, we will see he sheds light on how important Christianity is to all people.

Of course it's all about Jesus! The announcement of Jesus' birth was extraordinary. Both Elizabeth and Mary knew it was very important! Jesus would change the world! John the Baptist's birth was also significant in that he prepared the hearts and minds of the people of the world to receive Christ! A Christian's heart is prepared to receive His word. Are you a Christian?

**Day 291      Luke Chapters 2 - 3**

Gospels

Luke, a gentile physician, is a Christian. He has worked closely with Paul, the apostle of God to the gentiles. Luke is interested in showing the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, that Jesus can change their lives! Matthew, in his Gospel traced Jesus' heritage back to Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation. Luke traces Jesus' genealogy all the way back to Adam, the father of ALL mankind!

Matthew, in his Gospel, told us about the “wise men” who came to honor Jesus at His birth. Luke seems to be more interested in the common man. He told us about the shepherds! Luke told us about Simeon, an old Jewish man. He revealed Jesus was “A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” Jesus came to the world to save all people! Luke told us about Anna, an old widow woman, who also said Jesus was born for “redemption”.

When Jesus was only twelve, He explained, “I must be about my Father’s business?” Jesus submitted to God’s Will throughout His life. He was doing God’s “business” when He died! Christians believe Jesus was born for the redemption of the world. Christians believe it’s His “business”! Are you a Christian?

**Day 292      Luke Chapters 4 - 5**

Gospels

Jesus was tempted in all points just as we are. While fasting in the wilderness, Satan tempted Him with the lust of the flesh (turn stone to bread); the lust of the eyes (showed Him all the kingdoms of the world); the pride of life (cast yourself off the pinnacle of the temple and prove you are the Son of God!). Jesus did not sin! He did not succumb to the temptations! How did He do it? In each case Jesus said, “It is written...”! Whenever we have determined to do “our Father’s business”, we will submit to His Will – what is “written”.

His home town of Nazareth had heard He had done many miracles in other towns. When Jesus claimed to fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy that He was the Messiah, they tried to kill Him! Jesus had power over the demonic realm. He also had power over nature. He caused Simon Peter, a fisherman, to catch a miraculous amount of fish. Unlike His hometown folks, Peter’s response was quite different. He fell down at Jesus’ knees and said, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

Then Jesus announced His power over sin! The Jewish leaders were livid! Jesus showed His interest in sinners when He called a tax collector (a sinner) to follow Him. The man’s name was Levi (Matthew). Jesus explained His action by saying, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Christians know they are sinners. They have repented of their sins and are following Jesus. Are you a Christian?

**Day 293      Luke Chapters 6 - 7**

Gospels

The Sabbath day was one of the Jews' holy days. Over the years, Jewish leaders had distorted its true intent. Jesus said He was "Lord of the Sabbath". He healed on the Sabbath day, despite their strong objections. The Jewish leaders were outraged! They planned to kill Him!

After Jesus chooses His twelve apostles, He taught the most profound teachings mankind has ever heard. They were from His famous "Sermon on the Mount". Jesus began by explaining the type of person who would understand His doctrine. Most wouldn't understand concepts like "Love your enemies" and "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" and "Give"! If we follow these rock solid, fundamental teachings, we would stand firm in the storms of life! Jesus met a Centurion, a Gentile, who had great faith. Jesus said his faith was greater than any Jew he had met! Why? The Jewish leaders were so narrow minded with "law keeping" salvation, that faith was impossible for them.

The sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears had faith! Jesus explained to Simon, one of the Pharisees, that when we recognize our sinfulness, and our inability to save ourselves, we birth a strong faith. We express that faith with our love for Jesus! At this point, our hearts are prepared to be saved from our sins! Christians understand that if we love him, we will keep Jesus' commandments (John 14:15). What are His commandments concerning being saved? Christians know! Are you a Christian?

**Day 294      Luke Chapter 8**

Gospels

Luke takes a few verses to actually name some of the women who were following Jesus. Women were not given much social credence in the Jewish society, but Luke, being a gentile, seemingly had no problem giving credit where credit was due! He acknowledged they were providing for Jesus and His disciples with their own money! Luke makes sure his readers understand there is room in the kingdom for everyone.

Unfortunately not everyone will accept God's Word. Jesus teaches there are four types of "hearts" (**soils**) when it comes to responding to His Word (seed) ... wayside, stony, thorny, and good soil. Three of the four "hearts" of men will ultimately fail. Only one, the good soil, is prepared to produce. We must be careful to prepare our hearts to receive the Word of God. When we do, we must let our light shine. No one lights a candle then hides it under a basket or a bed! Anyone who hears God's word and obeys it is considered Jesus' family!

In this chapter, Jesus shows His power over disaster, demons, disease, and even death! Christians not only believe Jesus did these things during His ministry on earth, they TRUST in His power in their daily lives! Are you a Christian?

**Day 295      Luke Chapter 9**

Gospels

In this chapter of Luke's Gospel we will read about real discipleship! A disciple is a "student" or "learner". Disciples follow their teacher's instruction. First, we see Jesus SENDS His disciples to do the work that He does. He gave them power over demons and disease and told them to preach the kingdom of God. Like the great teacher He is, Jesus told His students to feed the multitude after healing them and preaching the kingdom of God to them. It was time for them to stretch and grow.

Second, Jesus expects His disciples to believe what He SAYS! Sure others had ideas about who He was, but Peter believed the truth! He confessed Jesus was "The Christ of God"! Third, Jesus tells His disciples they must SACRIFICE their own desires and their lives for Him. Fourth, even after Peter, James, and John saw His "glory" they still argued among themselves as to which would be the greatest! James and John even wanted to call fire down from heaven to destroy unbelievers! Then Jesus taught them that true disciples must understand what SPIRIT they are of. Jesus had come to save life, not to destroy it! Finally, Jesus expects His disciples to SERVE! Don't make excuses and don't quit!

Christians go when they are SENT. They believe what Jesus SAYS. They SACRIFICE themselves. They understand what SPIRIT they are of. They SERVE Jesus in the kingdom! Are you a Christian?

**Day 296      Luke Chapters 10 - 11**

Gospels

Jesus has so much to teach! Today's reading shows, through several episodes, that His word will go out to the world. He then contrasts the spirit of those that listen and those that don't. He sends seventy-two of his disciples to teach and heal. He told them to trust God for their provisions. Jesus told them some would listen and some wouldn't. When they get back they are thrilled they had power over demons and disease. Jesus warned them that performing miracles was not the point. They should be happy their names were written in heaven!

When Jesus told a lawyer that loving God and loving neighbors were the greatest commandments, the lawyer asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told the parable of the "Good Samaritan" to teach that anyone in need is your neighbor. The Gospel is for all! Go teach it! However, it's not our individual efforts that will save folks. Martha learned this valuable lesson. We must trust the power of the Gospel. That's why prayer is so important. Jesus taught his disciples how to pray and the value of prayer.

Some of the people accused Jesus of serving "Beelzebub the chief of the devils". Jesus told them that God's kingdom was far more powerful than Satan! Those who hear the Word of God and keep it are Jesus' family! Several in the Old Testament heard the Word of God through people like Jonah and Solomon, but Jesus is greater than them! Those who listen to Jesus are full of "light". Unfortunately, Jesus pronounces "Woes" to them who will not listen. Christians listen to Jesus. Are you a Christian?



**Day 297      Luke Chapters 12 - 13**

Gospels

Jesus' message was one of peace and His work was full of healing. Why did He have to warn His followers not to be afraid? Why would anyone want to harm folks who are striving to do good things? Jesus knew religious leaders would hate Him and anyone who follows Him. They would actually want to kill them all! This was true then, and it is true today!

Many put this world's wealth before God. Jesus assures us we should not worry over things of this world. Instead, we should seek the kingdom God. If we do this, God will provide what we need. The main thing we need to do is WATCH! Jesus has promised He will return. If we get too wrapped up in this world's ways, we will wish we were watching!

Jesus was straightforward. His message would divide the world! Except we repent, we will perish! If we don't "bear fruit", we will be cut down! We will either enter in or find ourselves on the outside. The Jewish religious leaders should have been the very first to accept Jesus, but they would not listen. Jesus is begging us to listen. Christians listen! Are you a Christian?

**Day 298      Luke Chapters 14 - 16**

Gospels

Some think they can be saved by keeping their religious ceremonies and rules. The problem is these rituals become the object of their worship! God should be the object of our worship! This will cause them to be full of pride. When Jesus invites them to His supper, they feel they don't need Him. They have their own religion! They feel they are justified. Jesus said they will never taste His supper!

Those who choose to follow Jesus need to count the cost. It certainly will cost you to practice what He preaches. Jesus wants us all to be saved. He told several parables that indicate how we can be lost. "The Lost Sheep" are those who innocently stray away, but Jesus goes to find them. "The Lost Coins" are those who don't really care or they were lost due to someone's neglect, but Jesus cared enough to find them. "The Lost Son" represents those who willingly leave God, but they are forgiven when they come home!

Those who trust in their own religious "law keeping" simply don't understand they are lost! You can't serve two masters. You must choose between God and the wealth the world offers. The parable of the "Rich Man and Lazarus" shows distinctly what happens to those who depend upon God and those who depend upon themselves. Christians depend upon God! Are you a Christian?

**Day 299      Luke Chapters 17 - 18**

Gospels

Because we are Christians, we will be offended. It is inevitable. The offenders will be punished for their actions, but what should our attitude be? Forgive them! How is that possible? If we think we can do it with our own strength, we are mistaken. Mankind is not capable of that. However, if we have faith in Jesus, even a very small amount, we can do incredible things! Don't get discouraged and quit. This just shows we have put our confidence in the wrong place. When we serve Jesus, we don't deserve any kudos! We are his slaves. He is our Master. Don't lose that perspective!

We must be thankful to Jesus. Nine out of the ten men healed of leprosy did not return to give Jesus thanks. The one that did was a GENTILE! Luke, being a gentile, was pointing out that anyone can be healed. Don't trust in your "heritage", your "religion", or your "goodness", trust in Jesus! When He came to the world at His first coming, He suffered and died to bring salvation. At His second coming, He will bring destruction to those refusing to trust in Him!

The key is to have faith in God! God wants to save us through Jesus' blood. Most people are like the Pharisee in the temple bragging to God about His "service". The real servants are like the one who simply asked God for mercy as he acknowledged his sin! We must become like "little children" and come to Jesus in simple trusting faith. We must not be like the rich, young, ruler who came to Jesus trusting in his own goodness! Christians understand that Jesus died for them and there is absolutely nothing they can do to earn their own salvation. Christians are like the blind man who simply say, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." Are you a Christian?

**Day 300 Luke Chapters 19 - 20**

Gospels

While it's true we can't save ourselves by our good deeds, God expects good deeds! When Jesus went to Zaccheus' home, a sinner, He was criticized by many people. Zaccheus was so penitent that he vowed to give half his "goods" to the poor and restore "fourfold" what he had stolen! Jesus could have said, "Oh, that's not necessary, your faith has saved you" ... but He didn't say that! He acknowledged his actions as an indication of true repentance. He said, "This day is salvation come to this house".

Jesus then told a parable about a nobleman who gave each of his ten servants a certain amount of money. When he returned, the servants had done things that had increased the nobleman's wealth ... except one. He simply wrapped the money in a handkerchief and returned it – nothing lost, nothing gained. Jesus taught that this was unacceptable! He expects His servants to DO something!

When Jesus came to Jerusalem riding on a donkey, He was exalted by many people. Others, however, hated Him and searched for opportunities to discredit Him or have Him killed. Jesus was dismayed over their refusal to hear. The behavior of the people who set up shops in the temple was repulsive to Him. He threw them out! The religious leaders tried to twist His words, but they couldn't. Christians are not like those religious leaders who refuse to obey the truth. Christians trust AND obey! Are you a Christian?

**Day 301      Luke Chapters 21 - 22**

Gospels

The problem with mankind is we measure our “goodness” in relation to other people’s goodness. Who is faster, who is smarter, who has the most money, etc. Jesus said the widow actually gave the most even when, compared to others, it was the least! Don’t brag about how “good” we are, it will all come to nothing. When the disciples bragged about the temple, Jesus prophesied it would be destroyed. It was destroyed by the Roman Emperor, Vespasian, in A.D. 70 – less than forty years later. Some of them who were standing there lived to see it! He told them they couldn’t depend upon their government, their community, or even their family, to be saved. Jesus used this opportunity to prophesy about His second coming. He taught that we always need to watch and be ready. .Our salvation depends upon our faith in Him!

This powerful message was rejected by the religious leaders. They made a deal with Judas, one of Jesus own apostles, to lead them to Jesus when He would be alone. At the Passover meal, Jesus instituted a solemn item of worship. We call it the “Lord’s Supper” or “Communion”. When we participate in this action today, we remember what He did for us on the cross. This humbles us! It causes us to forget about trying to be the greatest. It reminds us that service is the true indicator of greatness!

Peter refused to believe Jesus would die! Jesus prophesied Peter would deny that he even knew Him! Within hours, Peter fulfilled that prophecy! Peter repented and wept bitterly. Like Peter, everyone has sinned! Christians repent of their sins. Are you a Christian?

## Day 302      Luke Chapters 23 - 24

Gospels

Luke made it clear the Roman Governor, Pilate, found Jesus “not guilty” of any crime, especially a crime deserving the death penalty. Nonetheless, the religious leaders prevailed. Jesus was crucified!

Even while dying, Jesus was concerned about others. He asked God, the Father, to forgive the ones who were killing Him! He assured one of the thieves that was crucified with Him that He would be with Him in paradise! Jesus died and was buried.

Up from the grave He arose! His followers had a hard time believing it, but it was true! Before He ascended to Heaven, He “opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures”. Christians pray that their understanding of the Holy Scriptures will be “opened”. Are you a Christian?

**Day 303      John Chapters 1 - 3**

Gospels

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us ...”! John was one of Jesus’ apostles. He may have been the last one to die. During his lifetime John saw the Church established, grow exponentially, begin teaching heresy, and split into fragments! One false doctrine taught that all flesh is sinful. They said since Jesus never sinned, He was never flesh! Jesus just appeared to be flesh! John insisted Jesus was not only God, He was flesh and “dwelt among us”. John 20:31 gives us a key to why John wrote his Gospel. “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” John’s Gospel was written to evangelize!

John the Baptist taught Jesus was the Son of God. One of Jesus’ first followers was Andrew. He brought his brother, Peter, to Jesus. Phillip was another follower. He brought Nathaniel to Jesus. Evangelism was present at the very beginning! Evangelism is bringing others to Christ by preaching the Gospel. When Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding of Cana, His disciples believed Him!

Christians want to bring folks to Jesus. Christians are evangelists. Jesus told Nicodemus, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Jesus said, “Ye must be born again.” Christians are born again! A Christian is “In Christ” and has become a “new creature” (II Corinthians 5:17). How can this be? A Christian has been “baptized into Christ” (Galatians 3:27). Are you a Christian?

**Day 304      John Chapters 4 - 5**

Gospels

Jesus left Judea and traveled to Galilee. On the way, He went through Samaria. There He converted a Samaritan woman. She brought up a religious question that had divided the Jews and the Samaritans for years. Jesus simply said, "... true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth..." After she became a believer, what did she do? She evangelized! She told the people in the city she had found the Christ! Some believed because of her testimony. Others believed because they heard Jesus for themselves.

Jesus healed a crippled man on the Sabbath day. Instead of praising God for the miracle and acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God, they wanted to kill Him! Jesus didn't conform to their religious interpretation of what the Christ should be. Jesus said God had sent the world witnesses of Him. What witnesses? John the Baptist, miracles the Father gave Him to do, the Scriptures, etc. All of these are witnesses to the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God!

Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God! They tell others about Him. They are evangelists! Are you a Christian?



**Day 305      John Chapters 6 - 7**

Gospels

When Jesus fed 5,000 with only five loaves of bread and two fishes, the people believed He was “that prophet that should come into the world”! They were about to take Him and force Him to be their king! Jesus, knowing His Kingdom was not of this world, left them. His disciples boarded a boat, but Jesus did not go with them. Later that night, He came to them walking on the water! The crowd found Him. Jesus boldly told them their heart was in the wrong place. The only reason they followed Him was for the physical food they had miraculously received. Jesus told them He was the “bread of life”! They must believe on Him! Unfortunately, many of them couldn’t. They were not spiritually minded! Their physical mindset prohibited them from seeing the truth and believing on Jesus.

Jesus told them whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood has eternal life! They were confused and began to doubt. Many of them quit following Him. Jesus asked His disciples if they were going to leave also. Peter answered for the group by telling Him they believed He was the Christ, the Son of the living God!

Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God! The world does not! Therefore there is division among the people because of Him. What do you believe? Are you a Christian?

**Day 306      John Chapters 8 - 9**

Gospels

The scribes and Pharisees hated Jesus. They wanted to discredit Him and convince the people He was a false prophet. They brought a woman who was caught in the very act of adultery. Should she be stoned according to the Law of Moses? Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her!" They left her alone! People judge things based on worldly interpretations. His judgment was from God. Jesus explained He brought the Truth, and the Truth would set them free from sin. Many believed. Many others did not.

Those who refused to believe simply couldn't understand the Truth. Jesus said, "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." This is profound! When Jesus promised those who hear His words will never die, the Pharisees pointed out that Abraham and the prophets have died. Was Jesus greater than Abraham? Then Jesus said something that non-believers could not bear, "Before Abraham was, I am"! The term "I AM" is a reference to God Himself. Jesus claimed to be God! This would be blasphemy if it was not true, but it IS true! They tried to kill him for making such a claim!

Jesus healed a man who was born blind to show He was the "Light of the world". Instead of praising God for healing the man, they put the fellow on trial! Jesus told them they were "blind" because they claimed to "see". Christians acknowledge they are "blind" and are sinners. They believe that Jesus is the "Light of the world" who has come to set them free from sin! Are you a Christian?

**Day 307      John Chapters 10 - 11**

Gospels

Jesus had shown He is the “Light of the world”. He goes further to claim He is the “Door of the sheep”. There’s only ONE WAY in and He’s it! The critical point is that only His sheep will follow Him. Why? They recognize His voice! They understand the thief comes to “steal, kill, and destroy”, but Jesus comes to give life! He loves His sheep. He gives His life for His sheep!

Oh how the Pharisees hated Jesus! When He claimed to be the Son of God, they were livid! They tried once again to kill him, but many believed. One of the most powerful events of Jesus’ ministry was when He raised Lazarus from the dead. He told Martha that He is “The Resurrection, and the Life”. Then He asked, “Believest thou this”?

The Pharisees acknowledged that if they didn’t take serious action, “all men” would believe on Jesus. They were afraid Rome would take away their political power and destroy the entire Jewish nation. They justified their decision to kill Jesus by saying that it would be better for one man to die than for the entire nation to suffer. They concluded Jesus should die for the people! How ironic! They didn’t understand that Jesus DID die for the people! Christians know that Jesus died for them. "Believest thou this"? Are you a Christian?

**Day 308      John Chapters 12 - 13**

Gospels

Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. They loved him. Many people became believers when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. While Martha served, Mary anointed Jesus with a very expensive ointment. Judas felt it was a waste of money!

When Jesus entered into Jerusalem many received Him as they would a king! The Pharisees were beside themselves! Jesus knew the time of His death was getting closer. He told His disciples that His death would draw all men to Him. Yet not all men would respond. Their hearts were simply too hard. Their eyes were too blind to see the truth. Even the Pharisees that did believe He was from God would not confess Him because it would jeopardize their positions. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

During the feast of the Passover, Jesus washed His disciples' feet. He knew that pride was a key problem among them. He had to show them that He Himself was a servant! Only humble minded people can follow Christ. Judas was not humble. He could not give up his greed. Jesus told them, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Christians love each other. Are you a Christian?

**Day 309****John Chapters 14 - 16**

GOSPELS

Jesus had just told His disciples He would be killed. Peter insisted he would die for Him. Jesus prophesied Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed the next morning! This troubled Peter and all the apostles. Jesus said, “Let not your heart be troubled”. He went on to explain He must leave to prepare a place in His Father’s House. He would return and take all believers back with Him to heaven.

While Jesus was away preparing a place in His Father’s House, He told everyone that loved Him to keep His commandments. The “Comforter”, which is the Holy Spirit, would be sent after Jesus left. He would give God’s Word and commandments to the apostles to preach to the world. One of the most critical commandments is to “Love one another”.

Jesus is the “Vine”. Christians are the “Branches”. If we remain attached to the “Vine”, we will draw life from Him. Jesus laid down His life to give life to His followers. If we are detached from the “Vine”, we will surely die. Christians remain attached! Are you a Christian?

## Day 310      John Chapters 17 - 18

Gospels

Jesus poured His heart out in prayer just before He was arrested. What do you suspect He prayed for? What would most people pray for under similar circumstances? Jesus prayed for His followers. He knew He was about to leave them. He wanted them to be taken care of. Then Jesus prayed for US! Look carefully at chapter 17 verse 20 ... “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;” That’s ME! If you believe on Jesus through the word given to the apostles ... that’s YOU too!!!

Then it began. Judas betrayed Him. Peter denied Him. The Pharisees lied about Him. Pilate tried Him. The people cried out for Him to be condemned!

Jesus explained to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world. His kingdom is the Church that He built. Christians are members of His kingdom! Jesus is still praying for Christians! Are you a Christian?

**Day 311      John Chapters 19 - 21**

Gospels

Pilate made it clear he had found no fault with Jesus. Certainly he had found nothing worthy of capital punishment! However, the people would not listen to reason. They wanted Him dead. Pilate turned Jesus over to be crucified. The sentence was carried out. His body was placed in a donated grave.

Up from the grave He arose!! Many of His followers saw Him! Those who doubted became believers when they saw Him. Jesus said, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed”! He was talking about US!!!

So much more could be written about what Jesus said and did, but John said, “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” John witnessed so much. He said, “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” Christians believe! Are you a Christian?





**CHAPTER SEVEN**

**The ACTS  
Of The Apostles**

**Day 312 Acts Chapters 1 - 3**

Acts

The Gospel writer, Luke, also wrote “Acts”. Think of it as a sequel. It answers the question, “What happened next?” After Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection, but just before His ascension into heaven, Jesus said in Luke 24:47, “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Luke opens “Acts” recalling the events at the close of his Gospel. He notes the apostles were in an upper room in Jerusalem, the very city where Jesus prophesied the preaching of “repentance and remission of sins” would begin.

The Holy Spirit came upon them and they preached! Peter was the spokesman. In this very first “Gospel Sermon”, Peter proved, from the Old Testament scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ. He boldly reminded the crowd they were the ones who had crucified Him just fifty days before! Many were “pricked in their heart”. They asked Peter and the rest of the apostles what they should do. Peter told them exactly what Jesus said to tell them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” There it was! Beginning in Jerusalem, “Repentance and remission of sins” was preached. Why baptism? Jesus had told them in Mark 16:16 “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...” Three thousand were baptized and “added to the church” (Acts 2:47). In chapter 3, Peter preached the second “Gospel Sermon”. Using different wording, he preached the same message! This time, five thousand believed (Acts 4:4)!

Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God! They believe that He died for our sins and was resurrected from the dead. Beginning in Jerusalem almost 2,000 years ago, they have repented and have been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remissions of sins. Are you a Christian?

**Day 313      Acts Chapters 4 - 6**

Acts

It begins! Since about 8,000 people have believed Jesus is the Son of God, repented, and have been baptized for the remission of sins, this new movement could not be ignored! The leaders arrested Peter and John. They threatened them and commanded them not to preach Jesus anymore. Of course they kept preaching!

Ananias and Sapphira believed the truth. Unfortunately they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. It cost them their lives. More and more people became believers. The leaders confronted the apostles again. This time they beat them. They commanded them not to preach Jesus anymore. Of course they kept preaching! Stephen and six other men were appointed to serve the church. He convinced many people Jesus was indeed the Son of God. They brought him to court because he refused to stop preaching!

Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God so strongly that they refuse to quit preaching! They love the praise of God more than the praise of men. Christians will preach the truth even if the leaders command them to stop. Are you a Christian?

**Day 314 Acts Chapters 7 - 8**

Acts

Having arrested Stephen for preaching Jesus, the leaders brought him before the courts. He gave fundamental proof Jesus was the Son of God. They executed him! A man named Saul participated. He became a radical opponent to this new movement.

Philip held the same office as Stephen in the church. The persecution was so severe, he left Jerusalem, but he didn't quit preaching. In Samaria many believers were baptized. He converted Simon who was involved in sorcery. He, too, believed and was baptized. When Peter visited Samaria, Simon offered a bribe to him. He wanted the power Peter possessed! Peter warned Simon his heart was not right. Simon begged him to pray for him. Philip left Samaria and met a powerful man from Ethiopia. He was the treasurer for the queen. Philip heard him reading Isaiah. He explained the prophet was talking about Jesus! After hearing Philip's teaching, the Ethiopian asked, "Here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said if he believed, he could be. The Ethiopian said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." After his baptism, he "went on his way rejoicing"!

Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God and they tell folks about Him. Some folks will believe them, some will not. That doesn't stop Christians from trying because those that do believe will rejoice! Are you a Christian?

**Day 315 Acts Chapters 9 - 10**

Acts

The death of Stephen caused Christians to leave Jerusalem. Saul, later to be called Paul, pursued them! He obtained written authority to arrest anyone who worshiped in the name of Jesus. His plans were to bring them back to Jerusalem where they would be tried and punished. Jesus had other plans! He appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, a city far north of Jerusalem. It is an understatement to say Saul was shocked when he found out that Jesus was indeed Lord and Christ! Saul asked the most important question that any human being can asked, "What wilt thou have me to do?" There was something for Saul to do. Jesus said, "Go into the city and it will be told thee what to do." Saul was blinded by the experience. After three days of prayer and fasting, Jesus sent Ananias to heal Saul and tell him what to do. After Saul was baptized, he preached Jesus! This cost him his friends, his career, and ultimately his life! At first Peter and the other apostles were skeptical of Saul. Barnabas, who had become a Christian in the very beginning, vouched for Saul. Since Saul's life was now in great danger, they sent him home to Tarsus.

Persecution subsided a little. This gave Peter an opportunity to move about the region and preach the Gospel. He healed a lame man and even raised a woman from the dead! This opened the door for him to preach to even more people. Imagine Peter's surprise when he was sent to preach to a Gentile! Peter, being a Jew, was reared to believe the Gentiles had no access to Jehovah God. When he was sent to Cornelius, a Roman Centurion, Peter had a new perception: "God is no respecter of persons"! Cornelius and his family were baptized into Christ and added to the church.

Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God. It doesn't matter what your background is. Did you kill Christians like Saul? It doesn't matter what your race is. Are you a Roman soldier like Cornelius? Regardless, you can become a Christian just like they did. Are you a Christian?

**Day 316 Acts Chapters 11 - 13**

Acts

When the Jewish Christians heard that Peter had preached to Gentiles and accepted fellowship with them, they were very upset. Years of Jewish tradition had been breached. They just couldn't understand it. Why had Peter done such a thing? When Peter explained that God authorized it, they submitted and glorified God!

The church grew exponentially! Many strong congregations of the church were established. Antioch in Syria had one of those congregations. Barnabas was sent to check on them. He was so happy to find such a wonderful, and diverse, group of Christians worshipping together. Barnabas knew Saul would be good for the church there. He found Saul at Tarsus and brought him to Antioch. After a while, the Holy Spirit called Saul (Paul) and Barnabas to go on a mission trip. They took John Mark and went to Cyprus, Barnabas' home. From there they went to Perga. John Mark left and went back to Jerusalem. This will cause a problem later. Barnabas and Paul preached in Pisidia, in another city named Antioch. There the Jews were not kind. Most simply could not accept Jesus was the Christ. Paul and Barnabas told them they, the Jews, should have been the first to believe the truth. Since they refused, they would turn their attention to Gentiles!

Some people struggle with their own traditions and belief systems. It's very difficult to give up what you have been taught your whole life. Few people can submit to God's truth and surrender their own world view. Christians can submit and glorify God. Are you a Christian?

**Day 317      Acts Chapters 14 - 16**

Acts

Paul and Barnabas continued their missionary journey. Having left Antioch in Pisidia, where they were largely rejected by the Jewish community, they went to Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Even though God performed mighty miracles through them, the Jews from Antioch were able to persuade the Gentiles to reject them. They stoned Paul! God raised him up and he and Barnabas traveled the next day! They retraced their steps back through Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, Perga, etc. checking on the congregations they had established in those areas. They finally made it back to Antioch in Syria and reported on their mission trip. The church was so glad to hear of their successes.

Many Jewish Christians struggled when they heard a lot of Gentiles were being added to the church. They couldn't give up their traditions and teachings, especially circumcision. This had been at the heart of Jewish doctrine since Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation! They believed the Gentiles must be circumcised in order to be saved. Paul and Barnabas disagreed. This was an important doctrinal issue that had to be resolved. They carried the question to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. After much discussion, it was decided circumcision, nor other commandments of the law, was not to be imposed upon the Gentiles. They told them to observe certain "necessary things" to maintain harmony between Jew and Gentile Christians.

Paul and Barnabas set off on another mission trip, but this time they separated. Barnabas took John Mark and Paul chose Silas. Paul picks up Timothy and Luke during this second trip. At Philippi they baptize Lydia (a Jewess) and the Philippian Jailor (a Gentile). Paul believed in unity among Christians! There was no room in Paul's mind to divide the church into denominations. Christians are dedicated to maintaining the unity of the Spirit. Are you a Christian?

**Day 318 Acts Chapters 17 - 18**

Acts

Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke baptized several at Philippi. When Paul was asked to leave, he carried Silas and Timothy to Thessalonica. Luke didn't go with the team. Though many believed, the Jews could not stand to let the message flourish. They incited division, riots, and even assault! Paul took the team to Berea, a nearby city. The Bereans were "noble" than those in Thessalonica because they searched the scriptures to evaluate the validity of Paul's message. They didn't depend on the emotional bias of men. Unfortunately, the Jews successfully baited many of them into resisting Paul.

Paul left Silas and Timothy in that area to strengthen the church that had been established. He left them instructions to follow him as soon as they could. He went to Athens where he preached at "Mars Hill", a worship center. The Athenians believed themselves to be educationally elite and religiously superior. When Paul told them about the resurrection of Jesus, most of them laughed at the idea! There were only a few converts at Athens. Paul moved on to Corinth. He met Aquila and his wife Priscilla. They were tentmakers, as was Paul. He began working with them. When Silas and Timothy finally joined Paul they brought him wonderful news. Christianity was flourishing in Thessalonica! Paul wrote them two letters within the next few months. We call them I & II Thessalonians!

Paul took Aquila and Priscilla with him when he left Corinth. They went to Ephesus. He left them there, promising to return as soon as he could. He wanted to visit Jerusalem and go to Antioch in Syria to report on this second mission trip. While he was gone, Aquila and Priscilla met and converted Apollos. He was a wonderful preacher. He left Ephesus and moved to Corinth where he "helped them much"! Christians don't allow prejudice and divisive rhetoric to influence their thinking. Christians "search the scriptures"! Are you a Christian?



**Day 319 Acts Chapters 19 - 20**

Acts

Paul sets off on his third mission trip from Antioch in Syria. He headed straight for Ephesus where he had left his friends, Aquila and Priscilla. On his way there he met twelve men who were dedicated followers of John the Baptist. They had not heard the “rest of the story”! They had not heard about Jesus. After preaching the Gospel, Paul baptized them in Jesus’ name.

When Paul reached Ephesus a great ministry began. People were becoming Christians in large numbers. They gave up their false religious beliefs and followed Jesus. Even those who practiced false exorcism recognized the authority of Jesus. They tried to “hijack” that authority. It didn’t work! Paul heard the church in Corinth was having a lot of problems. He wrote a letter to them addressing these issues. We call it I Corinthians.

Christianity was gaining such popularity in Ephesus even the economy was effected. Demetrius was a silversmith. His business depended upon the sale of idols to the goddess Diana. With Christianity on the rise, his business was down! He organized an impressive union to advocate against Christianity. It worked! Paul had to leave town! He traveled to Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, etc. He wrote another letter to the Corinthians. We call it II Corinthians. In part of this letter, he asked for money to carry to Christians in Jerusalem who were suffering from a famine. Paul knew he wasn’t popular in Jerusalem, but he had to go. Christians realize they are not welcome in certain circles, yet they practice their faith anyway. Are you a Christian?

**Day 320 Acts Chapters 21 - 22**

Acts

Luke had rejoined Paul's team as they made their way to Jerusalem. The churches in Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, etc.) and Greece (Athens, Corinth, etc.) sent representatives from their congregations with Paul. Since Paul was taking a lot of money and supplies to Jerusalem, these men were chosen to escort him. While Paul was at Corinth, he wrote a letter to the church at Rome. We call it Romans. He explained he planned to visit them when he finished his trip to Jerusalem. As he got closer to Jerusalem, different Christians warned him (even begged him) not to go. They knew he would be arrested. Paul was willing to be killed for Jesus, he was determined to go!

Paul, Luke, and others met with James (the half-brother of Jesus) and the elders of the church. Paul's team was well received. Everyone was happy to see them. They knew, however, Paul would not be welcome among the Jews. They encouraged Paul to keep a certain Jewish custom to show he was not an enemy to the Jewish people. Paul agreed. He had always promoted peace and unity. Sadly, most don't promote peace and unity. There were some in the city who recognized Paul and incited the Jews against him. They would have killed him, but the federal government protected him. The Roman Chief Captain saved him from public execution. Paul tried to explain to them Jesus was the Christ and had sent him to preach salvation to the Gentiles. This enraged their prejudiced minds. They decided then and there to kill Paul. Fortunately he was in protective custody.

Christians are being arrested and killed for their faith every day. So far, we in America have been protected from such severe persecution. Pray that we will continue to enjoy this freedom. Christians will keep the faith and do God's Will even without this freedom. Are you a Christian?

**Day 321 Acts Chapters 23 - 25**

Acts

The Chief Captain, Claudius Lysias, had rescued Paul from certain death. He later learned that Paul was a Roman citizen! This entitled him with many rights and privileges. It was also a political disaster in the making! Lysias wanted this case resolved as soon as possible. He sent Paul to the Jewish court. The court split its opinion causing a great dissention. Lysias had to forcibly remove Paul from the courtroom!

More than forty Jews conspired to assassinate Paul. When Lysias learned about it, he transferred Paul from Jerusalem to Caesarea. Felix, the governor, heard Paul's case. The Jews mounted a prosecution against him, but there was no evidence to convict. Felix could have dismissed the charges and freed Paul, but it wouldn't be politically expedient! Felix met with him privately. Paul spoke of "Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come". Felix trembled, yet chose to be "politically correct".

Felix was transferred and Festus took his place. He asked Paul to go back to Jerusalem to try to resolve his case. Paul knew he would be killed. He exercised his rights as a citizen and appealed to the highest court in the land - Caesar himself! If Christians are protected by legal rights, we should exercise them! Christians may face "politically correct" crowds, but they speak out on "Righteousness (what is right), Temperance (self-control to do what is right), and Judgment to come (accountability as to whether or not we actually do what is right). Are you a Christian?

**Day 322 Acts Chapters 26 - 28**

Acts

Festus had received Paul's appeal to Caesar. It was incumbent upon him to write a letter listing the charges levied against Paul. Since there was obviously no credible evidence, he enlisted the help of King Agrippa. Perhaps he could help him with this political "hot potato"! When Paul's day in court came to appear before Agrippa, he used it to preach the Gospel! He wasn't worried about political correctness!

At the conclusion of his speech, Paul told Agrippa (and the court) that he knew Agrippa believed. Agrippa was an "expert" in the Jewish customs and traditions. The Old Testament was their bedrock. Paul had used the Old Testament to prove that Jesus was the Christ! Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"! He could have freed Paul, but he allowed political forces and legal interpretations to give him an excuse to send Paul's case to the Supreme Court.

Paul was transferred to Rome. During his trip he was shipwrecked and spent the winter on an island, but God was with him all the way. God WANTED him to go to Rome! God WANTED him to appear before the Supreme Court. God WANTED him to see Caesar! Christians should not be afraid of the political forces of the world. They are powerful indeed, but Christians trust in a much higher power! Christians pray that God will use these forces for the good of the country! Are you a Christian?

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# The Fourteen Letters of Paul

Romans

I & II Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

I & II Thessalonians

I & II Timothy

Titus

Philemon

Hebrews

**Day 323      Romans Chapters 1 - 3**      Paul's Letters

Paul was on his third mission trip. He was in Corinth. He had spent time in Corinth during his second mission trip. Paul had come back to strengthen the church and collect support for a project. Jerusalem was under a severe famine. He wanted Christians among the Gentiles to help these Jews. This could help break down the barrier between Jews and Gentiles. Since this prejudice was on his mind, much of this letter is designed to teach against Jew and Gentile division. Paul planned to deliver the support to Jerusalem then go on a mission trip to Spain. He would visit the church in Rome first. Paul fully expected them to support his trip to Spain.

The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write the Roman letter. In this letter he lays out a simple “Road Map” or “Plan” of Salvation for all of mankind. The first step on this “Road” is to recognize the problem. This first portion proves that all Gentiles are sinners. He then made it clear that all Jews, in spite of their trust in law keeping, are also sinners. In fact, he stated plainly in Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”!

Before anyone can be saved from the penalty their sin problem brings, they must acknowledge they have the problem! Paul is urging us to listen to the truth about sin and believe we are sinners needing to be saved. We must genuinely be sorry for our sins! Christians have taken those first “Steps” down that “Road” to Salvation. Are you a Christian?

**Day 324      Romans Chapters 4 - 7**

Paul's Letters

Paul has identified mankind's problem – SIN! Man is completely incapable of solving this problem. Now what? While we were yet sinners, God showed His matchless love when Jesus Christ died for us! Why did he have to die? The “wages” or “payment” for sin is DEATH! The Good News (Gospel) is that the gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ!! He died in our place!

Paul plainly asked, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?” Those who have been baptized into Jesus Christ, have “died” with Him! Just as He died, was buried, and rose again, we (in our baptism) died to our old sinful man, buried that “old man” with Him, and have risen never to serve sin again. We don't allow sin to “reign” in our “mortal bodies”. Can we sin since we are under God's Grace? God forbid! The fact is we are saved by God's Grace. We are not saved by keeping the law. Even the most casual observer must acknowledge that no one can keep the law perfectly. What a dilemma! Sin or not to Sin, that is the question!

We are “dead to sin” yet, in our flesh, we still sin!! We understand the sentiment of Paul as he cried out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Christians understand that God can and does deliver us! How? “Through Jesus Christ our Lord”! Christians have heard the Gospel, they have acknowledged their sin problem, as they recognize God's love for them by sending Christ to die for them, they have repented, and they have been “buried with him by baptism”! Are you a Christian?

**Day 325      Romans Chapters 8 - 10**      Paul's Letters

Paul has explained that everyone has sinned (Romans 3:23). The punishment for sins is death (Romans 6:23a). God's showed His love for mankind when He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to die instead of us (Romans 5:8). Instead of death, we have eternal life through Christ. That is the FREE GIFT from God! (Romans 6:23b). In all these things we are "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37). No one can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39)! Jesus died, buried, and conquered death when He was raised from the dead! This is the Gospel or Good News!

Anyone CAN be saved (Romans 10:13). Who WILL be saved? There is "no condemnation to them which are IN CHRIST Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1). Who is IN CHRIST? A person must hear the word and believe it (Romans 10:17). They must repent (changed life produced by Godly Sorrow) of their sins (Romans 6:12-13). Their belief that God raised Jesus from the dead moves them to confess Jesus (Romans 10:9-10). Then they are buried with Him by baptism INTO His death (Romans 6:3). After they are raised from their baptism, as Jesus was raised from the dead, they walk a new life because they have buried their sinful "old man". The folks who get on that ROAD and yield to that PLAN are IN CHRIST! They have "obeyed the Gospel"!!!

Unfortunately, Paul says something in Romans 10:16 that was true then and is still true today ... "But they have not all obeyed the gospel..."! Why? For the same reason people have always rejected God's word. "... For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" The problem is that most people won't believe! Christians believe! They "obey the Gospel"! Are you a Christian?



**Day 326      Romans Chapters 11 - 14      Paul's Letters**

Everyone who is IN CHRIST is saved. What a marvelous assurance! This upset many Jews. They were “God’s chosen people”. If God accepts the Gentiles (non-Jews), has He “cast away” His people, the Jews? Absolutely not! Jews can still be saved. However, they are not saved by keeping the law. They can only be saved through Christ. They, like the Gentiles, must “obey the Gospel”! Most Jews won’t! They simply won’t believe the truth about Jesus. A “remnant” will. Like it was in the days of Elijah, when a “remnant” had not bowed the knee to the false god, Baal, so it is among the Jews, a “remnant” will be saved.

However, we Gentiles must be careful not to “boast”. Don’t think we are beyond falling. Paul said in Romans 11:21, “If God spared not the natural branches, (Jews), take heed lest he also spare not thee. (Gentiles)”! Why did the Jews “fall”? It was because of unbelief! If we don’t believe, we can’t be saved! Here is the “Mystery”. Anyone who is IN CHRIST is among the “People of God”. All who have “obeyed the Gospel” is the “true Israel”. So, ALL Israel (the church of God) shall be saved!

Those who are IN CHRIST and have been added to His Church live differently from the world. They don’t think of themselves above everyone else. They use the gifts God has given them wisely. They genuinely love others. They hate evil. They cling to good. Paul gives other descriptions of their lifestyle, but simply put - they are Christians! Are you a Christian?

**Day 327      Romans Chapters 15 - 16**      Paul's Letters

As we finish Paul's letter to the Romans, let's note in the first chapter (Romans 1:5) Paul promoted "obedience to faith among all nations". In the last chapter (Romans 16:26) Paul says, "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith". The content of the letter is "sandwiched" between these common statements. ALL NATIONS (Jew & Gentile) are invited to "OBEY" the "FAITH". His entire letter is urging everyone to follow the "Road" or "Plan" of Salvation. Anyone who does this has "obeyed the Gospel" and is IN CHRIST. The Gospel is for all!

Paul ends this letter with a call for unity among the believers. He encouraged us not to "please ourselves". Instead we should edify our fellow man. Since Christ came to save others, shouldn't we follow that example? Jesus died for everyone, not just a particular race or creed. He wants everyone to "obey the Gospel".

Christians seek unity. They don't want to be divided. They want the doctrine of Christ to be held in the highest esteem. That's why Paul ended his letter with this call for unity. He even said, "... mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (innocent)." Sound familiar? Again, Christians seek doctrinal unity. Are you a Christian?

**Day 328     I Corinthians Chapters 1 - 4** Paul's Letters

Paul had worked with Aquila & Priscilla in Corinth during his second mission trip. He is now on his third mission trip. At that time he was teaching in a school in Ephesus. Many preachers and teachers were being taught and sent throughout the region to preach the Gospel. During this time, Paul heard the congregation in Corinth was having a lot of problems. He addressed these issues in this letter

Paul acknowledged he was writing to Christians in Corinth. He called them “sanctified”. He was thankful for the “gifts” they had been given. He even said they were “called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord”. However, they were divided! They magnified men instead of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ! The Gospel truth is all that matters. Jews deny it because they refuse to acknowledge its power is truly from God. They want more “signs”. Gentiles dismiss it as being simply a foolish doctrine. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus just don't make sense to them.

The facts are that the Gospel IS powerful! The Gospel IS NOT foolish. It may be considered impotent and foolish to most, but to Christians it is the wisdom of God. Christians are the “temple of God”. The Spirit of God dwells in them. Christians are not concerned about being judged by non-believers. They are more concerned about how God judges them! Are you a Christian?

## Day 329 I Corinthians Chapters 5 - 8 Paul's Letters

The Corinthian congregation was allowing an immoral person to stay in the fellowship. He was having an affair with his step mother! Paul told them to remove him from the fellowship. This was a disciplinary action designed to correct his behavior. Perhaps he would repent. The Corinthian Christians were also suing each other in public courts allowing non-believers to settle their disputes. Paul told them to reconcile their differences among themselves.

Paul reminded them that immorality would not be tolerated by God. The Corinthians used to be immoral, but they had been “washed” clean! Their bodies don’t belong to them. They should use their bodies to glorify God. What about Christians who were married to non-believers. Are their bodies defiled by being married to them? Should they leave them? Paul explained if the non-believing spouse wants to stay married, the Christian shouldn’t leave. It’s possible the Christian can still convert them. Of course the Christian can’t help it if the non-believer decides to leave. What about their daughters who had never been married? Can they get married? Paul said it would be great to stay single and serve God, but if they get married they haven’t sinned.

What about eating meat that had been offered to an idol? Paul told them the idol is nothing! Eating the meat is not sinful. However there are folks whose conscience won’t let them eat the meat. Don’t offend their conscience! Don’t eat the meat! Christians realize it’s never about satisfying their own fleshly lusts and desires. They remove themselves from the equation. Christians know that it is all about Christ living in them! Are you a Christian?

**Day 330 I Corinthians Chapters 9 - 11** Paul's Letters

They were so divided in the Corinth congregation some even questioned the Apostleship authority of Paul. He defended his authority, but he noted he often didn't use it. He wanted to keep unity among the brotherhood. Paul reminded them of the sins of Israel's past. They had been saved from Egyptian bondage, but they died in the wilderness! He drove the point home by saying, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." You simply can't sit at the devil's table and the Lord's Table at the same time! Whatever we do, we should do it for God's glory.

The Corinthians misunderstood the role of women and men in the church. Paul taught it was God's Will that men have the authority and that women were very important in their role. When men do things their own way, they often miss the point! That was the case when it came to Communion (The Lord's Supper). Each week when they met, they abused and disrespected its true meaning. Paul told them when they came together, which God commanded them to do every Sunday, they were to take the Lord's Supper in a specific way for a specific purpose.

Mankind wants to do things their way for their reasons. Christians do things God's way for God's reasons. Are you a Christian?

## Day 331 I Corinthians Chapters 12 - 14 Paul's Letters

God had blessed the church at Corinth with the ability to do wonderful things. Paul was thankful they had these gifts. When Paul listed them, he put the speaking & interpretation of tongues last on the list. Why? They had elevated the gifts of tongues! The Corinthians decided having that particular gift made them more important than those who had the other gifts. By putting that gift dead last on the list, Paul may have shown them this gift wasn't to be regarded as a "top of the list" item!

Actually, every gift God gives is important. We are members of Christ's body. His body is the Church. Every single one of us is serving a vital role as we exercise the gift we have been given. It doesn't matter if we are an "eye" or an "ear", we provide an important service to Christ's Church. However, without love, these gifts (and our use of them) mean absolutely nothing! We are to use the gifts we have to glorify God, not ourselves.

That's essentially the problem. Without love of God and our fellow man, we will glorify ourselves. Even those who claim to have the ability to heal people miraculously often bring attention to themselves. They want people to believe they are somehow more in touch with God. Christians understand that they are bringing glory to God in whatever capacity God has given them the ability to operate. There is no "top of the list" or "bottom of the list"! Are you bringing Glory to God? Are you a Christian?

**Day 332**     **I Corinthians Chapters 15 - 16** Paul's Letters

In this last section of the letter, Paul reminded the Corinthians that the Gospel is our salvation. The fact that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and then raised the third day. If we focus on this bedrock truth, we will have no time (or desire) to elevate ourselves or divide ourselves into different groups. If we take our eyes off this fundamental truth, we will fall into the same problems the Corinthians did.

Adam introduced death into the world. Since Adam, all men die (with the exception of Enoch and Elijah), but Christ resurrected from the dead. His victory over death gave us great assurance that we will be raised from the dead! We have lived in this natural body and we will put on a new and glorious body. A body that will be designed to serve Him forever without the limitations our earthly body has.

In the meantime we are to obey God in this life. Paul told the Corinthians (and us) to lay money aside every Sunday to support the work of the Lord. He encouraged the Corinthians (and us) to watch and stand fast in the faith. Christians' motivation in all their activities is love. Are you a Christian?

## Day 333 II Corinthians Chapters 1 - 4 Paul's Letters

At the close of the I Corinthian letter, Paul told them he would like to spend the winter with them. He wanted to stay in Ephesus a while longer. Sadly, Paul was forced out of town. The silversmiths started a riot against Paul and the Christians. Instead of going to Corinth, Paul went to Macedonia. This upset some of the Corinthians, especially those that didn't believe Paul was truly an Apostle.

Paul told them the real reason he didn't come straight to them was to "spare" them. He didn't want to come in "heaviness". He acknowledged the first Corinthian letter had been harsh, but he assured them it was written with love. They had not resolved some of the issues he addressed in the first letter. Paul wanted to wait and give them more time to settle some things.

Some believed Paul needed a "letter of commendation" from some source of authority. Paul told them the existence of the Corinthian church WAS his letter! He had a ministry from God. He intended to fulfill it, with or without their approval. He considered all the many afflictions he has gone through to be "light" compared to the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"! Christians understand that! Are you a Christian?



**Day 334     II Corinthians Chapters 5 - 8** Paul's Letters

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he had taught about the "Spiritual Body" we will receive. There may have been some in Corinth who didn't understand how serious this teaching was. Paul assured them in this section of his second letter that it was absolutely true! We walk by faith, not by sight! He went on to teach we will one day stand in judgment for the things we have done in this body, whether it be good or bad. Those who are "In Christ" are "New Creatures". They don't cling to the "Old Things". They participate in the "New"!

Paul explained he was a worker for Christ. He didn't hold onto "Old Things". It had cost him a lot, but it was worth it. He encouraged the Corinthians to separate themselves from the "Old Things" also. You can't be in the "light" and in the "darkness" at the same time!

Paul told the Corinthians he had been bragging about them to his friends. He wanted them to know he had confidence in them! That's the reason he wrote the first letter to them. Even though it was harsh, he wasn't trying to condemn, he was trying to get them to do right! He just wanted to show them how much he loved them. He encouraged them to accept Titus, his helper, along with the others that came with him. They were good men and cared deeply for the Corinthians. Christians recognize when people are trying to help them. They admit when they have done wrong and repent. Are you a Christian?

## Day 335 II Corinthians Chapters 9 - 13 Paul's Letters

Jerusalem had suffered an intense famine leaving many destitute. Paul had told the Corinthians in his first letter to them that he planned to help them. He had told them to “lay by in store” every Sunday “that there be no gatherings” when he arrives. In this portion of his second letter, he reminds them to be generous with their gift.

There were some in Corinth who criticized Paul. They doubted his apostolic authority. They accused him of being “strong” in his letter, but “weak” in person. Paul used the last section of this letter to defend the authority Christ has given him as an apostle. He gave more than enough evidence of his authority and his dedication to the Gospel. He felt bad about “boasting”, but he insisted that they forced him to do it.

Paul was looking forward to seeing them, but wanted it to be a “happy reunion”. That’s why he wrote the letters. He wanted to be sure they corrected their behavior before he got there so he would not have to use “sharpness” with them. Christians will correct their behavior whenever they realize they are wrong. Are you a Christian?

**Day 336 Galatians Chapters 1 - 4** Paul's Letters

As you read this letter, imagine you are living in Galatia (present day Turkey). Paul had spent a lot of time during his mission trip establishing churches in the Galatian cities. You live in one of those cities. There is a strong Jewish community in your town. The Jewish leaders have come into your congregation and have been very successful convincing people that the Christian movement is a mistake. They are telling them they must keep the Law of Moses to be saved. They insisted salvation was through the Jewish nation. If you don't accept the Jews as the people of God, you will be condemned. The Jewish leaders accused Paul of deceiving people with a false doctrine. They claimed he had no authority whatsoever. As a result of this message, many in your congregation are beginning to leave the church of Jesus Christ

In this letter Paul defended his authority reminding everyone that Jesus Himself gave him the gospel that he preached. He warned them that if anyone preaches any other doctrine they should be cursed. Paul pointed out that even Abraham, the father of the Jewish race, was saved by faith and not by keeping the Law. In fact, the Law of Moses was not even given at the time Abraham lived! He explained the purpose of the Law was to prepare and teach us about the coming of Jesus Christ that we may be saved through Him! If anyone believed that God's salvation is only found in the nation of Israel, Paul clearly showed there was a huge difference between being born of flesh and being born of promise! No one is a child of God through race, social status, gender, or other such thing. Children of God are born of promise and saved through faith! Anyone can be a child of God!

Paul explained it best this way in Chapter 3:26 – 29: “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” When you read Paul's letter you realize you can be just a Christian! Are you a Christian?

**Day 337 Galatians Chapters 5 - 6** Paul's Letters

You are imagining yourself to be one of the Galatians reading this letter for the first time. Several Jewish leaders have convinced many of the followers of Christ Paul had been deceiving them. The first four chapters of Paul's letter have convinced you that Paul was telling the truth! Paul spends these last two chapters encouraging you to keep the faith!

“You are Free! Why do you want to go back into bondage?” That's Paul's question. The grace that is found through Christ has set us free from law keeping. If you try to be justified by the law, you are fallen from grace! Surely you prefer God's grace!

We have a choice between being led by the flesh and being led by the Spirit. You can easily recognize those who live their life fulfilling the desires of their flesh. They are anything from adulterers to murderers! You can also recognize those who live their life fulfilling the desire of the Spirit. They are everything from loving to faithful folks. Christians are led by the Spirit. Are you a Christian?

**Day 338      Ephesians Chapters 1 - 2**      Paul's Letters

Paul wrote some of his letters from a Roman prison. He was actually under house arrest, but he was nonetheless a prisoner. We call these letters the “Prison Epistles”. His letter to Ephesus is one of those letters. He had spent a few years in Ephesus. A couple of those years he taught in a Christian school. His students then went out into the world to spread the Gospel. Paul had a disciple in Rome named Tychicus. He instructed him to deliver this letter to the Ephesians and tell them how things were going with him in Rome. They would be glad to hear he was doing well.

The first part of the first chapter explained that we have blessed assurance of our salvation! God has sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to save everyone, both Jews and Gentile alike, if they will trust and obey the gospel. Paul reminded them that salvation was only found through Christ. He also reminded them they were once sinners. As such, they were without hope and dead! Thankfully, through Christ, they are saved by grace through faith! They are no longer dead, but alive! They are no longer without hope and without God, but have peace with God. They are no longer “far away” from God, but are “nigh”. They are no longer strangers and foreigners, but citizens! Wow! These are wonderful ways to express the assurance of our salvation!

The Jews were known as God's chosen people. There was (and still is) a huge cultural and religious divide between Jews and Gentiles. Paul was known as the “Apostle to the Gentiles”. He proclaimed the good news that both Jews and Gentiles are united in Christ! Those that have obeyed the gospel are all Christians! Are you a Christian?

**Day 339      Ephesians Chapters 3 - 6**      Paul's Letters

Paul was privileged to reveal the “Mystery” of God to the world. God’s “Mystery” was hidden since the beginning. The “Mystery” is that all mankind is saved through Jesus Christ! Your nationality no longer matters (Jew or Gentile). Your social status, education, gender, wealth, etc. does not dictate your standing with God. Everyone can be fellow heirs of God and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel! We think so narrowly! We can’t comprehend what God can do through us. God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us!

Since God is able to save us and powerfully work through us, shouldn’t we live better, act better, and do better? God expresses Himself in unity and “oneness”. However, we each are given a gift! These gifts are diverse. These gifts are given to equip the saints, do the work of the ministry, and edify the body of Christ. There are many of us, but we operate through His one “body”. Shouldn’t we allow Him to use us as it pleases Him? Shouldn’t we speak the truth in love? Shouldn’t we “put off” our old selfish lifestyle and “put on” a new lifestyle which seeks to be holy and righteous? We were once in darkness, now we are in the Light! It doesn’t matter if we are wives, husbands, children, servants, or masters. Regardless of our lot in life, we have a high calling to live for God.

Satan, the devil, will attack us when we begin to live by this great “Mystery”. People with “flesh and blood” are not the real enemy. It’s “principalities”, “powers”, “rulers of the darkness of this world”, and “spiritual wickedness in high places” that Paul encouraged us to be prepared to stand against. They will not quit, neither should we! Christians who have prepared themselves will stand! Are you a Christian?

## Day 340      **Philippians**

Paul's Letters

The Christians at Philippi heard that Paul was in prison at Rome. They loved him very much. They remembered how he and Silas powerfully converted the Philippian jailer and baptized him and his family one night. Lydia, the seller of purple, along with her family was also a baptized believer from Philippi. They knew Paul would need money and supplies. They sent Epaphroditus to Rome with a generous gift for Paul.

Paul appreciated the gift from the Philippians. He wrote this letter to thank them for their kindness. The words “joy” and “rejoice” are repeated throughout the letter. It's hard to imagine someone in prison being so joyful! Paul had learned this attitude. He told them, “I have learned; in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” He also said things like, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”; “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ”; “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before”; and “I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.”

Regardless of our circumstances, we can be “joyful”! It's not the “Power of Positive Thinking” or the “I'm Ok; You're Ok” mentality. It's the assurance of knowing that Christ is our Rock! Christians lean on Him! Are you a Christian?

## Day 341 Colossians

Paul's Letters

While Paul was in prison he had written a letter to Ephesus which was delivered by Tychicus. Another man named Onesimus went with him. Onesimus was a runaway slave. He belonged to Philemon. They lived in Colossae. Paul encouraged Onesimus to return home. Epaphras was a Christian. He had told Paul how faithful the Colossian church was. Paul was thrilled. Since Tychicus and Onesimus were going to Colossae, he wrote this letter to the Colossian church. The content is very similar to the letter he had written to the Ephesians.

Paul's letter to the Colossians reminded them of bedrock Christian doctrines and the Power of God through Christ. He assured them that Christ's blood would present them "holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight"! This is blessed assurance. However, Paul noted this assurance is conditional, "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel"! Paul went on to explain that the Gospel is for all. Just as he told the Ephesians, there is no difference in Christ regardless of your cultural, racial, or social background. He warned them not to let anyone rob them of the freedom they have found in Christ. Jews were trying to force Gentiles to be bound by the Law of Moses. Paul assured them Christ had taken the Law and its "ordinances" out of the way by "nailing it to His cross"! Paul told these Christians, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances ... after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

Paul said that Christians have been "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead". He also said that "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Christians don't use their bodies and lives like the world. They use them for Christ. Paul points out one thing that is vital, "And above all these things put on charity (love), which is the bond of perfectness." Christians have found that the "tie that binds" is LOVE! Are you a Christian?



**Day 342 Philemon**

Paul's Letters

While in prison at Rome Paul met Onesimus, a runaway slave. Paul encouraged him to return home. He belonged to a Colossian named Philemon. Paul knew Philemon and most likely introduced him to Jesus. Paul wrote this letter to Philemon asking him to be kind to Onesimus and receive him as a brother in Christ.

Paul complimented Philemon for his love and faith. Since Paul expected to be released from prison after his trial, he told Philemon that he planned to visit Colossae. He asked him to prepare him a place to stay.

This letter to Philemon is a prime example of how we can stand up for our brothers and sisters in Christ. The penalty to a runaway slave was severe. Paul offered to pay any expenses that Onesimus owed. Remember Paul was in prison! He didn't have a job! Yet he stood up for his brother, Onesimus. There could have been a serious division between Philemon and Onesimus. Because Paul was willing to stand up for Onesimus and appeal to his friend, Philemon, we believe that unity prevailed. Christians seek peace among the brotherhood. They don't sow discord! Are you a Christian?

**Day 343**     **I Thessalonians Chapters 1 - 3** Paul's Letters

During Paul's second missionary journey he visited Philippi in Macedonia. Timothy, Silas, and Luke were with him. After baptizing the Philippian jailer and Lydia, three of them moved on to Thessalonica. Luke didn't go with them. Some of Thessalonians obeyed the gospel, but trouble soon broke out. The team had to move on. They went to Berea. The people of Berea were more fair minded than the Thessalonians in that they studied more carefully to prove what Paul, Silas, and Timothy were teaching was indeed the truth. Many became Christians in Berea. Paul thought it best to leave Silas and Timothy to work at Berea and keep a check on the new converts in Thessalonica while he moved on to Athens in Achaia.

Paul got a mediocre reception in Athens. He moved on to Corinth. He met Aquila and Priscilla. They were tentmakers. Since Paul was also a tentmaker, he worked with them. After a while, Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia to Achaia. They found Paul and gave him some good news! The church at Thessalonica was growing and thriving! After Paul's experience in Athens, this was wonderful news! He wrote this letter to the Thessalonians to express his joy over hearing about their faithfulness.

We can become a little discouraged if we feel we are not making as much progress as we think we should. The fact is that God is doing the work! We are just "planting" and "watering"! The "planting" Paul did in Thessalonica was beginning to bear fruit even in Paul's absence! Christians do the best they can with what they've been given. Then they trust God to do whatever He is going to do! Are you a Christian?

**Day 344 I Thessalonians Chapters 4 - 5** Paul's Letters

Paul had only spent a short time in Thessalonica when he, Silas, and Timothy planted the church there. The Thessalonians had a lot of questions about Jesus' doctrine. In this letter, Paul included important doctrine they needed to know.

One question that weighed heavily on their minds concerned the second coming of Jesus. They were under the impression that Jesus would come back very soon. When their friends and relatives began to pass away, they thought they were going to miss His return. This seems a bit naïve to us, but we must remember we've had the Bible for almost 2,000 years. They were getting it "hot off the press"! Paul assured them that the "dead in Christ will rise first" and we who are alive will "be caught up together with them in the clouds"! Paul explained that Jesus will come "as a thief in the night". It will be unexpected and totally unpredictable. That's why they should always watch. He warned them not to "fall asleep" while they are alive. If they "fell asleep" in death, they could rest assured they would live with Him!

In the last part of the letter, Paul gave a list of Christian behaviors that should be a part of the Christian's life. As you read the list, what do you think? Are you a Christian?

**Day 345 II Thessalonians**

Paul's Letters

Soon after the Thessalonians got Paul's first letter, he had to write them another. Why? Some of them misinterpreted his first letter, especially concerning the second coming of Jesus. Some others flat out taught opposing doctrine! Paul heard about these things and wrote them this second letter to set the record straight!

Paul began by bragging on them. He actually said, "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God..." In other words, "Silas, Timothy, and I have been bragging on you among all the congregations of God's church". Then Paul jumped right into correcting some of the error they were circulating. Some of the Thessalonians were teaching that Jesus had already come and they had missed it. Only certain ones were privy to the second coming. Paul said when Jesus comes no one would miss it! He will come "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul encouraged them not to let anyone or anything "shake" or "trouble" them, not even a letter from them! Perhaps they were using Paul's first letter and twisting his original meaning. Perhaps there were forgeries being circulated in Paul's name.

Whatever was being done or taught, we know Paul had already told them that the second coming would not occur until "there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition..." Many doctrines and theories have been promoted concerning these verses. Whatever belief system or interpretation we give to this truth, let's be careful not to be guilty of what the Thessalonians did. They divided themselves over the issue! They allowed it to blind them to God's truth of "salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth"! Paul warned them not to let unreasonable, wicked, and unfaithful men draw them away from the truth. In fact, he commanded them, in the name of Jesus, to withdraw themselves from such people who teach opposing doctrine than what Paul, Silas, and Timothy had already taught them! Christians will not suffer the vengeance of the Lord because they know God and have obeyed the gospel! Are you a Christian?

**Day 346 I Timothy Chapters 1 - 4** Paul's Letters

Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus while he went to Macedonia. Paul knew many would depart from the faith. He had heard that several had already perverted the truth and were teaching false doctrines in the church. He knew they would reject and attack Timothy. He wrote this letter to encourage Timothy to hold to true doctrine and continue to be faithful.

In addition to encouragement, Paul stated another purpose in chapter 3 verse 15 "... that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." This may have been his primary purpose. That's why Paul gave instructions for the role of women. He also explained the necessary "equipping" the elders and deacons must possess to successfully perform their specific roles in the church. He told Timothy if he would teach these things, he would not only save himself he would also save those he teaches.

It was obvious to Paul the truth must be obeyed and preserved. He knew the church is the "pillar and ground" of the truth. A "pillar" is a supporting post that holds something up. A "ground" is the foundation upon which something stands. The truth is "held up" and "supported" by the church. Christians are the church. Without them the truth would fall. Christians continue to spread and teach the truth. Are you a Christian?

## Day 347 I Timothy Chapters 5 - 6 Paul's Letters

Paul continues this letter encouraging Timothy as well as teaching him how to behave in the church. He explains the role of the older men and women. He teaches the responsibility the church has to widows if they were truly destitute. He gives instruction for the younger widows. He explains the role of slaves and the role of slave owners.

We are fighting a war. The world, especially its wealth and money, is where most focus their attention. Paul warned that the “love of money” is the root of all kinds of evil that comes into our lives. If we want to be truly happy, we should separate ourselves from the world and focus on our role in the church. Paul’s advice to Timothy was to focus on the four “Fs”: Flee – worldly things; Follow – after right things; Fight – stand up for the Faith!

Christians have learned that “godliness with contentment is great gain.” In other words, being content with whatever they have as long as they are doing God’s Will for their life. This is real “gain”! Are you a Christian?

## Day 348 II Timothy

Paul's Letters

Paul has been arrested and put into a Roman prison. He is facing execution. In this letter he says “the time of my departure is at hand” indicating that he is fully aware of his impending death. He is ready! He knows he has kept the faith and that he will receive a “crown of righteousness”. He tells Timothy to “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.” Why does he want Timothy to come to him?

We know he asked Timothy to bring a cloak, some books, and some parchments. Did Paul simply want Timothy to be his delivery man? We may think Paul needed some encouragement! After all he is about to die! Did he want to see his young student and friend one more time before he died? Consider chapter 1 verse 4, “Greatly desiring to see thee being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy”. Paul was aware that Timothy was upset. It was Timothy that needed the encouragement! He told Timothy, “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God”. It seems that Timothy could have had his faith shaken a bit when he learned that Paul was in prison. Paul wanted Timothy to come to him so he could strengthen his faith! Imagine, Paul, a man about to die, GIVING the encouragement!

Paul said that he wasn't the only one who would receive a “crown of righteousness”. He also said the Lord would give it to “all them also that love his appearing”. Christians are looking forward to Jesus' return. Are you a Christian?

## Day 349 Titus

Paul's Letters

Paul had recently written a letter to Timothy. It is called I Timothy in our Bible. He had left Timothy in Ephesus to strengthen the church there. Paul wrote to encourage Timothy to continue to teach the Ephesian Christians how to organize themselves in the church and the proper behavior they should display in the public worship.

Around this same time he wrote this letter to Titus. He had left Titus in Crete to "set in order the things that are lacking and ordain elders in every city". The content of the letter is strikingly similar to I Timothy. This is not surprising since it was written by the same author, about the same time, for similar purposes, to a similar audience, and inspired by the same Holy Spirit!

As you read today's passage, remember we are all workers in God's Kingdom in one capacity or another. We may not have the responsibility to organize and teach entire congregations, but we do have the responsibility to submit to the organization and teachings of the Holy Spirit. We should always ask ourselves the question, "Is this the way we are organized where I worship?" If not, perhaps we do have the responsibility to teach the congregation! Christians accept the responsibility. Are you a Christian?



**Day 350      Hebrews Chapters 1 - 5      Paul's Letters**

We are not exactly sure who wrote this letter to the Hebrews. Many believe Paul wrote it. Regardless of the human author, we know that God is the ultimate author. The Hebrew writer is writing primarily to Hebrews. We also know them as Israelites or Jews. Many of the Jews have become Christians after hearing, believing, and obeying the Gospel. Unfortunately, some have begun to doubt the authority of Jesus. They wanted to return to Judaism and keep the ordinances of the Old Testament. The Hebrew writer gives more than enough proof that Jesus is far superior to anything they once had.

Jesus is mentioned in every single chapter of this letter. It is clearly shown that Jesus is superior to the Old Testament prophets. He is superior to angels. He is superior to Moses. He is even superior to the priests and has become our High Priest (more on that later). It begs the question: "Why would you want to go back to Judaism?"

As you read today's passage, allow this evidence to strengthen your faith and confidence that we are right in following Jesus. Christians can rest assured that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Are you a Christian?

**Day 351 Hebrews Chapters 6 - 9** Paul's Letters

The Hebrew writer encouraged his readers to GROW UP! They have been "enlightened" with the truth about Jesus. If they "fall away" they have "crucified" Jesus all over again! This is serious folks! We can choose to let the truth continue to nourish us and cause us to grow or we can reject the truth and be rejected! The Hebrew writer warns his readers not to be lazy! He encourages them to be more like their forefathers who kept the faith. Abraham trusted the promise God made to him. He knew that God can not lie. We can trust God's promises too!

God's promises are found in Jesus. He is our "Priest". Through Him we have access to God. Abraham met a king named Melchizedek. He was also a priest. Melchizedek is a shadow of Jesus. He is both King and Priest! This makes Jesus profoundly more superior to the Old Testament priests. Those priests offered the blood of animals in an earthly building. The covenant God had made with them was constantly being broken by their inability to keep it! Their sins were never taken away by these offerings. God remembered them every year. They had to offer more sacrifices. Jesus is the High Priest of the New Covenant (Testament). He offered His OWN blood! His blood took away our sins! He only had to do this one time! Through His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus took away the first covenant and established the second one! We are no longer under the Old Testament, we are under the New Testament!! Thank God!

When you compare and contrast the Old Covenant with the New Covenant, why would anyone want to go back? We have a New Deal and it's far better than the Old Deal! New Testament Christians are redeemed by the blood of Jesus! Are you a Christian?

## Day 352      Hebrews Chapters 10 - 11      Paul's Letters

Many of the first Christians were Jewish. They were struggling between trusting Jesus' New Covenant and going back to the ordinances of the Old Covenant. The Hebrew writer clearly shows that the Old Law of Moses is a "shadow" of good things to come. That "good thing" was Jesus and His New Testament!

We can now have full assurance and "boldness" when we come before God. Why? We are not approaching Him through the blood of bulls and goats which could never take away sins, we are coming to Him through the blood of Jesus! Since we have such a High Priest, let's "hold fast" our faith and "cast not away" our confidence! In other words, don't quit!! If the people of Moses' day broke the Law of Moses, they died. If we break the New Covenant, it will be far worse than death! Keep the faith! All the Old Testament characters of chapter 11 kept the faith, but they didn't receive the new covenant. They died, in faith, looking forward to greater promises.

Ephesians 2:8 Paul teaches us "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:" It is by faith in the blood of Jesus that we come to God the Father. However, the Hebrew writer begged his readers throughout the letter not to quit. He warned them of the consequences of going back to their former state. He said in Hebrews 10:26 "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins!" These warnings should be taken seriously. We have great assurance in the power of the blood of Jesus to save us. We can't save ourselves! However Paul warns us in I Corinthians 10:12 "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The Hebrew writer, throughout the letter, gave warning after warning not to quit! It's not a matter of faith only or works (obedience) only. It's the right balance of BOTH! Christians understand the balanced teaching that one can't be saved by our obedience (works), nor can one be saved without obedience (faith only). Are you a Christian?

## Day 353      Hebrews Chapters 12 - 13      Paul's Letters

As we finish the letter to the Hebrews, we are encouraged to always be "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith". Jesus originates and completes our faith. Let's not quit! The lord often corrects us or chastises us to keep us on course. Let's appreciate Him for this. He simply wants us to stay focused on our faith "lest any man fail of the grace of God"! Once we have been "enlightened", we sure don't want to reject it. Once we have been saved from our sins, we don't want to go back to them! As awesome as Mount Sinai was in the day of Moses, we have come to "Mount Zion", the church of the first born, which makes Mount Sinai pale in comparison! As awesome as the Old Testament was, it pales in comparison to God's New Testament!

In chapter 13, the Hebrew writer gives a lists of Christian services that please God. Let's remain faithful to God serving Him as New Testament Christians.

Am I serving God? Christians serve God because they understand God's truth about Jesus. They are a part of His Church! Are you a Christian?

**CHAPTER NINE**

**The Eight  
Final Letters**

**James**

**I & II Peter**

**I, II, & III John**

**Jude**

**Revelation**

**Day 354 James**

Final Letters

James was the half-brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55). At first he didn't believe that Jesus was the Son of God (John 7:5). How could his older brother be the promised Savior and Redeemer? Later, James became a leader in the Church (Acts 15:13 & Galatians 2:9). God inspired him to write this New Testament letter to encourage Christian living even through difficult persecution. One might even call this a "Reader's Digest" version of what a Christian's life looks like.

Christians endure hardships and even persecution through prayer and faith! They are "doers of the word". This means their faith leads them to obedience. They exercise "pure religion" and do good works. Christians love their neighbors. They aren't partial and prejudice as to who those "neighbors" are! They don't pick and choose who they respect, they love them all! Christians are very careful what they say. They fully understand that words CAN hurt people! They submit to God and resist the devil. How do they resist the devil? They get as close to God as they can! How? By pure thinking and clean living. In other words, they live right and do well! Christians don't let money, pleasure, and worldly things distract them from godly things. After all, they are Christians. That means they follow Christ. Look back through this paragraph. Isn't this how Christ lived?

At the end of James' letter, he made a final appeal to Christians to "be patient". That means to "endure". In other words, "Don't quit"! There is a very important key to remaining faithful. What is it? Surround yourself with other Christians! Confess your sins to one another and pray for each other! It is critical to be an active part of the Church! Christians recognize their need for fellow Christians! Are you a Christian?

**Day 355 I Peter Chapters 1 - 3**

Final Letters

Peter, one of Jesus' twelve apostles, wrote this letter to Christians living in the area of present day Turkey. They were suffering horrible persecution. Peter predicted it would get worse! He pointed out it would be worth it. They will be saved! Christians have something that the Old Testament Prophets and even the angels didn't understand. They have been washed in the blood of Christ!

Since Christians have such a wonderful blessing through Christ, Peter encouraged them to live like it. He told them to strip away all the evil attitudes from their former lives. Christians are special and unique in the eyes of God. Their lifestyles should reflect that. How? Through SERVICE! Christ came to this world to serve, not to be served (Matthew 20:28). The world showed their appreciation by crucifying Him! Why would we expect anything different? Peter challenged Christians to SERVE and do well even though the ones they served didn't appreciate it and even persecuted them for it. If Christians do this, they would be following Jesus' example.

Regardless of our place in life, whether we are servants, wives, husbands, or whomever, just SERVE! If we think about others first, we have tapped into the very root of Christians living. Anyone speaking evil of us will be ashamed of themselves and put to silence by our good, clean living. Christians understand that Christ died for us. Everyone who is baptized into Christ will be saved. Are you a Christian?

## Day 356 I Peter Chapters 4 - 5

Final Letters

As we finish Peter's letter to suffering Christians, he continues to encourage them not to give up. These Christians used to live like the world lives. In fact, their worldly friends were surprised they are not running around with them anymore! They were putting a lot of pressure on these Christians to give up their new life and return to their old one. Peter told them God will hold them accountable.

Peter reminded them, and us, that the core ingredient to Christian living, is SERVICE. God has given Christians each a "gift" to "Minister" (serve). Peter insists they must use their gift regardless of the price they may pay. Many of those they minister to will be the very ones to persecute them! Don't worry about it. "Casting all your care upon him; for He careth for you."

"If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." Christians live their lives expecting their lifestyle will draw criticism and persecution. They live the Christian life anyway! Are you a Christian?



**Day 357     II Peter**

Final Letters

Peter anticipates his own death (II Peter 1:14). He knew he would not be around much longer. He wrote this letter to encourage Christians to remain faithful. Since he is speaking to Christians, he knows they have faith. Faith is just the start of the Christian life. Peter realizes in order to keep strong and not fall away, you must ADD to your faith. What needs to be ADDED? He gives a list of fundamental growing points in II Peter 1:5-7). These are in progression. You must have one before you can build the next one. Faith is first because it is the ground floor. You reach maturity as a Christian when you are able to LOVE! A Christian will never master any of these with perfection, but we must have them all to remain faithful. Not only do we have to have them, we must strengthen each one of them as part of our character. Without them we'll surely fall away. It is a serious thing to fall away after having been saved by grace through faith (II Peter 2:21)!

Peter spent a lot of time warning about false preachers and teachers. Why? He, no doubt, felt they were the most dangerous threat to a Christian's faith. These teachers would do anything to lead folks astray. Peter warned they would take Paul's writings and twist them to make them say things that Paul never intended. False preachers are masters at this technique! They will be held accountable, just as were the angels that rebelled, the people of Noah's day, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah! Thankfully, even in those situations, there were those that were spared!

Many scoff at the idea of the Second Coming of Christ. They try to dismiss it with irrelevant points of view, but Jesus IS coming! Christians not only look forward to it, they "hasten" it! Are you a Christian?

**Day 358 I John**

Final Letters

John was known as "The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved". He was very close to Him. As the Church grew, many false teachings were circulating. Some actually taught that since the FLESH is sinful, there was no point trying to do right. Surely God would not hold us accountable for something we couldn't help. We may as well give in to the lusts of our flesh. Once we are saved, there is nothing we can do to be lost, so don't worry about your actions. After all, you can't help it!

John pointed out that Jesus was in the FLESH! He said we HEARD, SAW, and TOUCHED Him! Jesus taught that God is LIGHT, not "darkness"! Jesus, even though He was in the flesh, walked in the light without sin. If we want fellowship with God, we must "walk in the light, as He is in the light"! Will we sin? Yes! If you say you haven't sinned you are a liar (I John 1:8). You must confess your sins. If you do, He will forgive you (I John 1:9)

Here is the message. Stop sinning and do right! Live like Jesus. The lusts found in the world will pass away, but if you do God's Will you will live forever (I John 2:16-17). Many false preachers are in the world telling you that you won't be held responsible for doing wrong. Don't let them trick you, "he that does righteousness is righteous" (I John 3:7)! We know we are children of God if we keep His commandments (I John 5:2). We are of the Devil if we don't do right (I John 3:10). Loving God and loving our brother is the key to doing right (I John 4:21). If we love God, we will do what He says (I John 2:5). If we love our brother we won't do anything against him (I John 2:10). So, do what God says by being baptized into Christ (I John 5:6). Live righteously, confessing our sins, and we KNOW we have eternal life (I John 5:13)!

**Day 359     II John, III John, & Jude**

Final Letters

We don't know who the "Elect Lady" of II John is. Perhaps she is an individual or perhaps it is a personification of a local congregation. John, the "Disciple Whom Jesus Loved", is saddened by the false doctrine that has crept into the Church. Notice how many times he uses the word "truth". John urges his reader(s) to beware of those false teachers. He called them "a deceiver and an antichrist"!

III John is addressed to a very loyal Christian named Gaius. Notice again the use of the word "truth". He expresses how happy he is to learn his "children walk in truth". These are not his biological children. He is talking about those he converted to Christianity. John is particularly upset with Diotrephes who has rejected John and those of his company. He promises to deal with him if he comes to them. John commends the work of Demetrius.

Jude is the half-brother of Jesus. He is called Judas in Matthew 13:55. He said he was going to write about the "common salvation", but felt it was more "needful" to exhort them to "earnestly contend for the faith". Why? There were so many false teachers who have crept into the Church. They were spreading false doctrine. Jude noted that God punished the Hebrews He rescued from Egyptian bondage when they refused to believe Him in the wilderness. Jude also pointed out that even the angels that forsook God would be punished. He said the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah should serve as an example to anyone who rejects God. What was Jude's point? God will execute judgment on the ungodly (Jude 15) and will save the godly (Jude 24). Christians are always aware that false doctrine is being preached. They "contend for faith". That means they fight to preserve sound doctrine! Are you a Christian?

**Day 360      Revelation Chapters 1 - 3      Final Letters**

Imagine you are a Christian living in the first century. You live in Pergamos in Asia Minor (present day Turkey). You attend the local congregation there. The Roman Empire is the federal government. They have come to hate the Christian movement. The government has even passed laws that were designed to eradicate this movement. Some of your friends have been arrested, beaten, and one of them has been killed! You are wondering if Christianity is worth the price. It seems that the power is in the Roman army instead of Jesus' Kingdom. What can you expect next?

You are so excited because your preacher has received a letter from John, one of Jesus' apostles. John had been exiled by the Roman authorities to the island of Patmos for his faith. You heard that he had seen a vision. He has written this letter to seven of the congregations in your area to share what he saw. As your preacher reads the letter to the congregation, you hang on every word!

You know what you are hearing will affect your life. John made it clear he had seen Jesus! He told John to write this vision and share it with your congregation. John said the things he had seen in the vision will "shortly come to pass". He said the "time is at hand"! You know this is about to happen. This is for you! You are suffering. You are concerned. You are even scared. What is Jesus going to say? He begins by admonishing the congregations! He wants you to get right! He knew what was going on in each congregation. He said, "I know thy works", to every one of them. Two of them were "all good". He didn't criticize them for any wrong doing. Jesus simply encouraged them to keep strong. Two were "all bad". Jesus was very upset with them. He warned them to correct their behavior. The other three were "good and bad". He spoke of things He was happy with first, then told them where they were getting off track. Jesus told every one of them, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches". He promised that all that "overcometh" would receive a blessing. Christians LISTEN and they have OVERCOME. Are you a Christian?

**Day 361      Revelation 4 - 8**

Final Letters

You sit on the edge of your seat as your preacher reads the letter from John. You gasp when he tells about seeing God on His throne! There are four awesome beings flying around it. There are twenty four smaller thrones circled around God's throne. There is an elder sitting upon each one. As you hear about the rainbow around the throne, you recall the rainbow God put in the sky after the flood as a symbol of His promise to Noah. You are ashamed that you thought God had forgotten His promises to you. Even though it seemed the Romans were in control, you are encouraged to hear God is still on His throne!

Then your preacher reads that John saw a little book in God's right hand. Surely this book contains very important information! A message from God to the saints! How sad you are when you discover it is sealed with seven seals and no one is worthy to take the book from God and open it to reveal its secrets. John wept and so do you! An angel tells John not to cry. The Lion of the tribe of Judah is worthy to open the book. He turns to see, not a Lion, but a Lamb. It has been sacrificed, yet lives! You know that the Lion and the Lamb are one and the same. It's Jesus! The four beings and the twenty four elders fall down to worship Him! The prayers of the saints (Christians) come up before God. Those are your prayers! You wanted to know what God plans to do about the Roman Empire. You are about to find out!

When Jesus opened the first four seals John saw four horsemen. A white horseman that conquered and enjoyed victory. He was followed by a red horse that waged war. Then there was a black horse of terrible poverty and economic collapse. Finally a pale horse ridden by "Death"! You quickly realize this is the cycle of all world kingdoms. The Roman Empire would fall. You asked the same question they asked when the fifth seal was opened. How long? The answer was not exactly what you expected, "A while longer until more saints are killed"! What about those heartless kings? The sixth seal answered your question. They would run to the mountains and rocks begging them to fall on them to hide them from God and

Jesus! You wonder who will be saved. Chapter 7 answers your question. The "remnant". There were 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes "sealed". This totaled 144,000. Is that all? Of all the followers of God, only 144,000 will be saved? Then you realize this number is symbolic. It represents a portion of those who had the opportunity to be saved. You remember that Jesus said, "Few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). When John turns around he sees a large number of people! Like the Lion and the Lamb represents the same person, this large crowd and the 144,000 represents the same group. Though it's a large crowd, it's still only a few compared to all the people that were offered salvation! When the seventh seal is opened the prayers of the saints went up again. Those are still your prayers! You are about to find out more answers. Seven angels came out to blow their trumpets. The first four announced that 1/3 of the all things are destroyed! God is obviously upset over the things that have been happening to His people. The things the Roman Empire had done to you! The last three angels will bring even more "Woes" to them! Christians are encouraged to know that God is still on His throne and cares what happens to His people! Are you a Christian?

## Day 362      Revelation Chapters 9 - 12      Final Letters

You have been listening to your preacher read about the vision of John. There was a "remnant" that has been "sealed". What about those that were not "sealed"? The fifth angel blew his trumpet to answer that question. The "bottomless pit" was opened and bad things came out upon all those who followed Satan. When the sixth angel blew the trumpet more bad things came upon those folks who had hurt the saints. An army with 200 million soldiers was loosed to attack them! Those who survived the attack still refused to repent and worship God!

Then John saw another angel with an open book in his hand. Since it was open, it was obviously meant to be shared with everyone. When John heard "seven thunders" speak, he was told not to record what they said. You realized God reveals only what He wants. The angel declares that time will end, but first John was to "eat" the book. It was a "bitter-sweet" message. John was told he must preach that revealed word. It would separate the good from the bad as was symbolized when John was told to measure (for protection) those that worship, but don't measure (or preserve) those that aren't Christians. The word is TRUTH and was represented by the "Two Witnesses" in chapter 11. Those who speak that truth will be protected until they finish their testimony. When that time comes, they will be killed. Though you were upset to hear this news, you are encouraged when you discovered they will rise from the dead and ascend to heaven in a cloud. Just like Jesus!

The seventh angel sounded and announced that WE WIN!!! Though Satan did everything he could to stop God's plan of salvation through Jesus, he failed. The battle continues to rage. Satan is still seeking to destroy you every day! John gives you the three secret keys to defeat Satan: 1) The Blood of The Lamb; 2) The WORD; and 3) Being willing to DIE for Christ! Christians overcome Satan by these and Satan hates them because they "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17). Are you a Christian?

**Day 363 Revelation Chapters 13 - 16** Final Letters

You've been listening to the preacher read about John's vision. God has promised punishment to those who have persecuted you. He didn't sugar coat anything or promise that everything would be easy. He told you that you must continue to trust in the Blood of Jesus, preach His Word, and even be willing to die! In fact, John has told you many of you WILL die! How could God let this happen? Did He not know the Romans would be so ruthless? Then John sees something that hits you like a bolt of lightning

He saw a beast with seven heads and ten horns. It resembled a leopard, bear, lion, and a dragon. Where have you heard that before? Then you remembered Daniel 7:3-7! God had revealed that four earthly kingdoms would rise up (Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman). During the days of the Roman Empire the church would be established. All this happened exactly as God had foretold. He already knew the Romans were going to be in power. This was no surprise to Him! He knew there would be a false prophet (false religion) that would force folks to worship the Emperor. He would seal them (Revelation 13:16) just like God has sealed the saved (Revelation 7:3). They would overcome the saints for a while, but they would not last. Just like all the other world kingdoms have fallen, so will Rome (Revelation 14:8). What will become of those non-believers? John was told they would be tormented (Revelation 14:10-11). When the end of the world comes, the saints will be saved and the sinners will be crushed!

To make His point even stronger, God gave John another sign. Just like He had shown the seven seals and the seven trumpets, He allowed John to see seven more angels. These angels had seven vials (bowls). Just like the other signs of seals and trumpets, they predicted punishment upon the non-believers. As each angel poured out his bowl, bad things happened to those who had persecuted the saints. Why? Because they deserved it (Revelation 16:6). Sadly, they didn't repent (Revelation 16:9). Finally, when the seventh angel poured out his



bowl, Babylon fell (Revelation 16:19). As you listened to your preacher read John's vision, you knew he was referring to Rome. That was the government that had killed your best friend. You had wondered if God was going to do anything about it. Now you know that He fully planned to punish them for their sins. Christians know that God is righteous and just. They trust Him. Are you a Christian?

## Day 364      Revelation Chapters 17 - 19 Final Letters

You are so encouraged to know God will take vengeance on those who are arresting, beating, and killing your Christian friends. You know you may be next, but John's vision has strengthened you! You know you will WIN IN THE END!

One of the angels that had one of the bowls showed John another sign that secured your faith. He showed him a powerful harlot. All the rulers of the earth participated in her wickedness. John was told she represented "Babylon". The beast John saw was one of the Emperors. In fact, he was the eighth. Rulers were given powerful positions in the Empire and aligned themselves with this Emperor. They all decided to make war with Jesus and His saints. As you breathlessly listen to the preacher read John's letter, you know this is exactly what you have been struggling with! The federal government has issued a war on Christians. You needed some assurance that God is still in control

The fall of Babylon was great news, but the best is yet to come! In the beginning of the vision John saw four creatures and twenty four elders worship God. In chapter 19 they are doing it again! Why? Because God is "true and righteous" and He "avenged the blood of His servants". John then heard an announcement that Jesus has married His wife! Just as a husband protects and cares for his wife, Jesus protects and cares for His wife (the Church). John knows he is a member of the Church. He is so moved by this vision that he falls down to worship the angel! The angel protests and insisted that he worship God. You can't blame John for losing himself. When you read it, you almost fell down and worshiped the angel too! Then John saw Jesus ride in on a white horse. His robe was dipped in blood (signifying His sacrifice for His Church). He is called the "The Word of God" (Compare Revelation 19:13 with John 1:14). He is the "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Revelation 19:16)! He comes against all His enemies; the kings of the earth, the beast, the false prophet, and all that were sealed by Satan. He cast them all into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20)! Christians know that God will do what He says! Are you a Christian?

## Day 365      **Revelation Chapters 20 - 22** Final Letters

You can't hold the tears of joy any longer! The assurance you needed has been given! Though you have suffered persecution, you know you will WIN IN THE END! The enemies of Christ will be destroyed. Then a question pops into your mind. What about Satan? What is going to happen to him? After all, he is behind the evils of the federal government, the kings of the earth, and the false prophet. John saw the answer to that question too.

Satan will be bound for a limited period of time. During that time the Church, the saints, will reign with Christ. Then Satan will be released. He will try to organize an effort to destroy the Kingdom, the Church. It will not be successful (remember Matthew 16:18). Satan will be cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are (Revelation 20:10). In fact, there will be a great day of judgment and everyone will stand before God. Those that are not found written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15).

What about Christians (The Church which is The Bride of Christ)? They are described in chapter 20 as "New Jerusalem". They will live with God for ever. There will be no more tears, death, sorrow, crying, or pain. You almost lost your breath as you heard the preacher read those words. Those are the very things you have been experiencing. You listen with great expectation and wonder as the preacher read John's beautiful description of heaven. You wonder when this day will come! No one knows when judgment day will come, but Jesus wanted to assure you your suffering won't last forever. He said, "Surely I come quickly"! Throughout the reading of Revelation you imagined you lived in the first century. The immediate promise of retribution upon Rome was fulfilled. He came "quickly" for them. But you don't live in the first century. You live in the 21st century! You may be tempted to ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" That's what the non-believers ask (II Peter 3:4). Christians know that God always has and always will keep His promises! So, Christians join in with John and say "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20)! Are you a Christian?

The Table on the next three pages can be a helpful tool when trying to put into perspective the Kings of Israel and the Kings of Judah and the prophets associated with them. It also gives a general guideline to the dates of each.

Notice the top of the page shows information about the United Kingdom. The bottom of the page gives information about what happens from the time Judah was carried into Babylonian captivity and Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament.

<b>Year (B.C.)</b> 1000	<b>United Kingdom</b> Saul – (1050 – 1003) David – (1003 – 970) Solomon – (970 – 931) <b>Divided Kingdom</b> <hr/> <b>Kings of Israel</b> <b>(All Bad)</b> <b>(Northern Kingdom)</b> <b>Ten Tribes</b>	<b>Prophets to Israel</b>	<b>I Samuel – 1-8:</b> Eli & Samuel <b>9-15:</b> Saul becomes King <b>16-31:</b> David's Call – Saul's Fall <b>II Samuel – 1-24:</b> David's reign <b>I Kings - 1-11:</b> Solomon's reign <b>Divided Kingdom</b> <hr/> <b>Kings of Judah</b> <b>(+) = Good Kings</b> <b>(Southern Kingdom)</b> <b>Two Tribes: Benjamin &amp; Judah</b>	<b>I Chronicles:</b> History of Tribes to David's reign <b>II Chronicles:</b> Judah's Kings from Solomon to Babylonian Captivity <b>Prophets to Judah</b>	<b>Prophets to others</b>
900	Jeroboam (931-910) I Kings 12 - 14 Nadab (910-909) I Kings 15 Baasha (909-886) I Kings 16 Elah (886-885) I Kings 16 Zimri (885) I Kings 16		Rehoboam (931-913) I Kings 12-14 Abijah (913-911) I Kings 15 (+) Asa (911-870) I Kings 15		
875	Omri (885-874) I Kings 16 Ahab (874-853) I Kings 16-22 Ahaziah (853-852) I Kings 22	Elijah (864-846) I Kings 17-21	(+) Jehoshaphat (873-848) I Kings 22		Obadiah (848-841) <b>Edom</b>
850	Jehoram (852-841) II Kings 1 II Kings 2-8	Elisha (846-796)	Jehoram (848-841) II Kings 8 Ahaziah (841) II Kings 8		

(JEHU SLAYS JEHORAM OF ISRAEL & AHAZIAH OF JUDAH - 841 B.C.) II Kings 9-10						
841	Jehu (841-814) II Kings 9	Elisha		Athaliah (841-835) II Kings 11	Joel (830-?)	
800	Jehoahaz (814-798) II Kings 13 Jehoash (798-782)	Elisha		(+) Joash (835-796) II Kings 12	Joel ?	
775	Jeroboam II (782-753) II Kings 14	Amos (760) Hosea (755-725)		(+) Amaziah (796-767) II Kings 14 (+) Uzziah <del>(790-739)</del> II Kings 15 <b>Joint reign for 23 yrs.</b>		Jonah (780) ? <b>Nineveh</b>
750	Zechariah (753-752) II Kings 15 Shallum (752) II Kings 15 Menahem (752-742) II Kings 15 Pekahiah (742-740) II Kings 15 Pekah (740-732) II Kings 15	Hosea		(+) Uzziah ( <i>Also called Azariah</i> ) (+) Jotham (751-736) II Kings 15 <b>Joint reign for 12 yrs.</b>  Ahaz (743-728) II Kings 16	Isaiah (740-681) Micah (736-710)	
725	Hoshea (732-722) II Kings 17 <b>End of Israel : Deported by Assyria</b>	Hosea		(+) Hezekiah (728-695) II Kings 17-20	Isaiah Micah	Nahum (725 - ?) <b>Nineveh</b>
700				Manasseh (695-642) II Kings 21	Isaiah	
650				Amon (642-640) II Kings 21		

625	<b>In 612 B.C. the Babylonians overthrew the city of Nineveh, Capital of Assyria</b>			(+) Josiah (640-609) II Kings 22 - 23 Jehoahaz (609) II Kings 23	Jeremiah (627-586) Zephaniah 627 Habakkuk 606?	
600				Jehoakim (609-597) II Kings 24 Jehoiachin (597) II Kings 24 Zedekiah (597-586) II Kings 24	Jeremiah (597-570) Ezekiel (597-570)	Fall of Jerusalem II Kings 25
<b>FIRST DEPORTATION OF JUDAH BY BABYLONIANS UNDER NEBUCHADNEZZAR IN 605 B.C. DURING REIGN OF JEHOAKIM OF JUDAH - DANIEL (605-536) TO JEWS IN BABYLON</b> - Daniel wrote during time of Nebuchadnezzar (King of Babylon) to Cyrus (1st King of the Medo-Persian Empire). He also refers to Darius' reign who has been identified as Gubaru, a governor appointed by Cyrus.						
BABYLONIANS CONQUERED & DEPORTED JUDAH UNDER NEBUCHADNEZZAR IN 586 B.C.						
Nebuchadnezzar (605-562) had four successors from 562-539. Belshazzar who ruled jointly with Nabonidus lost the kingdom to Cyrus (539-530) (Medo-Persian Empire) in 539 B.C. Cyrus allowed Zerubbabel to take 50,000 Jews back to Jerusalem in 536 B.C. During Darius I (521-486) reign Haggai (520) & Zechariah (520-480) prophesied to Judah to encourage a rebuilding of Jerusalem. During Ahasuerus (Xerxes) (485-465) reign, he married Esther and the Jewish nation was spared. During Artaxerxes I (465-424) reign he allowed Ezra's return (458) & Nehemiah's return (444). <b>Malachi wrote to Judah in 430.</b>						